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Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

MARBACH STIPEND

The German Literature Archive and the Norbert Elias Foundation, Amsterdam will in 1999 once again award a six-month Marbach Graduate Stipend to undertake research on the papers of Norbert Elias, which have been deposited in the German Literature Archive. Further details can be obtained from Dr. Christoph König (Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach-am-Institut für Sociologie, Allende-Platz 1, D-20146 Hamburg, Tel. ++ 49-40-4123-3229). Applications should be submitted before 31 August 1999 to: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, Personalstelle, Postfach 1162, D-71666 Marbach am Neckar.

WORK IN PROGRESS

The Politics of Dress and Undress in a French Colony: Social Bodies and Kanak Feminist Art

The research summarised here was first presented under the title, 'Le théatre des plage en Nouvelle-Calédonie: La Présentation du corps et l'art kanak feministe', to an anthropology group at l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in January, 1999. The essay is currently under revision for presentation to the Cultural Studies of Colonialism group at the University of California, Berkeley. This essay grew out of research for my book that compares the civilising process as directed at the Melanesian Kanak of New Caledonia and the political revolutionaries of the Paris Commune of 1871 (who spent 8–9 years of exile in New Caledonia). The book will be published at Stanford University Press in 2000. I should like to thank all Elias–l listserv participants who contributed useful references for this project.

The first European missionaries to establish a presence in the islands of New Caledonia immediately set about clothing the indigenous Melanesians, known as the Kanak. Since the 1980s, some 140 years after those missionaries arrived in the islands, topless bathing by European tourists on New Caledonia's beaches has become a common event. Kanak women, however, are prevented from sunbathing or swimming in this manner through the threat of clan-based gang rape.

Kanak women live the historical irony of inheriting a colonial culture ostensibly based in the Christian civilising mission yet that allowed, a few short years after opening the reservations, the construction of a Club Med and similar vacation resorts. They live with the double burden of indigenous patriarchy and the patriarchy of French colonial culture.

To the colonisers of the nineteenth century, the nakedness of the Kanak seemed shameful, yet in the second half of the twentieth century westerners view partial nudity as liberating. Nineteenth-century ethnographies conveyed the impression that the sight of bared aged breasts was profoundly troubling to French or other European men. It is perhaps useful here to recollect that the European image of the evil witch, whose history Carlo Ginsburg has so skilfully written, is usually represented with bared, withered breasts.[1] The description of an ordinary evening in a Kanak village by a missionary in 1853 drew attention to the nude bodies of the Kanak around the camp-fire and typified the scene as a 'nocturnal sabbath'. The missionary reinforced this reference to the language and concepts developed in European witch-hunts by typifying the scene as a 'satanic fantasmagoria'.[2]

For travellers and colonial officials of the nineteenth century, the exposed breasts of older wives and mothers revealed the embarrassing harshness of time and toil on youthful feminine beauty. To expose this weathering of the female body shocked their sensibilities and reinforced the impression that Kanak women were especially degraded. Not only did they live the hardships of maternity and agrarian labour, their used bodies were crudely on display for all to see.[3]

The problem of bare breasts was quickly addressed by the colonial authorities. According to Captain Laferrière of the Bucéphale, the Kanak adopted European-style clothing, so far as they were able, with alacrity. Writing in 1843 Captain Laferrière remarked, 'I spoke of the entire nudity of the men upon our arrival, but by the end of our stay they had begun to cover themselves with the pieces of cloth we had given them'.[4] However, other sources testify to Kanak resistance to European clothing. Victor Rochas wrote, 'The young people who the missionaries would like to clothe are often taken aside by the old people of the clans who say to them, 'And what! are you going to abandon the clothing of your fathers for that of strangers? Your ridiculous outfit, does it really compare to the simple, masculine dress we gave you? At the very most, the clothing of the

whites is good for women."[5] We begin to glimpse here the patriarchal side of dress and undress in Kanak culture.

If the success of the missionaries was partial and patchwork, their efforts were complemented by the state authorities. In 1887, the *côde d'indigenat* mandated that Kanak wear clothing when in areas frequented by Europeans.[6] After 1887 the Kanak indulged partial nudity only on their reserves or in their homes.

Evidence exists for the sacred nature of clothing in the nineteenth-century Kanak's eyes. According to the missionary-ethnographer Maurice Leenhardt, the initial impulse to wear clothing stems from a perceived inferiority of humans vis-à-vis God. In Leenhardt's explanation, the first form of clothing was ornamentation designed to attract powers to the individual body, a bracelet tied around an infant's wrist, for example, to ward off illness.[7] This association of clothing with magic and divine powers was extended by the Kanak to European clothing, which they called 'skin of gods.' Very quickly the Kanak became convinced of the European's mortal natures, but nonetheless they continued to call European-style clothing 'skin of gods'. Meshed with the sacred and magical nature of clothing is the person who wears the clothing; indeed, clothing becomes such a powerful part of the self that rupturing the bond between a person and his or her clothing can disrupt their power and their identity. This sense of the highly intimate and powerful nature of clothing has endured into the 1990s. One Kanak woman recently voiced her objection to individuals borrowing each other's clothing, 'I find it disrespectful to take the skin of another, to be in his place. It is like entering the depths of the other's being, their innermost parts. I try to explain this to my children."[8]

If the magical and sacred dimension to clothing has faded from European consciousness, clothing nonetheless retains an ability to augment and transmit aura. Forsaking such magical props, the European woman now unveils her body, as a sign of freedom or as a means toward pleasure. The Kanak woman keeps her body fully covered, as a sign of belonging to her clan and culture, or as a means of self-protection.

