

# Figurations

## Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

### ■ EDITORIAL

We have reached issue 10 of *Figurations*. It doesn't sound very many, but, at only two issues a year, it means that we have been going for nearly half a decade. We have received many favourable comments – some people have gone so far as to say that they look forward to the next issue! But perhaps it is time for some brief reflections.

In the editorial comment in the first issue, I wrote that 'it is far from the intention of the Norbert Elias Foundation, in initiating this twice-yearly newsletter, to foster a cult of the dead'. That has at times seemed hard to avoid, partly because the centenary of Norbert Elias's birth fell in 1997, and much space has been taken up first with anticipating and then reporting on the numerous conferences that were held in many parts of the world to mark the occasion. Besides, recent research by Jörg Hackeschmidt, Paul Nixon and others has turned up interesting new information about Elias's life, including the long involvement in Zionism which, for whatever reason, he later preferred to deny or at least to disguise. So we have reported all that.

The more general purpose of *Figurations*, however, could be defined as being to make known events and research which are likely to be of interest to people who find the work of Norbert Elias interesting. That, if one reflects upon it, gives us a rather broad remit. It means that some of the books and articles to which we draw attention may not have been written under the direct influence of Elias's writings, may indeed scarcely mention him if at all, but tackle topics cognate with those raised in his work. Thus, to take five random examples, we have carried discussions of William McNeill's *Keeping*

*Together in Time*, of Iko Ikegami's *The Taming of the Samurai*, of John Powelson's *Centuries of Economic Endeavour*, of Richard Evans's *Rituals of Retribution*, and (a brief note in this issue) of J.L. Watson's *Golden Arches East*.

The paradigmatic potential of Elias's writings is so broad that even the events and publications which are explicitly driven by ideas derived from his work are amazingly diverse. Again, to take some random examples from past issues of *Figurations*, we can mention the conference on Tango organised in Oxford by Esteban Castro, Paul Kapteyn's book *The Stateless Market* about the development of the European Union, Barbara Walter's article in this issue on 'Liturgy and Civilisation', and Cas Wouters's critique of Duerr's *Der erotische Leib* under the saucy title 'The inverted *rue d'amour*'. Nor do we always spare our friends; I still savour Richard Kilminster's remarks on 'the heady wine of post-modernism' in his report of the conference in Berlin organised by *Theory, Culture and Society*, which has been something like the English-language house-journal for the figurational research tradition in recent years.

I should like to thank all who have contributed to *Figurations* so far; they have generally responded well to only the mildest of bullying. And I should like to encourage many others to submit contributions, or just to alert us to events, articles or books that we may otherwise overlook. We need a network of stringers – as journalists say – to fill the gaps in our rather hit and miss intelligence-gathering operation. Don't hesitate to e-mail us – better to be alerted several times to the same thing than not at all.

Stephen Mennell

### ■ NORBERT ELIAS AMALFI PRIZE

The Trustees of the Norbert Elias Foundation, in association with the Amalfi Prize organisation, are pleased to announce the establishment of the Norbert Elias Amalfi Prize.

The prize is to be awarded for a distinguished first book in Sociology published in Europe by a European author. It will be awarded for the first time in 1999 for a book published in the preceding three calendar years and thereafter every second year. The prize is awarded 'in commemoration of the sociologist Norbert Elias (1897–1990), whose writings, at once theoretical and empirical, boldly crossed disciplinary boundaries in the human sciences to develop a long-term perspective on the patterns of interdependence which human beings weave together'.

The winning author will receive DM 3,000, and with his or her partner will also be invited to Amalfi at the Foundation's expense for the prize-giving ceremony.

### ■ REVIEW SYMPOSIUM

**Robert Van Krieken**, *Norbert Elias*. London, Routledge, 1998. 212 pp. ISBN: 0-415-10415-7 (hbk); 0-415-10416-5 (pbk).

The publication of Robert van Krieken's book in the 'Key Sociologists' series of Routledge indicates that Elias is finally receiving the widespread attention he deserves. To some extent, as Van Krieken points out, responses to Elias have tended to vary be-

tween two diametrically opposed poles: either uncritical acceptance from loyal followers, or ungenerous rejection from fervent enemies. In this book, a very fair balance is successfully achieved between these two extremes. Van Krieken illuminates the many merits of Elias's sociological approach in a clear and concise manner, while also pointing to the controversial areas in his work which numerous critics have questioned. He is generous both to Elias and his opponents, and the result is a remarkably lucid book which can serve not only as a valuable introduction to process-sociology for those who are newcomers in this field, but also as a stimulus for criticism, debate, and revision amongst scholars who are already familiar with the study of human figurations.

Van Krieken argues that the fundamental achievement of Elias was not so much that he developed entirely novel ideas, but that he created a highly original synthesis of different perspectives and traditions: an innovative fusion which fundamentally combined elements such as Ernst Cassirer's philosophy, the sociologies of Marx, Simmel, and Weber, and the psychoanalytic theories of Freud. The resultant outcome was a unique approach to the study of human societies which broke down disciplinary boundaries and focused on the interrelations between long-term historical changes in social organization and the personality structure, or emotional 'habitus', of individuals. Van Krieken notes that Elias often tended to portray himself as a 'lonely maverick' who had successfully developed a new, revolutionary vision of sociology largely on his own. To some extent this is undoubtedly true, in the sense that he did have to fight a long, solitary battle to defend his views, at a time when Parsonian structural-functionalism and the 'retreat of sociology into the present' were dominant. Nevertheless, Van Krieken rightly questions Elias's occasional tendency to exaggerate his self-portrayals, and in his book he effectively traces some of the key sources of his inspiration, by providing many illustrative quotations with a very 'Eliasian' flavour from Marx, Cassirer, Freud, and other authors such as Max Horkheimer, Johan Huizinga, Morris Ginsberg, William Sumner, Charles Judd, and Charles Cooley. This intellectual sketch is interwoven with a moving account of Elias's life experiences, in which Van Krieken particularly focuses on the tragic death of his mother in Auschwitz, and his prolonged struggle to gain recognition as a sociologist.

Van Krieken's objective is not to provide a full survey of Elias's writings, but rather to present a general account of his approach

## ■ EDITORS' NOTES

Robert van Krieken tells us that if you look at his new book *Norbert Elias* in the Routledge 'Key Sociologists' title page, you'll see that 'Key Sociologists' is actually a sticker over 'Key Socialists' – a little Freudian slip on the typesetter's part. Or has someone discovered the secret of Norbert's true political views?

The Norbert Elias Foundation has a new e-mail address. It is: [norbert.elias.foundation@wxs.nl](mailto:norbert.elias.foundation@wxs.nl)

Congratulations to Arpad Szakolczai on his appointment to the chair of sociology at University College Cork. Arpad, Agnes and the family moved to Ireland from the EUJ in Fiesole over the summer. We are looking forward to reading Arpad's forthcoming work on Elias in the context of a whole clutch of twentieth-century theorists – Weber, Foucault, and Voegelin among them.

Richard Kilminster's book *The Sociological Revolution* has been published by Routledge. A review of this very important work will be published in *Figurations* 11. In the meantime, if you wish to order it the ISBN number is 0-415-02920-1.

In April 1998, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* was celebrated at a gathering of past and present editors and contributors. For a quarter of a century, the journal has maintained consistently high academic standards, with a strong though not exclusive emphasis on the 'process' or 'figurational' way of doing sociology. Contributions are accepted in English by non-Dutch authors, though the bulk of the journal is in Dutch (with English abstracts). To subscribe, write to the publishers, Wolters-Noordhoff, Postbus 567, 9700 AN Groningen, Netherlands.

Perhaps our policy on reviews requires some explanation. *Figurations* is a newsletter, not a learned journal, and we don't have the resources to organise independent reviewing of all books in which readers may be interested. If authors send us a copy of their book, we try to arrange for it to be independently reviewed. But sometimes it is easier to ask the author to write a brief descriptive and informative note about his or her own work. The main objective is to keep readers aware of the latest books and articles, by whichever means.

For the first time, this issue of *Figurations* carries a paid advertisement. The immediate reason for this innovation was that the Editor did not feel equal to bragging about his own book. Our policy on advertising is as yet a little inchoate, but if others would like to place adverts in future issues, they are welcome to make proposals.