Norbert Elias explains this variation in such force fields by means of his theory of the civilising process.[9] For Elias, more complete clothing was a sign of the control of the body and of the emotions or sentiments of the people. According to his argument a more controlled people – whether controlled by the state or by social norms internalised individually – was demarcated as 'civilised'. The tendency towards informality in the post-World War Two era, according to Elias, represents a continuation of the civilising process. At this late stage of civilisation controls were so successfully internalised that the outward markers of control, careful clothing, could be omitted without fear of social regression. Elias's argument, it seems to me, is a transformation of commonly held ideas of the nineteenth century, which held that clothing was a triumph of man over nature, and, by extension, a sign of free will. Elias may aid us in our analysis of the force fields in which the aura of the clothed and the unclothed took (or takes) shape, but his theory is not entirely satisfying.

This investigation of the body politics in the French territory of New Caledonia reveals the separate histories of female sexual shame (associated with indigenous patriarchal society) and body shame (imposed by Catholic missionaries). These varieties of shame are means of controlling the agency of women, both Kanak and French. French women seemingly have overcome body shame without overcoming patriarchal authority. With their semi-nude bodies on the beaches of New Caledonia, these women live in competition with the masculine gaze. The autonomy of these women is the contested prize in this rivalry.

In the paintings of Kanak feminist artists Yvette Bouquet and Micheline Néporon and in the poetry of Déwé Gorodé, the carefully covered female Kanak body is unveiled to offer contemporary Kanak access to the mythical life *[la vie legendaire]* of their ancestors. Through the metaphor of a feminine interface with the past, contemporary Kanak women build their identities as constructors of the modern Kanak people. This essay suggests that the body images created by these Kanak women can aid French women as well in their battle for autonomy within the patriarchal regime.

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1. Carlo Ginsburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, trans. by Raymond Rosenthal, (New York, Pantheon Books, 1991). See also Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe*, (New York, Routledge, 1994).

2. R.P. Fonbonne's letter to M. Moyne, written 1853, published in *Annales de la propagation de la foi*, T27 (1855), 102–120, p. 109.

3. Kathleen Wilson, 'Breasts, Sodomy and the Lash: Masculinity and its Others aboard the Cook Voyages,' paper presented at the 1999 annual American Historical Association meeting in Washington DC, discusses the writings of Georg and Reinhold Forster in which breasts were read as a sign of comparative social development or degeneration. Western feminist opposition to masking the loss of one or both breasts to cancer addresses this same cultural anxiety toward the 'ugly' breast.

4. Lafferière, p. 100.

5. Victor Rochas, *La Nouvelle-Calédonie et ses habitants*, (Paris, Sartorius, 1862), p. 152.

6. Article 6 of the Arrêté – Infractions spéciales aux indigènes non citoyens français, du 23 déc. 1887; see 'Punitions d'indigènes,' *Lois, Décrets, Arrêtés et instructions formant la législation de la Nouvelle-Calédonie* (Nouméa, Imprimerie Calédonienne, 1900), 7 volumes, Vol. 5: 663–668, p. 667.

7. Maurice Leenhardt, 'Pourquoi se vêtir?' *L'Amour et l'Art*, 31:58, 59 & 60 (1932); all references are to the reprint in *Journal de la société océanistes* 34:58 (March 1978), 1–7.

8. Interview with Mickaéla Kombouare in *Mwà Wée* (Septembre 1994), Numero 6, 70–76, p.72.

9. Norbert Elias, *The Civilising Process*, translated by Edmund Jephcott, (one-volume ed.,Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); and see in particular 'Informalisation' in *The Germans; Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. by Michael Schröter and trans. by Eric Dunning and Stephen Mennell, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1996)

Norbert Elias in Brazil: an Initial Impact

The impact of Elias's work on the social sciences in Brazil is very recent and still difficult to evaluate, given both the geographical size of the country and also the multidisciplinary range of Elias's thought. The reception of his writings in Brazil is a phenomenon of the 1990s, even though scattered references to his work can be found from 1983 onwards. It is important to remember that Portuguese translations of Elias's books began to appear only in 1980 (*What is Sociology?*), with a poor translation of *The Court Society* following in 1987 – both of them published in Portugal. In Brazil, translations began in 1990 and 1993, with the two-volume version of *The Civilising Process*. Since then, we have had *The Society of Individuals* (1994), *Mozart: The Sociology of a Genius* (1995), *The*

Germans (1997), *Time: An Essay* (1998) and *The Established and the Outsiders* (1998). All of these books were widely reviewed in academic or cultural journals and in newspapers with large circulations. The remaining works of Elias are now being prepared for publication; as far as we know, *The Court Society* will be the next. This recent spate of translations in itself shows the increasing interest in Elias's work in Brazil. It is also highly significant that São Paulo State University – USP, the most traditional and pre-eminent Brazilian university – has just recently published a *Dossie Elias*, a collection of articles by very well established scholars dealing with Elias's thought.