The winner of the competition, announced in *Figurations* 9, to find the best English translation of the title of Bram de Swaan's book *Mensenmaat-schappij* is Bram de Swaan. He came up with the title *Human Arrangements*. Since there were no other entries, the result was a foregone conclusion.

to sociology, as well as to situate his work within contemporary debates. An excellent chapter, entitled 'Towards a Theory of Human Society', succinctly outlines Elias's vision of sociological theory and practice: his stress on the unplanned and unintended outcome of intentional human actions; his view of human beings as interdependent, forming 'figurations' or networks with each other in which psychological make-up is moulded by webs of social relations; his focus on ratios or bal-

ances, rather than isolated substances or states, particularly with regard to his dynamic conception of power; his concern with long-term processes of development and change, rather than static structures; and finally, his approach to sociology as the collective attempt gradually to develop an 'object-adequate or reality-congruent' picture of the human world, which offers us the possibility of maximizing control over social life and avoiding the outbreak of destructive conflicts.

Two further chapters then summarize the main arguments of Elias's most important empirical studies: *The Court Society*, *The Civilizing Process*, and *The Germans*, as well as his contributions to the sociology of knowledge, sports, community relations, and childhood. Throughout the book, Van Krieken never limits himself to presenting Elias's views and accepting them uncritically. On the contrary, he highlights some of the more problematic aspects of his work: the fact that his theory of civilization and state-formation seems to clash with the anthropological evidence about stateless, pre-industrial societies; the unresolved problem of 'civilised barbarism', or 'decivilising processes'; the possibility that he overemphasized blind, unintended processes over intentional action, or 'civilising offensives'; the lack of clarity about what exactly are his epistemological criteria for 'object-adequacy' or 'reality-congruence', as well as the ambiguity surrounding the ethical or political standpoint of his sociology, i.e. who gains control over whom through the achievement of emotionally 'detached' knowledge?

The author also suggests that, in Elias, one still finds a misguided continuation of the Hobbesian opposition between 'nature' and 'society', due to his constant stress on the socially acquired 'restraints' which have to tame aggressive human tendencies. With regard to this issue, however, I think Van Krieken is mistaken, for at least in some of the works which he does not discuss, such as the essay 'On Human Beings and their Emotions', as well as 'The Symbol Theory', Elias specifically argues that the classic dichotomy between 'nature' and 'society', or 'nature' and 'culture', is totally inaccurate, and must be replaced by conceptualizing human life as an ongoing process in which natural capacities and tendencies continuously interlock with social learning experiences. According to Van Krieken, 'Elias's own theoretical position is that human habitus is socially constituted' (p.133), but a more accurate statement of his position would be to say that the 'habitus' evolves out of the intertwining of biological and social processes. Elias often stated that there was no opposition between 'nature' and 'society', since newborn human beings cannot survive outside of a social unit in which they are fed, protected, loved, and taught how to orientate themselves by others, through the acquisition of symbols.

Van Krieken's fundamental conclusion, in any case, is that Elias's views are by no means settled, but that on the contrary, there is much room for refinement and correction

through further research. In the end, this is undoubtedly the best homage one can pay to him. After all, it was Elias who always stressed that he, like all scientists, was simply one link in a long historical chain of human generations, who are gradually accumulating and improving their knowledge about the world through constant investigations and revisions.

*Pablo Jáuregui*

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This timely small volume appears in the Routledge series 'Key Sociologists' and is intended as a basic introduction and contextualisation of Elias's approach. As such it is comprehensive and concise, as one would expect, while containing elements of originality. For example: Van Krieken chooses an order of presentation where the substantive themes of Elias's work - the most notable of which is, of course, the civilising process itself - do not take precedence over theoretical and methodological questions. This runs somewhat counter to Elias's own style, where theory was rarely 'self-consciously presented as such', and to the format that previous introductions have tended to adopt. After an 'Intellectual Sketch' (chapter 2), the author moves to elucidating Elias's position in relation to classic sociological problems (e.g. the structure/agency dichotomy, the 'problem of order') and introduces key concepts such as 'process', 'figuration', 'interdependence', 'habitus', and 'object-adequacy'. Van Krieken here stresses the originality in Elias's approach is perhaps not so much the concepts themselves, as the *synthesis* he achieved through the constant reference to a historical dimension; this synthesis, in turn, translates into a specific attitude - set of concerns, commitments or visions - in relation to both social and sociological problems (this attitude, if I may call it so, becomes the object of a broader critical assessment in the final chapter of the book). This format - where Elias's language is explicitly considered against the wider background of sociological thought - allows the reader to see at once both the embeddedness and the particularity of his approach, and to appreciate the full significance of the terms he chose in preference to more conventional ones. Only at this point does the book move on to the theme of 'civilising processes' (chapter 4) and its extensions into the sociology of knowledge,

of sport and leisure, and of childhood (chapter 5). The concluding section of each chapter is devoted to a lucid discussion of 'critiques', usefully summarised into a number of key points. These include a review of the challenges posed by Hans-Peter Duerr - especially useful since they are still mostly not translated - and a discussion of Elias's understanding of the politics of knowledge. Especially in this last domain, addressed again in the concluding chapter, Van Krieken rightly detects persisting ambiguities and unresolved tensions in Elias's thought; as a related point, the author mentions the near total lack of an explicitly gender-conscious appraisal of Elias, which may draw out hitherto neglected features of his arguments. The book closes with a note on 'reading Elias' that will guide newcomers to his vast body of work. To conclude, in my view Van Krieken thoroughly succeeds in providing a 'critical understanding' of the work of Elias, fair to both Elias and his critics, that points to the singularity of his approach and to the wide applicability of his concepts, without glossing over any of the difficulties that remain. For this reason, the book is to be welcomed not only by those who know little or nothing of Elias's ideas, but also by those who seek a guide to problematic aspects of his theory that call for further consideration, development, or correction. The focus on these critical aspects, I believe, will draw more readers to Elias rather than the contrary.

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## ■ RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

**Michael Schröter**, *Erfahrungen mit Norbert Elias: Gesammelte Aufsätze* [Experiences with Norbert Elias: Collected Essays]. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997.

After having translated a significant part of the writings of Anna Freud, Michael

Schröter came to work as a translator and soon also as an editor for Norbert Elias. Their relationship, from 1976 until 1990, when Elias died, had an intensity that I used to envy. They had lengthy arguments, they sometimes quarrelled. Whereas with me (and with other friends) Norbert could end a conversation by agreeing to disagree, by saying 'No Cas, you don't understand', or simply by subtly changing the subject, he would not do that with his translator and editor. In the course of this relationship, Schröter developed an intimate knowledge of both the work and the person of Norbert Elias. This is demonstrated in the two parts of this book: in the first part Schröter applies and discusses Elias's theory and analysis of civilising processes; in the second part he gives an account and a psychoanalytical interpretation of his experiences with Norbert Elias as a person. In both parts, he contributes original findings to the theory in a style of writing that is exceptionally clear and often exciting.

The chapters in the first part can be read as extensions of Schröter's book on medieval marriage (*Wo zwei zusammenkommen in rechter Ehe*, Suhrkamp 1985), a book that in my view deserves no less attention than the famous one by George Duby. The first chapter of the present book deals with changes in the social regulation of sexual behaviour from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, using new sources that show how fruitful it is to focus on the connection between state formation and affect control. Whereas early mechanisms of control mostly centred on direct guarding – in matters of sexuality this mainly meant the supervision of women – later the 'social constraint towards self-constraint' intensified. From examples of 'The Wildness and Taming of the Erotic Look among German Nobility in the Thirteenth Century', the second chapter presents a new and interesting demonstration of a change in this direction, establishing and enforcing inhibitions between the 'stimulus' of an erotic look and sexual seizure as a 'response'. The third chapter takes issue with Hans-Peter Duerr, who in all four volumes of his *The Myth of the Civilising Process* describes similarities through time and place in standards of shame, without taking any notice of differences between and developments in the relationships of power and dependency between men and women, or more generally between established and outsiders, nor of the processes of social shaming effected in those relationships. An example of the significance of these processes is that in figu-

rations with an uneven balance of power where, accordingly, the principle of mutual consent is not solidly anchored in the social code, women do not dare to look at men who are strangers to them, and certainly not into their eyes, as this is usually interpreted as an open invitation to sexual advances. Schröter clearly shows in his fourth chapter that empirical demonstrations of civilising spurts are possible, in a detailed study of 'the intimisation of wedding nights'. The last chapter of the first part consists of three short articles – on marriage, fatherly love and abortion – in which the same perspective is fruitfully used to understand some actual developments.

The second part of this book consists of three chapters in which Schröter aims at establishing connections between the work of Norbert Elias, the author, and the personality or – better – the process of Norbert Elias as a human being. It is richly sprinkled with various personal observations, connecting them to drives and motives in Elias's work. He observes, for instance, how Elias was pressured by his austere conscience constantly to revise his manuscripts, leaving many unfinished and habitually failing to meet deadlines, while at the same time this process of going over and over the same manuscript also had a creative aspect as it enabled him to keep in touch with deeper (preconscious) layers, allowing associative-productive ways of thinking. From the example of Elias, Schröter makes some significant, more general, observations on creative processes (including sublimation).