Nevertheless, the impact of Elias on academic thinking has to be kept in perspective: it is just beginning and, of course, will take some time to be fully accomplished. According to data from the National Centre for Historiographical Reference, the most comprehensive Brazilian index of historical writing, only 5 out of 2,300 articles published by Brazilian authors in 450 volumes of periodicals in 1994–98, are specifically related to Elias. Of course in other areas, such as sociology, psychology, sports and leisure, the picture will be different. It is possible to find many citations of Elias in doctoral and masters' theses in the last decade, although that does not mean there is a solid appreciation of the conceptual tools and the general framework of figurational sociology. There are, however, some theses which deal specifically with Elias's theory, especially works focusing on the Brazilian colonial period (Polito 1990, Alcides 1996, Silveira 1997, Malerba 1997, Souza 1998, Schwarcz 1998). Elias's sociological model is receiving increasing attention in graduate programmes, in areas like history, sociology, education, physical education (which in Brazil also means sports and leisure). In the last ten years some Brazilian scholars have been dealing with Elias's thinking in a more accurate way, showing the paradigmatic potential of his writings (Rainho 1995, Nascimento 1996, Malerba 1996, Silva 1997, Gebara 1998).

Three recent events indicate the increasing interest in Elias's theory. From 11–13 November, 1998, the *Third International Symposium on 'Civilising Process: Education, History and Leisure'*; took place in the Faculty of Education at the Methodist University of Piracicaba, São Paulo state. The published proceedings present twenty-nine papers produced by graduate students, and eight by lecturers, dealing with the theory of civilising processes, and showing an increasing number of new research projects, discussing Elias's books, and the central concepts of figurational sociology.

Many questions were raised about civilising processes in a non-European environment. This Symposium already has its own history. Eric Dunning was present at the first one in 1996, and he returned in 1997 with Mike Featherstone joining the group, which served to increase considerably both the interest and the accuracy of the discussions on Elias's writings. These annual meetings have been organised both by the Faculty of Physical Education/Unicamp, and more recently the Faculty of Education/Unimep. This year – in November 1999 – we are planning a new symposium on the subject *The Civilising Process: Corporeality and Religion*, in which Professors Stephen Mennell and Johan Goudsblom will be taking part.

Another very important initiative was taken by the Maringa State University (Paraná State), where the Department of History publishes its journal *Dialogues*; it organises a round-table session, in which an unpublished article is discussed by three scholars, the article and their commentaries then being published together in the journal. Norbert Elias was the centre of the discussion, published in full in the1998 issue. The Mexican historian Carlos Antonio Aguirre Rojas pointed to Elias, among other intellectuals such as Weber, Braudel and Foucault, as taking a long-term perspective on the question of the modernity. The comments make clear that Rojas's argument is far from achieving general acceptance, but it promises to bear fruit. Elias has finally arrived in Brazil; his influence on Brazilian social science will perhaps become clearer over the next five years. In the meantime, the visits to Brazil by social scientists broadly involved in the figurational research tradition – such as Eric Dunning, Roger Chartier and Mike Featherstone – and the contact that they have been maintaining with many Brazilian research groups, are also evidence of the deepening of the interest in Elias work.

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The 'stolen generations', civilisation, citizenship and governance in Australia

Late in 1998 I was fortunate enough to receive research funding support from the Australian Research Council (ARC) for a project titled 'The stolen generations: implications for Australian civilisation, citizenship and governance', which will run over 1999/2000. It was stimulated by the publication of a report by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 'Bringing Them Home', which outlined the history of the removal of Indigenous Australian children from their families, mostly over the course of the twentieth century. What struck me in particular was that while the current feelings of dismay about the past treatment of Aboriginal children and their parents were experienced as expressions of 'civility', of disap-

proval of 'barbaric' practices, at the same time the object of the policies of child removal was precisely to bring Aborigines into civilisation as it was understood at that time. It seemed to me that a detailed analysis of this history which focused on how the understanding of civilisation was used in the Australian context and how it changed, – how civilising processes operated at their 'fringes', at their interfaces with peoples and ways of life constructed as 'barbaric' – could tell us a lot about the nature of European civilising processes themselves. The project will be organised around three central concepts: civilisation, citizenship, governance:

1. 'Civilisation' was perhaps the most central concept around which relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians were organised from when they first encountered each other. Europeans regarded themselves as the bearers of civilisation, and all that they wished to change in Aboriginal culture and social life was seen as quintessentially 'barbaric', diametrically opposed to what all human beings should regard as civilised. So-called 'half-caste' Aborigines were seen as lying on the boundary between civilisation and barbarism, and this ambiguity was an important element of the political will to transform them into different sorts of Australian citizens. The policies and practices of child removal are thus usefully understood as a 'civilising offensive'.
2. Aboriginal child removal was also regarded as part of a process of making Aboriginal children properly 'Australian', fit to take their place in Australian social life as citizens equal in status to non-indigenous Australians. Indeed, it was often presented as the proper compensation for their dispossession, the only appropriate contribution which white Australians could and should undertake in order to make up for part inhumanities. The logic of 'assimilation' which governed the child removal policy, seen in its most developed form in the writing of Sir Paul Hasluck, was at the same time a theory of citizenship, and it is only possible to understand properly contemporary debates on this topic through an analysis of the internal logic of assimilationist policies and practices.
3. The policy of child removal was exactly that: a policy pursued by governments hoping to govern their populations more effectively, in order to achieve particular effects. It is important, then, to analyse changing policies and practices of Aboriginal child removal, and the current critiques of those policies and practices, as part of a changing logic of governance. The question to be addressed here is whether the relation between governments and citizens should be seen in terms of an opposition between dominance and control on the one hand, and freedom and autonomy on the other. The history of state intervention into family life, in relation to non-indigenous children as well as indigenous children, is a useful lens through which to examine this issue.

Readers of this newsletter are all part of an expanding field of study which attempts to develop a social scientific conception of 'civilisation' and processes of both civilisation and decivilization, one which builds on Elias's work itself and attempts to move beyond the progressivist and colonial understanding of 'civilisation' simply as the steady world-wide triumphal march of Christian European culture. However, I would suggest that what remains underexplored is the extent to which 'civilising offensives', the self-conscious attempts to bring about 'civilisation', have revolved around essentially violent policies and practices; in this case, the removal of children from their families largely for the social engineering purpose of gradually and systematically annihilating Aboriginal cultural identity. At the time, however, these policies and practices were constructed by most, although not all, observers as contributing to the 'welfare' of Aboriginal Australians, and this intersection of welfare and violence raises the possibility that processes of civilisation and decivilisation, rather than being mutually exclusive, can run alongside each other, so that a society can be said to display both 'civilised' and 'barbaric' characteristics at one and the same time. On the other hand, it may be possible to describe the move away from the systematic removal of Aboriginal children since the 1970s as itself part of a civilising process, an increasing recognition of the human rights of Aboriginal Australians and of the inhumanity of those policies and practices. The project will identify how these two approaches to this history can be weighed up against each other, as well as the implications for theories of civilisation and decivilisation more generally for our contemporary understanding of what it means to be a 'civilised' Australian citizen within society containing a variety of cultures.

The research itself will be based on an investigation of the relevant State and Commonwealth parliamentary papers and debates, the Commonwealth Government archival holdings in the Australian Archives, contemporary newspapers and periodicals, magazines, relevant commissions of inquiry, as well as autobiographical and biographical writings. Two journal articles are currently forthcoming from the project, 'The barbarism of civilisation: cultural genocide and the 'stolen generations''. *British Journal of Sociology* 50 (2) 1999: 295-313, and 'The "stolen generations": on the removal of Australian indigenous children from their families and its implications for the sociology of childhood' *Childhood*, 6 (3) 1999, and the project's web site is: www.usyd. edu.au/su/social/robert/arc/arcframe. htm. An additional aim of the project is to promote international research links by forming the foundation of a comparative analysis, possibly with Canada, Russia, South Africa, USA, New Zealand. There is also the potential for a comparison between the Australian and German cases. If any readers can see a connection between this project and their own research interests, I would be pleased to explore the possibility of collaboration.

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Civilisation and Punishment

Modern societies like to think of themselves as belonging to the civilised world. This is not only an important cultural signifier of their own identity but it also helps to set them apart from other non-modern and, by corollary, uncivilised societies. The claim to be civilised and thereby part of the modern world can be established in a number of ways: for example, mortality rates, average annual incomes, standards of health care – and the way in which a particular society punishes its offenders. In contrast to the floggings and public executions characteristic of punishment in the pre-modern world, or the gulags and labour camps of those countries of the former Eastern bloc, punishment in modern, civilised society has followed a very different route.

Here, over the course of the last two centuries a number of prominent themes emerge.

These relate to, first, the disappearance of the spectacle of punishment itself. This refers not just to the gradual abolition of public punishments on the human body, but the way in which their main replacement – the prison – itself gradually became closed off to the public and hidden from view. Second, the steady amelioration of penal sanctions – such as the gradual abolition of corporal and capital punishment and improvements in prison conditions. Third, the growth of sympathy for the offender, to the point where modern societies themselves were seen as more culpable for the crimes such individuals committed. Fourth, we find the centralised, bureaucratic control of punishment at the expense of any public involvement in its administration.

Historical research shows this pattern establishing itself right across modern society. Indeed, it became a yardstick against which a society's claim to belong to the civilised world could be judged. Those elements of modern society, such as the southern United States which did not conform to these standards by, for example, making use of the highly visible and highly stigmatizing chain gangs which lasted until well into the 1950s, were thus seen as different from, lagging behind the rest of the civilised world. Certainly, by the 1970s, it was clear that modern penal culture was closely aligned with the broader cultural patterns denoted by Norbert Elias in his work on the civilising process.