The last chapter, longer as well as more personal than the others, is centred on the question why Elias needed an editor. While the other chapters represent revised reprints of earlier publications, this one was especially written to conclude the book. Of its three chronological sections, the first one (1972–76) describes how and why Schröter came to work with Elias. The next section (1976–78) deals with the rapid transition from translator to private assistant. Although he experienced the latter position to a large extent as being a living dictaphone, Schröter was at the same time fascinated by the magic of creativity, which in Elias had a certain playfulness. The third section (1982–90) is proudly entitled 'Nine Books in Eight Years'. To produce these books, Schröter had to invade Elias's habitual privacy, which put the latter's confidence and self-restraint to the test. The story of how these books arose out of the co-operation and opposition between the author and his

editor I found fascinating. Schröter presents this book as his contribution to the Elias centenary and, at the same time, he presents a summation of what he calls the 'Elias chapter' of his professional life. After Elias died, Schröter finished editing Elias's book on Mozart, but he and the Norbert Elias Stichting could not come to an agreement about continuing this kind of work. He then turned to his old interest and today he has also made a name for himself as an historical sociologist of psychoanalysis. In this way, he continues to elaborate Elias's empirically orientated synthesis of sociology, psychoanalysis and history.

Cas Wouters  
University of Utrecht

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**Farhad Dalal**, *Taking the Group Seriously: Towards a Post-Foulkesian Group Analytic Theory*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1998. ISBN 1 85302 642 5.

Farhad Dalal is a training group analyst and supervisor for the Institute of Group Analysis, London. He is in private practice as a psychotherapist and group analyst, and is a member of the North East London Psychotherapy and Counselling Association and the Group Analytic Network. In this important book, he offers a critique and extension of the work of S.H. Foulkes, arguing that Foulkesian group analysis has yet to construct a coherent group analytic paradigm that gives ontological priority to the idea of a group over that of individuals, and thus take the notion of the group seriously. The author draws out two Foulkesian theories, one that is orthodox and remains in the individual psychoanalytic frame, and one that is radical and is used as the basis of a radical theory of groups. He proposes that Foulkes himself was unable to break free of his Freudian antecedents, and that the basis of a group analytic paradigm is to be found in the work of the sociologist Norbert Elias rather than Foulkes.

The book offers the philosophical and metapsychological foundations of a post-Foulkesian group analytic paradigm. Critical in this new account are the roles given to power relations, the social, and the history of social groups. One outcome of this is that the therapeutic project of group analysis is broadened to take account of notions of ideology and the roles they play in the structuring of the psyche. Drawing from a broad base of

material that includes the psychoanalytic theories of Freud, Klein, Matte-Blanco, Winnicott and Fairbairn, the work also incorporates insights from a number of disparate fields – discourse theory, evolutionary biology, philosophy and sociology – which are used to extend and develop the Foulkesian notion of the social unconscious. These ideas are used to rethink a number of central concepts in psychoanalysis and group analysis – for example group processes, the matrix, identity, the unconscious and the superego. The domains of ‘race’ and racism are used as a test ground for the ideas being developed, and this in turn sheds new light on notions of similarity and difference.

*Contents:* Foreword by Malcolm Pines; Introduction.; Chapter 1: Freud; Chapter 2: Foulkes; Chapter 3: Interlude between Foulkes and Elias; Chapter 4: Elias; Chapter 5: Biology; Chapter 6: Elements of a Post-Foulkesian Group Analytic Theory

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**Pieter Spierenburg** (ed), *Men and Violence: Gender, Honour and Rituals in Modern Europe and America*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1998. vii + 279 pp.

It is increasingly acknowledged that studying gender also means posing the problem of male culture and masculinity. This volume explores a crucial feature of male cultures: violence. Intimately related to male violence were notions of honour and the rituals they generated. Essays written by nine scholars shed light on these issues from different angles. They cover a period from the seventeenth century to the twentieth, in Europe and America. The introduction provides a long-term perspective, focusing on honour, gender and the body. It emphasises that conceptions of honour do change, creating the conditions under which male cultures may become less violence-prone. For its argument, the introduction (as well as some of the other contributions) relies, among others, on the theoretical work of Elias.

The duel, a major example of ritualised male violence, was revived in the nationalist world of the late nineteenth century. Its practitioners were respectable bourgeois men, who fought ‘civilised’ duels often involving little bloodshed. The popular – that is, lower-class – duel is a novel historical discovery. Honour codes were crucial in the

popular duel, too, but it was fought with knives. The evidence on ritual knife fights enhances our understanding of lower-class people’s own conceptions of honour. With firemen’s violence, Antebellum America witnessed a collective form of the popular duel. The final part discusses the role of the state, curbing male violence in England, but condoning the terror of lynching in the Postbellum South. To see why lynching occurred requires attention to traditional notions of honour and masculinity among whites. Thus, the analyses of duels and lynchings are mutually enlightening.

This volume may appeal in particular to anthropologists studying honour, and, because of its focus on masculinity, to everyone dealing with gender issues, including women’s history. Other readers of *Figurations* may be attracted to the volume’s Eliasian focus on long-term change. Finally, this book hopes to provide a historical background to discussions about violence in contemporary society.

*Contents:* Pieter Spierenburg, Introduction: Masculinity, violence and honour; The Long Term; Ute Frevert, The taming of the noble ruffian: Male violence and duelling in early modern and modern Germany; Steven Hughes, Men of steel: Duelling, honour and politics in liberal Italy; Robert Nye, The end of the modern French duel; Pieter Spierenburg, Knife fighting and popular codes of honour in early modern Amsterdam; Daniele Boschi, Homicide and knife fighting in Rome, 1845–1914; Amy Greenberg, Fights/fires: Violent firemen in the nineteenth-century American city; Martin Wiener, The Victorian criminalisation of men; Stephen Kantrowitz, White supremacist justice and the rule of law: Lynching, honour and the state in Ben Tillman’s South Carolina; Terence Finnegan, ‘The equal of some white men and the superior of others’: Masculinity and the 1916 lynching of Anthony Crawford in Abbeville County, South Carolina.

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**Sue Dopson**, *Managing Ambiguity and Change: the Case of the NHS*, Macmillan, 1997, 172pp.

The central object of this book is to address some of the more theoretical issues involved in the analysis of ‘managed social change’, that is to say, change which has been deliberately initiated with the specific

objective of achieving some formally stated policy goal. The vehicle chosen by Dopson to explore these theoretical issues is the introduction of general management in the British National Health Service (NHS) following the publication of the Griffiths Report. Dopson’s book will be of interest to process sociologists since it is one of the relatively few books which uses a figurational approach to understand organisational change and health care systems.

Dopson’s analysis is firmly grounded in a longitudinal and qualitative approach which involved, amongst other sources of data collection, detailed and repeated interviews with twenty newly appointed district general managers. Her central finding – and it is this which forms the focus of her book – is that the implementation of general management within the NHS did not work out in the way in which its architect, Sir Roy Griffiths, or the government had intended; there were a number of unanticipated consequences of the introduction of general management and, at least in some cases, these were not only unexpected but were actually the opposite of what had been intended and hoped for by those responsible for initiating these changes.

These unanticipated outcomes are perhaps best illustrated by Dopson’s case study of the implementation by one general manager of a strategy designed to improve mental health services in his district. The strategy was developed following criticism of the existing provision and was intended, amongst other things, to shift the balance of care away from a hospital-based service; to develop the local community as a resource in the provision of psychiatric care; to reduce the centrality of psychiatrists and increase the involvement of para- and social work professions in the provision of care; and to establish the new district manager’s authority by demonstrating the effectiveness of the new management structure. However, the planned strategy was successfully resisted both by senior consultants and by members of the local community. As a consequence, both the continued importance of the ‘hospital approach’ to mental health care and the continued power of doctors to influence the outcome of change were emphasised; members of the para-professions and social services were marginalised and became disaffected; many members of the local community became more hostile towards plans for care in the community; and the authority of the new general manager and the value of the new management structure were called into question.

The question then arises of how we can best account for the gap between the intentions and aspirations expressed in the Griffiths Report, and what the introduction of general management was able to deliver. Dopson notes that those who have written about managerial change, both within the health service and more generally, have usually chosen to emphasise the degree to which 'effective' managers can manage change so that, within fairly narrowly defined limits, the outcomes are more or less those which were intended. The idea that 'good' managers can effectively control what happens within their organisations is, of course, a longstanding part of management ideology. The reality, however, as Dopson convincingly demonstrates, is that particularly in large organisations, managers are involved in complex and far-flung networks of interdependency of which they are only partially aware and which they are, as individuals, unable to control.

It is thus important to understand these unanticipated outcomes of complex process of change not as outcomes which occur when, atypically, 'something goes wrong', but as the normal outcomes of the processes of policy formation and implementation. In seeking to understand the normality of these unanticipated outcomes, Dopson draws upon Elias's work on the complex interrelationship between planned and unplanned processes of change and, in particular, his work on games models; indeed, her application of Elias's games models to understanding 'managed change' is an excellent illustration of how useful the games models can be in shedding light on an empirical problem. In this respect, it can be said that Dopson's book makes a valuable and distinctive contribution both to figurational sociology, and to our understanding of health care management, and indeed wider organisational, issues.

Ivan Waddington

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**Michael Krüger**, *Körperkultur und Nationsbildung: Die Geschichte des Turnens in der Reichsgründungsära – eine Detailstudie über die Deutschen*. Schorndorf: Verlag Karl Hoffman, 1996, pp. 445 ISBN 3-7780-6731-1

Michael Krüger researches into the development of the German *Turn*-movement

during the nineteenth century - especially within the period of the *Reichsgründungsära* (1860-1870; foundation of the German Empire 1871). He deals with the subject of the social differentiation process of *Turnen*, and how the *Turn* movement was involved in the formation of the German nation and state whilst being active as a cultural and political group. The author employs a three stage model of development as a framework: (1) the early *Turn*-movement of Jahn including the first *Turn*-club period (about 1820-1840); (2) politicisation of the *Turn*-movement culminating during the revolution of 1848-49; (3) adaptation of the *Turn*-movement to the so-called *Restoration*, and its increasing integration into the *Reichsgründungsära*.

Krüger conceptualises his historical analysis as grounded methodologically on a *history of society* (*Gesellschafts-geschichte*). He looks for and emphasises 'models of social relations', oriented towards Norbert Elias's theory of the civilising process, applying this concept as an open method for the interpretation of historical sources. Employing these methodological principles Krüger inquires by means of detailed and systematic analysis into documents, books, contributions up to practical and theoretical 'concepts of bodily movements' grounded on *Turn*-activities. The author presents and sums up the results of his studies on two connected levels.

(1) The effects of the *Turn*-movement relating to nation building in Germany (1860-1870) had been the following (pp. 416-22): *Turnen* established a central social factor of the 'bourgeois club character' in general (institutionalisation of corresponding values/norms); *Turn*-clubs had been founded as social spaces of affecting national identity ('we feeling'); development of primarily bourgeois oriented aims of culture and education combined with forms of 'civil militarisation'; *Turn*-clubs offered social spaces to lower middle class persons and craftsmen where they could have experiences based on the 'idea of nation' as a 'matter for all people'; members of the *Turn*-clubs and teachers in schools created patterns of a 'national education' involved in a programme of a 'general education'; in this respect they started and differentiated processes of pedagogisation, rationalisation, scientification, professionalisation within the fields of *Turnen* (clubs, schools); *Turn*-movement institutionalised forms of communication wherein people overcame cultural traditions, and explored

advanced possibilities of communication; within this process of personal and social emancipation they created a 'national body language' of a peaceful *Turnen*, playing, dancing, and at the same time of 'aggressive, paramilitary exercises' referring to the idea of a *Volksheer* (people's army).

(2) The *Turn*-movement generated a specific expression of 'German Habitus'. They formalised and transformed *Turn*-behaviour towards civilised standards which on the one hand had been grounded on 'secondary military virtue'. But during the period of establishing the 'German Empire' (1860-1871) the members of the *Turn*-movement did not maintain its political function which they had realised during the revolutionary phase (culminating in 1848-49). Increasingly they became political outsiders, and shifted from a former political opposition to a state supporting national and cultural group dominated by males. They adapted to the *Wilhelminisches Establishment* (Kaiser Wilhelm I), and did not co-operate with ideologically advancing groups such as the workers' movement (which included *Turnen* and Sport) or politically liberal opposition organisations (1880s, 1890s).

Here I cannot give a more detailed critical acknowledgement of Krüger's study. But I can say that the author makes a major contribution to historical, cultural, and social research into the German *Turn*-movement in the nineteenth century. The work is historiographically excellent, elaborated and systematically differentiated. But, although he refers in outline to Elias's theory of civilisation, Krüger does not conceptualise methodological consequences. It is not sufficient to mention and apply sociological process terms at the beginning and end of an inquiry. One has to transform them into theoretically and empirically employable research methods. On the basis of Krüger's historically important contribution to the German *Turngeschichte*, further sociological investigation into the social field of sports history ought to be pursued

Bero Rigauer

Carl-von-Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg

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**Monica Greco**, *Illness as a Work of Thought – A Foucauldian Perspective on Psychosomatics* London: Routledge, 1998.

As the subtitle indicates, the book adopts a methodological perspective based on the

work of Michel Foucault. Fans of Elias, however, will find here an entire chapter (chapter 1) devoted to comparing Elias and Foucault on the different ways in which each of their approaches may inflect the question: What makes 'psychosomatic illness' a specifically modern problem? Figurational perspectives are also discussed in chapter 8, as a way of contextualizing new forms of emotional self-management and pathology.

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**Stefanie Ernst**, *Machtbeziehungen zwischen den Geschlechtern: Wandlungen der Ehe im 'Prozess der Zivilisation'*. (Power Relations between the Sexes: Changes in Marriage in the 'Civilising Process'). Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996, 192 pp. ISBN: 3-531-12803-5

Stefanie Ernst's research topic is the changing power relation between the sexes, which she traces by analysing an institutionalised form of this relationship: marriage. Her detailed research covers the development of different, partly competing forms of marriage from the early Middle Ages up to the present. Marriage is Ernst's focus because it 'reflects the inequality between the sexes which is socially embedded within law, economy, norms and world views' (p. 40; translation H.H.) The first chapter serves to establish the theoretical framework of her study: the relationship between the sexes is defined as a changing power balance, using Elias's relational concept after contrasting it with Weber's classic approach and Luhmann's more recent concept of power as a medium of communication. This relational concept of power allows her to analyse the relationship between the sexes, on the basis of Elias's theory of civilising processes, in interdependence with social changes, applying a process-sociological method. Chapter 2, as the major part of the empirical study, describes the socio- and psychogenesis of marriage from feudal knightly society, to absolutist court society and, finally, bourgeois society, successfully linking the changes in marriage with the social processes of state formation and the intertwined processes of increasing drive and affect control by concentrating on two functions of marriage: marriage as an economic combination and as a relationship serving to organise sexual and affective needs and behaviour. This makes it possible to bring out the power balances between men and

women both on a social and on an intra-marital level, linking a micro- and a macro-perspective. One of her central theses deals with the ambivalent role of the Church in respect to the position of women: marriage is crucial to the power contest between the church and the secular upper class. The form of marriage pushed through by the church reduces male sexual privileges and increases the value of married women, yet it also passes on the contempt for women by marking them as more liable to sin and reinforces the subordinated economic and social position of women. Absolutist society allows a small change of the power balance in favour of women mainly due to the pacification and civilisation of affects reducing the use of physical violence, yet this is taken back by bourgeois society, where the ideal of love implies the complete devotion of women.

Chapter 3 gives a comparatively short yet comprehensive survey of both emancipatory movements and ongoing discrimination on a social level, and conflicting expectations within the personality structures of men and women. A brief summary and prospective look forward at further developments on the basis of increasing unemployment conclude the study. With her analysis of the changing power balances between men and women, Ernst fills in an almost 'blind spot' of Elias's *The Civilising Process*, using both his initial thoughts and scattered remarks and his method to give an extensive account of these changes and thus developing further his theory of civilising processes. She also contributes significantly to feminist theories in conceptualising the relationship between the sexes as an unequal, but non-static, relational power balance, and gives a framework for analysing this power relation and the role of marriage in a civilising process that is still 'under way'.

*Heike Hammer*  
University of Hamburg

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**Paul Nixon**, *Sociality-Music Dance: Human Figurations in a Transylvanian Valley*. Skrifter från Institutionen för Musikvetenskap 34, Gothenburg: Göteborgs Universitet 1998. xxvii + 636 pp. ISBN: 91 85974 49-8; ISSN: 0348-0879. Price Stg £30.00 + p.& p.

This book is an attempt to break new ground in its appraisal of communist and post-communist figurations: it acknowledges complex human inter-weavings bound up in

structures surrounding and supporting vernacular imaginative expression; it identifies satisfactions, pleasures and frustrations, the implementation and collapse of authoritarian designs on music-making and dance in changing forms of personal relations, shifting power balances over the period 1979-1995. It is written primarily for process-sociological, anthropological, socio-musicological, and socio-choreological specialists, though discussions hold something also for students of other historically-sensitive disciplines.