However, over the last decade or so, and at an accelerating pace, we have seen a reversal or fragmentation of these penal norms to a greater or lesser extent across most modern societies. We have seen, instead, a resurgence of punishments intended to shame offenders by ordering them to wear stigmatic clothing or perform menial labour tasks before a public audience; we see a resurgence of public participation in penal matters here and in other ways – vigilantism, for example, and the right to be consulted and involved in issues relating to the release of some sex criminals from prison; we see a resurgence of seemingly non-modern sanctions such as curfews; of the death penalty, at least in the United States; and of forms of detention more usually associated with gulag societies; of harsher prison conditions and rapidly expanding prison populations (as if the latter is now seen as a sign of political virility and security rather than shame). Elias referred to such reversals or departures from the civilising process: these could be brought about by such phenomena as war, famine, economic collapse and so on, and would last for an unknown duration.

What my current project aims to do is to chart and explain the development of these main contours of punishment in the English-speaking modern world and the departures that now seem to be taking place from them, while taking into account the differing emphases and forms that the new punitiveness takes across these respective societies at the present time. Above all, perhaps, the project is examining what this new punitiveness is telling us about life in the modern world today and why it should be that at the present time we seem prepared to use penal sanctions hitherto associated with either our uncivilised past or non-democratic present.

The New Zealand Marsden Fund has funded the project for three years. The principal researcher is myself (Reader in Criminology, Victoria University, PO Box 600, Wellington, New Zealand, john.pratt@vuw.ac.nz). Two PhD students are linked to the project. Ms Sarah Anderson's thesis is titled 'The Imaginary Prison' and it explores the role played by nineteenth-century literary knowledges in contributing to the development of a penal culture that thereby circumscribed the direction of British policy at this time. Ms Anna McKenzie's thesis is titled 'The History of Women's Imprisonment in New Zealand' and explores this subject through an Eliasian theoretical framework. The researchers would be pleased to hear from scholars with similar interests or suggestions. The following early papers have so far been published or accepted for publication relating to this project:

Pratt, J. (1998), 'Towards the 'Decivilising of Punishment?', *Social and Legal Studies* 7: 487-515

Pratt, J. (in press), 'Norbert Elias and the Civilised Prison', *British Journal of Sociology*

Pratt, J. (in press), 'The Return of the Wheelbarrow Men; or, the Arrival of Postmodern Penality?', *British Journal of Criminology*

Pratt, J. (in press), 'Sex Crime and the New Punitiveness', *Behavioural Sciences and Law.*

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The Civilising of the Ultimate Fighting Challenge

This is a brief synopsis of an investigation into the Ultimate Fighting Challenge (UFC). This particular genre of fighting (often called No-Holds-Barred or NHB) has been used directly to counter a point in Elias's thesis: that there has been a long-term decline in people obtaining pleasure from directly taking part in and viewing violent acts. However, the UFC has actually undergone (and is undergoing) it own processual 'civilising process'. The text below highlights some of the key factors and subsequent relevant changes that directly affected the UFC, from its first competition on 12 November 1993, to the completion of the paper on 1 September 1998. But first, a brief outline of the original rules. These were very simple: no eye gouging and no biting. Fighters could punch, kick, headbutt, choke, or break limbs to win and progress through to the next round. If one, or both, fell to the floor, the fight continued. Winning was by knockout, submission, the corner throwing in the towel, or the referee stopping the fight. There were no weight classes and no time limits.

However, the civilising processes that have pacified our unarmed combat sports to their present level were in effect even when it came to *where* to stage the event. The first UFC was held in Denver, as the state of Colorado had recently repealed all but one of the state statutes sanctioning and governing boxing and wrestling matches. From the very beginning, the media 'big guns' such as CNN and *The New York Times*, began running features that highlighted the violence allowed within the UFC. A growing 'figuration of disapproval', set in motion due to current levels of internal pacification, soon gained a political voice when Arizona Senator John McCain actively tried to ban the events he labelled 'barbaric'. The American Medical Association also added its weight when it stated that it supported efforts to ban these competitions. Throughout 1996 and 1997, many cable companies, under increasing pressure from viewers, religious groups, and politicians, dropped NHB competitions from their programming. Further, during this period politicians introduced legislation that either banned NHB competitions, or increased the powers of existing legislation. Many cities and states introduced their own series of guidelines for the hosting of combat sports, with rules that were far removed from the origi-

nal UFC format. Even the martial arts community were quick to add their own power base to the 'figuration of disapproval', by stressing the civilised nature of their own sport, which met established, approved levels of violence in sport. The UFC responded by repeatedly adding rules that reduced the violence (real and symbolic) within the format. However, the death of an American fighter on 18 March 1998, in a Ukrainian NHB competition, overshadowed any of the changes. The subsequent backlash was immediate, powerful, and now carried justification as to why the format should be banned. It was a blow the UFC is still struggling to recover from.

That the UFC has undergone a 'civilising process' is demonstrated by the list of current rules which have been introduced as additions to the original two mentioned above. The new rules include: no hair pulling, no fish hooking (inserting fingers into the mouth and pulling), no pressure point attacks, no groin attacks, no small joint manipulation, no throat attacks, no head-butting, no kicking a downed fighter, no elbowing the back of the head or neck, and no spitting. Also, a timed-round system with three weight categories was introduced, which, in the case of a draw, facilitated the need for a judge's decision. Further, as the UFC has become rule-laden, intervention within the fights has increased by the referee, a doctor, or disqualification.