The author seeks to combine regional investigation with illumination of intricacies emanating from government and international relations. First-hand experience of State Folklorism throughout 1979 led to a countenancing of the dogmatic character of Marxist-Leninist social policy in general, Romanian isolation from theoretical questions explored elsewhere, and researchers' inabilities to investigate troubled established-and-outsiders legacies between Hungarian-speaking and Romanian-speaking villagers; and between those groups and settled communities of Gypsies, providers of music-making at dances convened for the pleasure of majority populations.

A multi-stranded enquiry is engaged in an attempt to achieve sociological synthesis. Bridging macro levels of communist didacticisms and micro levels of village life, tensions of power holds and mutual identification are observed between interdependent groups. The approach amplifies ethnographic materials from Béla Bartók and extends Norbert Elias's perceptions of civilising processes. Social adaptations are charted, far from uniform ideals, expectations and tolerances that emerged during fieldwork. And sentiments of aversion, pride, envy, fear, collective self-love, hatred of other groups, defensiveness of or contempt for varying attitudes to violence, body-washing, dietary habits, excretory practices, amatory customs and pair-formation, socially-approved excitement arousal, extrovert funerary conventions. Communist Party edicts receive operational attention, manipulative strategies which could not be discussed with many Romanian and Western social scientists until the mid-1990s, for example, the politicisation of Folklore during the period 1948-1989, and distorted accounts of Transylvanian history.

This sociology of knowledge approach is little encountered in area-studies reports of aesthetic activity; nor in accounts of Leninist societies and the hectic flux which has characterised collapse of dictatorial struc-

tures. How far this book achieves its ambitious objective in venturing across specialist fields is not something on which critics are likely to agree. It will have done much of its work if it points the way for other non-idealising past-and-present syntheses which address the dynamics of political centralism and monopolistic demands on artistic expression as well as elucidating multi-personal relations at face-to-face level.

Copies of the book may be ordered from the author: Dr Paul J. Nixon, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Cambridge, Free School Lane, Cambridge CB2 3RQ. E-mail: pn203@cam.ac.uk

**John Rundell and Stephen Mennell, eds,** *Classical Readings in Culture and Civilisation*. London: Routledge, 1998. viii + 248pp. ISBN: 0-415-10516-1 (HB); 0-415-10517-x (PB).

This book traces the genealogy of intellectual debates about 'civilisation' and 'culture' in Britain, France, Germany and America from the late eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century. It includes excerpts from the writings of Kant, Ferguson, Jefferson, Tocqueville, Schiller, Nietzsche, Simmel, Thomas Mann, Freud, Durkheim and Mauss, Lucien Febvre, Robert Park and Norbert Elias. Perhaps of particular interest is the long 1921 essay by Alfred Weber in which he sketches what was to become *Kulturgeschichte als Kultursociologie* (1935). Remarkably little of Alfred Weber's work has appeared in English translation; the typescript of this essay, translated by Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration in the 1930s, languished unpublished at Columbia University for more than half a century.

**Jean-Bernard Ouédraogo,** *Violences et communautés en Afrique noire*. [Violence and Community in Black Africa] Paris, L'Harmattan, 1997. 240pp. ISBN: 2-7384-5848-3

The subtitle of this illuminating study is 'The Comoé region between modes of competition and logics of destruction'. It takes its departure from the 1995 inter-communal massacres in Burkina-Fasso but goes on to draw on a wealth of historical and social scientific

literature, including the works of Norbert Elias, Pierre Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron and others to throw light on the 'processes of violence' involved. This wide ranging study represents a major contribution to understanding violence in general, and it is especially fascinating for its application of Elias's work and other views of European development to contemporary Africa.

**Tom Inglis,** *Moral Monopoly: The Rise and Fall of the Catholic Church in Ireland*. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1998. viii + 312 pp. ISBN: 1-900621-12-6

The Catholic Church in Ireland has played a dominant role in every aspect of Irish society for a very long time. In a brilliant updated version of his classic *Moral Monopoly* (first published in 1987) Inglis shows how the Catholic Church has been in decline in Ireland especially since the late 1980s.

The first section of the book discusses how the Church came to hold such a powerful position in the first place and the mechanisms it used to maintain this power. Inglis argues that Irish Catholics have higher levels of institutional adherence than their western European counterparts but that this, even combined with the organisational strength of the Catholic Church, is not adequate to explain its power and monopoly over Irish society. One needs to examine how the Church controlled and influenced the social, economic and political aspects of Irish society as well, and here Inglis draws on Pierre Bourdieu's accounts of symbolic power and cultural capital.

Drawing on the work of Norbert Elias, Inglis shows how the Irish civilising process was undertaken in and through the Catholic Church. 'The church, family and community with the priest at the head became major power blocs and alliances in Irish society' (p. 152). The priest was the model of a civilised agent in Irish society – what Blanshard in 1954 called the 'moral policeman'. Controlling and regulating sex was central to maintaining the church's power. There were different ways of achieving this such as through penitentials, the education system, parish visitation. But the most important and probably the strongest link the church had in gaining and maintaining control was, according to

Inglis, the Irish mother. It was the women who were the main targets of the confessional where the priests would question them on their sexual activities or thoughts and administer suitable penances. 'The sexual moralisation process became centred upon gaining control of women's sex' (pp. 145–6).

Not only did they control this aspect of women's lives, but also used the Irish mother to spread these beliefs throughout her family. She was a tool in the crafty manoeuvres of the Church to gain power. The ability of the church to control what its members did and said depended on children being brought up in accordance with these teachings and so the indoctrination process had to begin at home. Through parish visitations the priest gained detailed knowledge of the moral and social goings-on of his parishioners, and, since the priest was the most powerful person who regularly visited the Irish mother, a close and trusting relationship built up.

In addition to revising all the earlier chapters, Inglis has written an additional chapter which examines the breakdown of the power of the Catholic Church in Irish society. He believes that the church is no longer the conscience of the Irish people and that Catholics are now more likely to make up their minds on what is right and wrong by what they hear discussed in the media rather than by priests. Inglis found direct evidence of the Catholic Church having declined significantly in the last decade. 'The media have driven a stake into the heart of the institutional Church from which it will recover, but never fully' (p. 257).

Although there has been a dramatic decline in the Church's power in recent decades, in the last chapter Inglis – returning to Bourdieu – argues that the Catholic Church still has considerable influence in the religious field and also continues to have a certain influence in defining the character of Irish social life in terms of 'people attaining social, cultural and symbolic capital' (p. 13).

*Aoife Rickard*  
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**Peter Burke,** 'Civilisation, Discipline and Disorder: Three Case studies in History



and Social Theory', *Theoria* June 1996, pp. 21–35.

In this article the prominent socio-cultural historian Peter Burke (University of Cambridge) discusses the relation between history and social theory with reference to three books by authors who emerged from very different cultures and disciplines: Elias's *The Civilising Process*, Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, and Bakhtin's *Rabelais and his World*. He contends that Elias and Foucault 'each compensate for the weakness of the other'; Foucault may be described as turning Elias on his head. 'Elias emphasised self-control, Foucault state control. Elias accepted the idea of social or cultural evolution, while Foucault followed Nietzsche in rejecting it ... Bakhtin, like Foucault, disliked the disciplinary society ... but he preferred to concentrate on disorder, ... especially the playful reversal of the normal order of things.'

**Kuzmics, Helmut**, 'Zur Soziogenese der österreichischen Mentalität', in Max Preglau and Rudolf Richter, eds., *Postmodernes Österreich?* Vienna, Signum, 1998, pp. 23-44.

Helmut Kuzmics writes on authority and Austrian 'national character', its continuity and changes from the monarchy to the present.

**Watson, J.L. (ed.)**, *Golden Arches East*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Eric Jones writes to point out how this collection of essays on the impact of MacDonalds fast-food outlets in the Far East can be read in the light of Elias's theory. It shows (among other things) how MacDonalds subjects people to Western 'civilising' pressures in relation to such matters as queuing, clean toilets, and table manners.

**P. N. Stearns & J. Lewis (eds)**, *An Emotional History of the United States*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

A fascinating collection of recent research on the history of emotions in America, including Cas Wouters's 'Etiquette Books and Emotion

Management in the Twentieth Century' (pp. 283–304).

**W. Ludwig Mayerhofer** 'Discipline or distinction? On the interpretation of Norbert Elias's Theory of the Civilising Process', *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 50 (2) 1998.