For a full version of this text, about 5000 words, e-mail the author on marchowes@yahoo.com

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Paul Nixon's Elias project: specialist writers sought.

As subscribers to the Elias–l e-mail network will know from recent communications, Paul Nixon has been assessing information of rich intellectual interest in his research on the Elias papers in Marbach.

The next stage is a large study, hopefully in English, French and German editions, dealing with Elias's career and developing character structure, intellectual biography and world-wide applications of his legacy. Paul welcomes the co-operation of others and seeks contributions principally from:
1. A German-language scholar with specialist knowledge of Breslau–Heidelberg–Frankfurt, etc., figurations and legacies (e.g. the work of Hönigswald, Scheler, Curtius, the brothers Weber, Mannheim, Jaspers); and with competence to assess Elias's impact on modern German sociology and society – involving analysis of the reception of Elias's principal writing – especially *Studien über die Deutschen*, TV broadcasts, newspaper articles, reviews, and the attention that journalists paid to Elias in his later years.

2. A Dutch scholar with broad interests in tackling Elias's Amsterdam involvements – personal, teaching, professional-collegial, broadcasting, newspaper coverage, reviews; and able to assess Elias's impact on Dutch historians, psychologists, political scientists, anthropologists and sociologists.

3. Anglophone and Francophone specialists: emphases on historical subject matter, sociology of knowledge, sociology of science, sociology of the body, emotions, dynamic psychology, the sociology of mimetic expression. And Elias's approach to teaching, his working relations with other professionals, his extremely varied social contacts, experience in Ghana. And latter-day application of his ideas elsewhere in the world. Scholars should indicate areas of interest.

Anyone taking part would be invited to conferences in Marbach as the project matures. Paul hopes to raise grants to cover international travel and draft production expenses. Colleagues must be willing to write to deadlines. Negotiation of contract will adhere to safeguards approved internationally by The Society of Authors.

Suggestions are very welcome. All who are interested are asked to contact:
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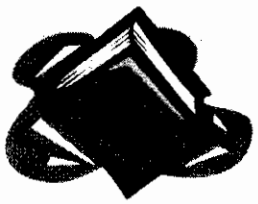

■ RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Norbert Elias, *Watteaus Pilgerfahrt zur Insel der Liebe*. Munich: Edition München, 1998 60pp. ISBN 3-901862-03-5. With a biographical note by Hermann Korte.
Hermann Korte, *Utopia: Das Himmelreich auf Erden?* Munich: Edition München, 1998. 39pp. ISBN 3-901862-0 2-1.

These two essays, by Elias and by Korte, appear in an unusual and attractive format: pocket-sized little books in hardcover, each with a small reproduction of a painting on the cover.

In the case of Elias, the painting is itself the subject of the hitherto unpublished essay written in the late 1970s or early 1980s. It is Watteau's famous picture *'l'embarquement pour l'isle de Cythère'*, now in the Louvre (there are two other versions, one in Berlin)

Since the age of the early Cretan civilisation, the island of Kythera had been associated with the cult of the goddess of love. Watteau's aristocratic public in the early eighteenth century would have been familiar with this association through theatrical pieces or ballets of the time. The picture shows young couples about to embark, in the evening sunlight, on a ship to take them to the island. 'It is', writes Elias, 'the mimetic expression of maidenly hesitation – half flirtatious, in the real game of love'. Elias interprets this as a painting of an aristocratic utopia – the essay is in effect a pendant to Elias's arguments about aristocratic romanticism in *The Court Society*. Watteau's career reached its peak between the death of Louis XIV in 1715 and his own death at only 38 in 1721, and his art expresses a sense of release felt by the aristocracy of the Regency period after the firm hand (and oppressive religiosity) of the great king.

Like Mozart, Watteau was a bourgeois artist in a court society, but was luckier than Mozart in securing the aristocratic patronage necessary for a secure and successful career in such a society. Even so, he shared the low social status of the artist in that milieu and there is a suggestion that that experience may have strengthened a personal disposition in Watteau towards melancholy.

Elias goes on to deal with the changed reception of the painting from the French Revolution and into the nineteenth century. The art of the *ancien régime* was now viewed in the light of political changes, including the dominant wishes and dreams. Watteau, now described pejoratively as 'rococo', fell into disfavour. But power balances between art consumers and art producers changed slowly in favour of the producers. This part of the argument echoes Elias's early essay on 'Kitschstil und Kitschzeitalter'; he contends that under the *ancien régime* there were second- and third-rate artists but nothing that could be called kitsch. In a society dominated by a professional-bourgeois public, however, the absence of any 'official' style meant that it became more a matter of chance in the market-place whether an artist's own particular style – perhaps the expression of his/her own upbringing and life experience – became popular or not.

During the nineteenth century, the role of outsider groups in the production of art became stronger and a tension between their taste and that of the wider society gradually became the rule. Watteau's work became a cult object in generational struggles – younger groups rebelling against the taste of their elders. Under Louis-Philippe, the swing of the pendulum found expression in Gérard de Nerval's essay on this painting of Watteau's. This in turn fed into the later stream of bohemianism from Baudelaire to Goncourt, who took up once again the romantic, melancholy, escapist utopia. This has persisted as one strand of taste into the twentieth century.