The persistent popularity of the sociology of Norbert Elias (especially in Europe) is largely due to his theory of the Civilising Process. In a critical discussion of this theory, this paper first points out gaps that cast doubts on Elias's claim that his theory can account for developments from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century. Above all, the question is raised whether twentieth-century developments can be adequately understood in Elias's picture of 'civilised' man restricted by a tight super-ego and increasing barriers of shame and embarrassment; a lack of decrease of violence as well as processes of pluralisation and relaxation of norms of conduct stand in stark contrast to this picture. It is argued that Elias outlined four processes underpinning the development of 'civilisation', and that all four processes were conceptualized in terms of societal integration and individual restrictions ('discipline'). However, these processes could be interpreted in different terms ('distinction'), and thus the one-sidedness of Elias's account may be overcome.

**J. Maguire and L. Mansfield**, "'No-body's perfect": Women, aerobics, and the body beautiful', *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 1998, 15 (2) 1998: 109–137.

This paper seeks to synthesise aspects of feminism and figurational (process) sociology. Women's bodies are viewed as sites for studying interrelationships between power, gender, and identity construction. The behavioural and emotional rituals of women in a specific aerobics class are mapped out and located within the 'exercise-body beautiful complex.' We explore the way in which social constraints and individual self-control interweave in the rationalised management of women's bodies. The embodied experiences of these women are intertwined with long term enabling and constraining features. Covertly disempowering, the 'exer-

cise-body beautiful complex' reinforces established standards of femininity. The realignment of dominant images of femininity is advocated in order to extend the liberating features of the figuration in question.

## ■ RECENT CONFERENCES

### EARLY MODERN HISTORY AND THE 'CIVILISING PROCESS' University of Leicester, 14–16 April 1998

Over seventy scholars from five disciplines (History, Sociology, Anthropology, Art History, and Literary Criticism) and seven nations (Britain, Ireland, United States, Holland, Italy, France and Denmark) gathered in Leicester on 14-16 April 1998 to discuss 'The Civilising Process and Early Modern History'. Organised by Leicester historians, the conference was a most rewarding cross-disciplinary experience, notable for its warm, constructive and exhilarating debates in conference rooms, across dining tables, and in bars. Indeed, the only flicker of tension between disciplines was on the third morning of the conference, when Professor Eric Dunning was seen narrowly to miss scraping the car of one of the organising historians as he sped into a parking spot on his way, it must be said, to deliver a most stimulating and entertaining plenary lecture.

The root-motivation for the conference were the continuing significance of the 'civilising process' for the nature of society between 1500 and 1800, and Norbert Elias's arguably still under-recognised contribution to the development of sociology at Leicester both as a member of staff and a fund of inspiring ideas. The conference was organised around six principal themes, all of which were either squarely addressed in *The Civilising Process*, or have become subject to its powerful explanatory frameworks. The six areas for consideration were: punishment, personal appearance and grooming, art and culture, domestic relations and self-control. Peter Burke, Martin Albrow, Eric Dunning, and Pieter Spierenburg contributed plenary addresses. Richard Brown delivered a highly amusing and informative talk after the conference dinner.

Participants were encouraged to cross disciplines, to reflect more generally on the many-sided relations between history, literature, art, and the social sciences, as well as commenting on their particular aspect of the early modern past. It would be more or less fair to say that the 'civilising process'

emerged intact from three days of debate. Some speakers felt that it still provided first-rate building bricks for explaining early modern contexts and concepts; others preferred to sample more selectively, and focus on particular aspects of Elias's exposition; still others, expressed rather more caution and, in some cases, a constructive scepticism, testing the limits of applying Elias. The enthusiasm of every participant was plain to see: the conference over, it was clear that debates had been energised and challenged through fresh perspectives on new and old issues. And these conversations continue.

Following Peter Burke's opening plenary, we began with punishment. Richard Evans, Jim Sharpe, and Pieter Spierenburg reminded us of just how contested, creative, and complicated this hotly-debated subject has become. The session on personal grooming covered clothing, dressing, costume books and embodiment, beards, hair and the expression of the self (Margaret Pelling, Andrew Gordon, Philip Carter). Texts and visual images were discussed by Mary Hamer, Warren Butcher, Colin Keaveney, and Stephen Mennell; a feast of culinary cultures, Turkish styles, and Montaigne. Warren Butcher raised the question: 'Do books civilise?'

We then turned our attention to domestic relations, and we were treated to a first-rate paper by Fay Bound on love and the letter in England, 1660-1760, a state-of-the-art review of the early modern family by Keith Wrightson, and a fascinating sense of the possibilities of Elias's ideas for the study of service. The state and the court were examined through visualisations of the eighteenth century maritime nation, early steps in the formation of the English state, and the connections between absolutism, etiquette, and the roots of French identity (Geoff Quilley, Steve Hindle, Robert Muchembled). Finally, the parting shot was a stimulating discussion of mentalities and civility. Mark Jenner discussed civilisation and deodorisation; David Gentilcore mapped legal figurations of medical practice and discourse; Markku Peltonen returned to the early modern duel; and Jonathan Walker breathed fresh life into debates about noble violence and ceremony in early modern Venice.

We managed to get through a great deal in just over forty-eight hours, but it was well worth it. It was an unusually coherent conference, not least because numbers were tactically limited, parallel sessions were dropped for their splintering effects, and Elias provided a strong backbone. The participants must all be congratulated for the quality of

their contributions. A selection of the papers will be published. Fourteen essays will appear in *Revisiting Elias: Early Modern History and the 'Civilising Process'* (eds., Nicholas Davidson and Paul Griffiths). We hope to publish *Revisiting Elias* with Polity Press, the stable for so many of Elias's own works. A conference on leisure and free-time – areas of human experience in which Elias was not a little interested – is being planned for April 2000 in Leicester.

*Paul Griffiths*

Department of Economic and Social History  
University of Leicester

### **SOMMES-NOUS CIVILISÉS? – BILAN DU XXe SIÈCLE Société des Gens de Lettres, Paris, 10 April 1998.**

This one-day conference was organised by Alain Garrigou of the Université de Paris X – Nanterre. Presiding at the morning session was Howard S. Becker (University of Washington). Jack Goody, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Cambridge, presented a paper on 'Civilisation and Modernisation: A Critical Assessment', the critical assessment centring on Elias's theory of civilising processes as it applies to Africa; Goody, himself a West African specialist, had encountered Norbert Elias in Ghana in 1962–64. In a paper entitled 'The Paradox of Pacification', Johan Goudsblom responded sympathetically to Jack Goody, and one had a sense that there was at least a partial meeting of minds. Other speakers included: Alain Garrigou on 'The lost sense of history: how to recount the twentieth century'; Peter Gleichmann (Hanover) on 'Are humans able to stop killing one another?' (in which he introduced the chilling concept of 'thanatogenetic industries'); and Stephen Mennell on 'Decivilising processes: the state of the debate', in which he reported on his discussions with Godfried van Benthem van den Bergh about that troublesome notion.

### **Norbert Elias and the Social Sciences at the End of the Twentieth Century International Symposium in Bucaramanga, Colombia, 24–26 June 1998.**

This conference was organised by Vera Weiler of the National University in

Bogotá. The conference was supported by the Industrial University of Santander in Bucaramanga and the National University of Colombia. Invited speakers were: José Esteban Castro, Peter Gleichman, Johan Goudsblom, Fred Spier, Pieter Spierenburg, Willem Mastenbroek and Cas Wouters.

The conference was well attended; about 50 participants were expected, but in fact more than 200 people participated from universities all over Colombia. After each lecture there were many questions and some very lively discussions which often had to do with the tensions and conflicts in Colombian society. The conference papers were translated into Spanish and have already been published in a fine volume: Vera Weiler (ed), *Figuraciones en Proceso*, Fundación Social, Santa Fé de Bogotá, 1998. The many participants and the great interest in the conference book can be seen as symptomatic of the rapidly growing interest among Latin

American social scientists in the work of Elias. It seems to me there is a kind of barrier in the social sciences between the English and the Spanish speaking parts of the world. The conference was experienced as an opportunity to bridge this barrier.

The participants represented a wide range of disciplines; among them many historians and sociologists. Historians especially are showing a great interest. This resembles the situation I have encountered in other Latin American countries. Historians seem to take a prominent position when it comes to introducing innovative approaches in the social sciences. How does this compare with the situation elsewhere?