Thus, Elias shows, one painting can be used as a key to showing the structure of figurational changes, especially the connections between changes in social power-balances and changes in taste.

Hermann Korte's essay, 'Utopia: the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth?' is an appropriate companion to Elias's essay on a utopian work of art. Korte begins by describing how, in 1536 in his home town of Münster, three Anabaptist preachers were put to death with red-hot pincers and their bodies exhibited in iron gibbets. That was their fate for their utopian religious vision. Korte surveys other utopias, from Thomas More and Thomas Campanella, through to modern dystopias such as those of Aldous Huxley and George Orwell, and the collapse of the 'real existent socialist utopias' in 1989. He concludes by setting Elias's theory of civilising processes in the context of utopian thought. Although the theory makes no predictions of development towards a precise goal, Elias himself – in the last paragraph of *The Civilising Process* – clearly stated his own hopes for the future. He aspires to a situation in which there is a lasting balance between (on the one hand) a person's social tasks, between totality of the demands made upon a person by his/her social existence, and (on the other) his/her personal inclinations and needs.

The real misfortune of all earlier utopias was the oppressiveness of their rules, and that is the greatest barrier to thinking about and formulating utopian ideas again. But the utopia Elias had in mind – that was really something – writes Korte. It was to begin, at least, with rules and constraints, but instead of increasing them, finally to reduce them. Elias's vision was of a form of living in which a highly complex global society is integrated through a minimum of constraints by others and self-constraints. It is a utopia in which well-being and peace rule, a world in which humans make life good for each other with a minimum of constraints.

SJM

Jorge Arditi, *A Genealogy of Manners: Transformations of Social Relations in France and England from the Fourteenth to the Eighteenth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. *x* + 312 pp. ISBN 0-226-02583-7 (hb); 0-226-02584-5 (pb).

In this long-awaited book – a meticulously refined and revised descendant of his 1989 PhD thesis – Jorge Arditi makes a major contribution in the very heartland from which Elias's theory of civilising processes emanated: the transformation of manners and habitus in late medieval and early modern western Europe. In a comment printed on the jacket, Paul DiMaggio neatly summarises the thrust of the book: 'Arditi tracks the changes of interpersonal behaviour through several stages – *courtoisie*, civility, and etiquette – arguing that each embodied the cultural representation of relationships consistent with a different social infrastructure. Arditi revises Elias by way of Foucault, and, equally important, materialises Foucault, grounding power in social relations in a way that preserves the value of Foucault's argument while eliminating its more metaphysical aspects.'

The book starts in very much the same mode as does *The Civilising Process*, since the first section offers reflections on the advent of the word *etiquette* just as Elias reflected on the rise of the concepts *civilité, civilisation*, and *Kultur*. Arditi places 'etiquette' especially in eighteenth-century England. 'My general argument', writes Arditi (p. 3), 'does not differ much from Elias's'. Just as Elias contended that the transition from the use of *courtoisie* to that of *civilité* was not merely a change in the concept used to denote somewhat similar things at different times, but was rather a symptom of much more profound changes in power relations and in habitus, so too according to Arditi does the rise of the notion of etiquette. Specifically, Arditi argues that 'the practices associated with *etiquette* developed as part of the shift from a highly centralised system of power-practices that supported the absolutist tendencies of the English monarchy to a system that affirmed the aristocracy as a group. (I found that added to my own understanding of differences in emphasis between France and England in the eighteenth century which I studied some years ago through a culinary prism.)

More importantly, though, Arditi argues that the advent of the concept of 'etiquette' in the eighteenth century involves a disconnection of propriety from ethics, and that the 'full embeddedness' of manners in ethics before then finds no expression in Elias's work. As a result, in writing about the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Arditi makes central to his case books widely influential at the time – most notably Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* – to which Elias paid puzzlingly little attention. Furthermore, the disjunction of manners and ethics 'points to the beginning of a new chapter in the history of social detachment

in the West, a chapter in which processes of physical and mental separation, whose beginnings Elias traced to the early sixteenth century, appear to have attained a new dimension, the conceptual' (p. 5). Arditi thus follows and insightfully elaborates on the train of thought which led Elias from *The Civilising Process* to *Involvement and Detachment.*

Both Elias and Foucault were concerned with the constitution of the self through history and its relation to structures of power, and that is Arditi's concern too. I have the impression that in earlier drafts the intellectual influences on the author started at about 20 per cent Elias and 80 per cent Foucault, but that the balance gradually tilted. A central thrust is (as DiMaggio put it) to eliminate the more metaphysical elements to be found especially in Foucault's earlier work. He rightly says that he departs from Foucault in that Foucault was anti-foundationalist: that is to say, Foucault always resisted explaining a particular discourse in relation to particular social structures, or the transition from one episteme to another as a result of changes in social structures. (Foucault always seemed to me to be profoundly anti-sociological – although Arpad Szakolczai is beginning to convince me that this is less true of his last works – so I have always been slightly bemused by his immense prestige among sociologists). Arditi is foundationalist (and sociological), in that he consistently tries to relate discourse in each of the periods he studies to what he calls an 'infrastructure of social relations'.