*Willem Mastenbroek*

Vrije Universiteit van Amsterdam

### **WORLD CONGRESS OF SOCIOLOGY Montreal 26 July-1 August 1998**

#### **AD HOC SESSIONS ON FIGURATIONAL SOCIOLOGY**

The *Ad Hoc* Group on Figurational sociology proceeded smoothly and productively despite the absence of one of its main organizers, Paul Nixon (Cambridge). The sessions took place over two afternoons and were both well attended, with a broad range of themes being discussed on each occasion. On the first day, Dennis Smith (Aston University) opened the session with a paper on Elias and the new Europe, where he outlined

how *The Court Society* might help us understand the sociogenesis of the European movement. He was followed by Chris Shilling (University of Portsmouth) with a paper on 'Sensual socialities and the embodied bases of knowledge', discussing the sociological traditions that allow for a conceptualization of sensual embodiment. Catelijne Akkermans (University of Amsterdam) presented a paper written and researched by herself and Wouter Gomperts, on developments in municipal health care in Amsterdam between 1933 and 1988. The paper was based on the study of clinical archives, and discussed the apparent changes in clinical presentations over this medium-term period. Patricia Mulready, one of the chairs for this session with Monica Greco, presented her ongoing research on fashion. Day one was concluded by Joseph Maguire (Loughborough University) with a paper on 'Sport, identity politics and national habitus', illustrated to great effect with examples from the recent World Cup among others. The second session was opened by Monica Greco (Goldsmiths College, London) with a paper on 'alexithymia' entitled "Without words for emotions": on pathogenic normality, which discussed the rise to prominence of this clinical phenomenon in recent medical/psychiatric literature. Stephen Mennell (University College, Dublin) followed, on 'Network theory and the social constraint towards self-constraint', during which he introduced Elias' diagram for a figuration – allegedly in the shape of 'false teeth' – to those of us who had not come across it before. Bram de Swaan (University of Amsterdam) discussed mass extermination in modern societies and proposed a revision of Elias's account of the Holocaust, by introducing the notion of dys-civilizing processes. Robert van Krieken (University of Sydney) closed this session with a close discussion of the critical positions of Hans-Peter Duerr.

At the end of the two sessions signatures were collected to upgrade the Figurations Group from an *Ad Hoc* to a Working Group of the International Sociological Association.

Monica Greco  
Goldsmiths College

## ■ FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

### On Time: History, Science, Commemoration

The Royal Historical Society announces a conference entitled 'On Time: History, Science, Commemoration', to be held on

16–19 September 1999 at the Merseyside Maritime Museum in the historic Albert Dock in the heart of Liverpool.

Thirty-minute papers are invited on 'many aspects of the history and science of time, including: creation stories, calendars and timetables, commemorations, work time and other units of time, the scientific measurement of time, cultures of time, religion and time, nostalgia, the past and the future.'

Brief proposals should be sent to Dr Roger Quinault, Honorary Secretary, Royal Historical Society, University College London, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT. Telephone/Fax: +44-171-387 7532.

This conference would appear to be highly relevant to anyone pursuing research under the influence of Elias's *Time: An Essay*.

### European Sociological Association Fourth European Conference of Sociology WILL EUROPE WORK? 18-21 August, 1999, Amsterdam

The European Sociological Association hosts its fourth conference on 18-21 August, 1999 at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The conference theme is *Will Europe Work?* The theme will be explored focusing particularly on the issues of work and inequalities, constructing identities and institutions, and Europe's working in the world in the process of the unification of Europe.

*Call for papers:* Abstracts of papers (not exceeding 250 words) should be sent not later than 15 January, 1999 to the conference secretariat:

SISWO  
Plantage Muidergracht 4  
1018 TV Amsterdam  
The Netherlands

### XV World Congress of Sociology Brisbane 8-12 July 2002

This is looking a long way ahead! At the close of the World Congress in Montreal in July 1998, it was decided that instead of having an *Ad Hoc* Group on Figuration

Sociology as at Bielefeld and Montreal we should request that two new Thematic Groups be established within the International Sociological Association. One will be on 'Civilisation', the other on 'Historical Sociology', and we hope that the two groups will be able to collaborate in promoting sessions at the next world congress in Brisbane in 2002.

Besides this we hope that the ISA will agree to there being a **Symposium on 'The Comparative Study of Empires'**. Johann Arnason of La Trobe University (Melbourne) has offered to act as co-ordinator of the symposium.

He writes: The comparative analysis of imperial formation is one of the most strikingly underdeveloped themes of historical sociology. S.N Eisenstadt's pioneering study, first published in 1963, has not been followed by any work of comparable scope. In the context of Eisenstadt's own project, *The Political Systems of Empires* was the transitional text, followed by the development of a civilisational theory whose potential for the topic in question has yet to be fully utilised. Other schools in the field have failed to confront the problem in a systematic fashion. In particular, the seminal contribution of figurational sociology to the analysis of state formation has so far had a limited impact in this area.

The symposium should take stock of recent work in the field and explore some key themes; if possible, it should include historians and/or area specialists. It would focus on theoretical issues as well as on some particularly important cases. On the theoretical side, three questions would seem most significant: The study of empires from the viewpoint of the comparative analysis of civilisations; the importance of imperial formations for the relativisation or deconstruction of the distinction between tradition and modernity; and the problematic of imperial state formation, with particular emphasis on the figurational paradigm. On the substantive side, the most obvious examples to consider would be the Roman, Chinese, Ottoman, Habsburg and Russian empires, as well as the European overseas colonial empires, with regard to the dynamics of state formation at home as well as overseas.

Readers interested – even at this early stage – in taking part in the proposed Symposium on *The Comparative Study of Empires* should contact:

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## ■ CIVILISATION AND VIOLENCE

Although violence should be prominent among the central themes of the social sciences, it does not play a major role in most important contemporary social theories. The problem of violence is either considered solved (legal state monopoly of violence) or is pushed to the edge of society (then it is a relic of pre-modern times or something pathological). Consequently there has occurred an opposition between modernity and violence: Western civilisation in its self-image is regarded as a non-violent modernity - despite the fact that the twentieth century in particular has been a century of violence.

At present I am investigating the relationship between civilisation, violence and the various decivilising processes of this century and I intend to finish that investigation in form of my *Habilitationsschrift* in spring 1999. After some introductory discussion of the sociology of violence, and of the terms civilisation, culture and modernity under the aspect of violence, I focus on the different approaches of classical civilisational theories. I have therefore chosen to compare the theories of Sigmund Freud, Max and Alfred Weber, Norbert Elias and Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno systematically under the following aspects: What do these persons mean by civilisation or culture and what direction does the process of civilisation take? What is their understanding of violence? With which kinds and forms of violence are the authors concerned in their theories? How do they construct the relationship between civilisation and violence? Are they able to integrate violence logically into the systematic core of their theories and, if not, what are the contradictions and ambivalence resulting from this? What kind of relationship exists between their approaches and the manifold and repeated processes of decivilisation in the twentieth century? Of special interest for my study is the question of how and to what extent these authors contribute to an understanding of the macro-crimes of the century (like the two World Wars, the Holocaust, the Gulag system in the former Soviet Union) as

the most important test cases for the maturity of civilised behaviour among humankind. In the case of those authors who did not experience these events in their lifetime, I will look for possible explanations for these horrors that might emerge from their theories in retrospect. By systematically reconstructing their approaches I will attempt to explain the considerable differences among them, including specific justifications for their arguments. I shall also take into account the theoretical debates resulting from these theories.

Sigmund Freud acknowledges in his cultural writings the specific fragility of modern culture and considers a regression to barbarism to be possible at any time. If one reads Max Weber in an evolutionary manner, it becomes clear that he tends to an optimistic view with respect to violence (increasing pacification of societies in the process of western rationalisation via monopolisation of the central means of violence). His terminology offers various possibilities for explaining and theoretically integrating a phenomenon like National Socialism and its violent character.

Alfred Weber is one of the few sociologists who concerned himself both with the World Wars and totalitarian rule in the diagnosis of his time. His highly positive estimation of culture against the more or less ordinary processes of civilisation and of societal development does not at all ignore the perceived cultural crisis of his era. If one disregards the demonological and irrational aspects of his theory, explanations for the phenomenon of collective violence can be found in the mechanisms of excessive bureaucratisation and the coming of the so called 'fourth man'.

The Frankfurt School explicitly deals with the 'dialectics of enlightenment' by using numerous historical-philosophical constructions. Horkheimer and Adorno sought explanations for the escalation of violence in the twentieth century by examining authoritarian personality structures and the mind-deforming principles of capitalism. Their pessimistic view of history becomes evident in their regarding the principles of enlightenment (instrumental reason and technical rationality) and the very institutions of modernity themselves as decisive preconditions for the Holocaust.

How does Norbert Elias fit into this context? Norbert Elias was not only the author, in his early years, of one of the most profound and far-reaching (and least optimistic) models of civilisation. Perhaps he is also the sociologist who contributes most to an understanding of individual and collective violence, the rise of National Socialism and other forms of group

violence. Although the means of control of violence is of great importance for him, Elias's terms prepare the ground for understanding and interpreting various aspects of National Socialism and genocide in Germany. But I do not believe violence to be the great theme of his life's work, nor do I consider *The Civilising Process* to be one of the great intellectual reactions to the rise of Nazism (as Peter Gleichmann suggests and Hermann Korte rejects). Nor do I think that it is easily possible to integrate his later work on violence (especially *The Germans*) into his earlier vision of the civilising process and the categories and terms used there, as recently Jonathan Fletcher has contended in his chilling introductory work on Elias [*Violence and Civilisation*, Polity Press, 1997 - see *Figurations* 9] and as most Elias scholars have done in the past. Contrary to them, and in agreement with Robert van Krieken, I don't assume that Elias's work forms a unified whole, but consider that - especially with regard to violence - it reveals contradictions and tensions between different parts of his writings. The neglect of these tensions was responsible for some of the persistent controversies and misunderstandings of the civilising process.

In general I intend to contribute to an adequate understanding of the relationship between modernity and violence, and I am trying to provide differentiated reasons to justify the thesis that modernity is highly ambivalent with respect to violence.

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## ■ LITURGY AND CIVILISING PROCESSES

In *The Royal Touch*, Marc Bloch - famous historian and contemporary of Norbert Elias - placed his finger on the historical pulse when he linked the imposition of Roman over Gallican liturgical rites by Pepin III to the sacrosanct 'Royal Touch' and legitimacy of the Frankish kings. Pepin III, followed by Charlemagne, were the first French kings to receive unction, i.e. ablution, by virtue of kingship, in contrast to the earlier Merovingians who, even in the case of Clovis, received the rite prescribed by the Gallicans for all catechumens. Thus Pepin enacted an 'irony of history' by coupling his usurpation of legitimacy with imposition of the Roman liturgy, and even more so, by an adaptation of an Old Testament rite reserved for Hebrew chiefs.

Pierre Bourdieu's analysis (in *Language and Symbolic Power*, 1991) of rites of institution makes possible a direct address to the implicit exchange between Crown and Papacy insinuated by the pre-emption of Roman liturgical rites onto the Frankish territories and the first celebration of Royal unction in what would become France. According to Bourdieu, the 'magical efficacy' of such rites hinges upon certain social conditions that converge to guarantee the distinction and importance of a legitimating language. At a minimum, these conditions 'ensure the production of appropriate senders and receivers' such that the capacity among a people to reproduce a symbolic ritual is matched by a capacity to recognise the production as an authentic mark of distinction, symbolising and simultaneously legitimating relations of domination.

The 'magical efficacy' evokes a symbolic transformation of the individual consecrated and of the symbolic representation others have of him as a consequence of the ritual. Moreover, these are not just scripts and actors. The designated heir genuinely believes in the identity transformation ritually inscribed and comes to behave, as second nature, differently. Similarly, the witnesses adapt their behaviour habitually to conform with an elaborate ceremonial protocol that defines codes of interaction for different strata toward one set apart by this near irreversible ritual.

Both Max Weber's concept of *Gentilcharisma* and Norbert Elias's commentary on it ('Group Charisma and Group Disgrace,' in *The Norbert Elias Reader*, Blackwell 1998) bear mentioning in this context since the ritual exchange inscribes an entire caste – not restricted to familial lines – that is set apart by the mechanisms guaranteeing production and recognition of both a hierarchy and a group charisma. Recognition of legitimate royal power and privilege entails recognition of both the rites and of those individuals authorised under these rites to enact and celebrate the inscription. Thus, while ostensibly buttressing the power of the King, the inscription simultaneously bolsters the distinction of the celebrants and their symbolic rituals.

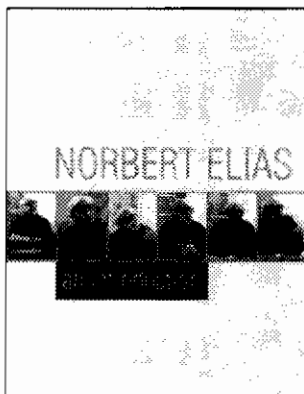
Charlemagne made clear his commitment to Roman liturgy as legitimate ritual through a series of edicts to clergy commanding them to learn the Roman chant thoroughly. The coincident massive expansion of scriptoria, monasteries, ecclesiastic schools and book production, referred to as the Carolingian Renaissance, needs but mere mention to trigger recognition of how the goal of rapid dissemination of an imposed chant reper-

tory took place. A new stratum of 'sacred intellectuals' emerged, fuelling and fuelled by the movement of the aristocracy into the monastic orders. Now set apart, as Max Weber noted, the monastics, especially the Cluniacs, became the first professionals. 'The monk lived in a methodical fashion, he scheduled his time, practised continuous self-control, rejected all spontaneous enjoy-

ments and all personal obligations that did not serve the purposes of his vocation. Thus he was predestined to serve as the principal tool of bureaucratic centralisation and rationalisation in the church.'

The monastic movement survived even as the centrifugal forces eroded the geopolitical unification brought about by Charlemagne and

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the Carolingians. In this context cultural production in the form of music theory and new liturgical forms flourished. The dominant theory to emerge during and after the ninth century was that of mode. Not surprising, given the initial goals, this was largely a theory of musical grammar and syntax characteristic of Roman chant, that enabled rapid classification, organisation and memorisation of the received repertory. This pragmatic work likewise gave rise to an emendation of existing chants, as well as to a proliferation in compositions that 'sounded like' Roman chant. The most popular genre to emerge was the rhymed numerical office.

The rhymed numerical offices represent an expansion of the Canonical Hours, or Divine Offices, which, with their seven daily prayers, proper to the day, underscored the organisation of time in the cloistered orders. Most of the nearly 1500 newly composed offices represent the application of a formulaic ritual to tell a story, an *historia*, at a local level for the purpose of evoking recognition, the unctio, of a deceased person as a saint. Upon papal recognition, the Offices of newly recognised saints were added to the *Sanctorale*, or the liturgy proper to a feast day.

Even more significant were those rare additions to the *Temporale*, or that part of the liturgical year re-enacting the life of Jesus on earth. The Feast of Corpus Christi was one of six and symbolically the most important of these additions. Initially celebrated in 1246 in the diocese of Liège, the geographical locale of Aachen, 'capital' of the Carolingian empire, it was adopted for the universal church in 1263 by a Papal Bull of Urban IV, formerly Jacques Pantaléon of Troyes and Bishop of Liège. While 'authorship' has traditionally been assigned to his chief theologian, Thomas Aquinas, Juliana of Liège, an Augustinian nun, most likely pieced an earlier version together from existing material.

Thirty-two extant Psalters with vernacular poems and illuminations, as well as saint's vitae from the period, give witness to the origins of the Feast in a movement emanating from an excess of celibate women in Liège. The excess of women and their relationships to men parallel those identified by Elias as rooted in the excess of second-born sons deprived of ancestral inheritance as a consequence of Capetian primogeniture. Both the movement and the 'authorship' of the original version by Juliana constitute another irony of history. The feast celebrates that symbolic capital which functioned to keep women both within the religious fold and powerless, i.e. transubstantiation of

the Host and sacerdotal authority, even while incorporating the Marian Tree of Jesse.

The delicate and hidden mechanisms of debt and exchange at play in the institution of the Rite of Corpus Christi and that rite canonising Louis IX, Christocentric Capetian king and protector of the Roman papacy, merit careful examination. These two ceremonies received the requisite papal recognition at approximately the same time, if under different Popes then still under a Holy See indebted to the French not least through favours to Urban IV. Moreover, both functioned to fortify the hierocratic monopoly on ceremonial transformations while simultaneously rationalising a *Gentilcharisma*. The rationalisation process at work might best be described as a set of organisational mechanisms that simultaneously absorb and 'quarantine' irrational ideas that have the virtue of logical consistency with a broader political agenda.

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[This article, revised from a presentation at the Ad Hoc Figurational Sociology session at ISA in Montreal, summarises a book project, *Metamorphosis and Fine Amour: The Corpus Christi Movement in Thirteenth-Century Liège*, by Barbara Walters and Peter T. Ricketts of the University of Birmingham. Thanks to Stephen Mennell, Dennis Smith, Ann Buckley and Marshall Battani for comments.]

## ■ ELIAS WEBSITES AND E-MAIL DISCUSSION LIST

Robert van Krieken has re-organised the Sydney web site, incorporating frames. This means that you need a reasonably up-to-date web browser. The new URL is: <http://www.usyd.edu.au/su/social/elias/eliasframe.html>

### ELIAS-I: The electronic discussion list

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## ■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

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