SJM

Maarten van Bottenburg, *Verborgen competitie. Over de uiteenlopende populariteit van sporten* (Hidden competition: On the differential popularity of sports) Amsterdam: Bert Bakker 1994, 323 pp.
and:
Allen Guttmann: *Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism.* New York: Columbia University Press 1994, 275 pp.

Verborgen Competitie begins by demonstrating the existence of a world sport constellation of a number of sports that are practised almost world-wide according to standardised rules. Children in villages all over the world practise these sports and follow the same rules as do famous professionals in championships broadcast world-wide. The central problem for Van Bottenburg is the variation within this international sport constellation. Why is the popularity of different branches of sport changing over time? How does one explain differences in popularity of branches of sport between countries and changes in popularity of branches of sport within countries?

He measures popularity in terms of active participation and leaves aside the question of popularity in terms of number of spectators. He demonstrates that we are dealing with two related but different problems. Rank-orders of popularity according to the two measures do not correlate very much. In a brilliant chapter Van Bottenburg argues in Durkheimian fashion that all kinds of explanations of a non-social nature fail to explain the existing variations and changes. Inherent characteristics of sports or of nations or classes, climatological and geographical factors, religious, economic or media explanations are falsified with the help of simple comparisons between nations and between different periods within nations. His own model implies that people's sport preferences differ and change according to the social-cultural meanings different branches of sports have for them. And these meanings arise and change as unintended consequences of changes in the interdependencies between groups, especially between nations and social classes. In his empirical chapters Van Bottenburg shows how, since the middle of the nineteenth century the world sport constellation has been based on sports that originated from countries with dominant power positions, especially England, Germany, the United States and Japan. It depended on the nature of the relations of other countries with these dominant nations which sports became most popular in those countries. To understand completely the distribution of sports that resulted, it is also necessary to include the class positions, organisation and mentality of the participants of different sports in the dominant nations. Some sports became more open to participants of different classes than others. After being adopted in other countries by the national elite, these elites also differed in their exclusiveness toward potential participants from the lower classes. The term 'hidden competition' is used to explain how changes in class-structures express themselves in the nature of sport participation. When sports like cycling, soccer and later tennis became less exclusive, the elite participants left those sports and joined more exclusive and less well- known sports. Sport participation is a result of status competition between and within nations.

Guttmann would broadly agree with this conclusion. In his book he studies the hypothesis that the diffusion of modern sports from Europe and the United States to the rest of the world should be considered as a form of cultural imperialism. As a good historian he first presents facts about the diffusion in a number of countries of more or less widely distributed sports like cricket, soccer, baseball, American Football and gymnastics. Then he poses the question of whether these facts justify the term 'cultural imperialism'. He cannot deny a certain amount of cultural hegemony on the part of the West. But even that concept does not fit the process adequately, because one sees a lot of voluntary emulation of western sports in the rest of the world and in many cases these sports, in spite of their international standardisation, are more or less modified according to the existing culture of the new participants. He quotes the 'wise words': 'What is important is not where a cultural form originated but what happens to it upon its arrival'. Guttmann, one of the older historians of sport and surely the most productive one, offers us a unique opportunity to observe progress in social science. In his famous early book *From Ritual to Record* (1978) he wrote about the differential popularity of sports in different countries: 'One is tempted to throw up one's hands and announce in despair, "It's entirely a matter of historical accident. Pakistanis play polo and Americans play baseball. Once a game is part of a culture, it's there to stay. Chronological priority becomes cultural preference"' (p. 100). Now we have a sociological explanation for these 'historical accidents'. Van Bottenburg's contribution to this progress deserves to be translated in English.

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Stephen Mennell and Johan Goudsblom, 'Civilising Processes – Myth or Reality?'. Review article on Hans-Peter Duerr, *Der Mythos vom Zivilisations-*

prozeße. Comparative Studies in Society and History, 39 (4) 1997: 727–31.

Previously overlooked – not least by its authors, who wrote it as far back as 1995 – this short essay was intended for a planned review symposium on Duerr's work, but eventually appeared in splendid isolation. The essay was written before the appearance of Duerr's fourth volume (see *Figurations* 9), but that would have in no way affected Mennell and Goudsblom's arguments. They show that Duerr, while being hyper-critical of all details of Elias's empirical evidence, accepts all sorts of ethnographic boloney quite uncritically if it appears to support his own case. The huge mass of ill-assorted evidence of diverse provenance that Duerr deploys amounts to little more than what Sir Edmund Leach called anthropological 'butterfly collecting'. Above all, Duerr completely fails to grasp the *processual* character of Elias's theory – it is to do with changes over time, and nothing to do with conceiving of European 'civilisation' as 'more advanced' than other cultures. Ultimately, argue Mennell and Goudsblom, Duerr's work is fundamentally a resuscitation of the old conception of 'Civilisation' versus 'Culture' found in Alfred Weber and Robert MacIver – he distinguishes between the 'technical' and the 'psychological', and while recognising that there is structure in processes of technical change over time believes that psychological changes are entirely random and lacking in structure.

SJM

Manuel Eisner *Das Ende der zivilisierten Stadt? Die Auswirkungen von Modernisierung und urbaner Krise auf Gewaltdelinquenz.* Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1997.

Note the question mark behind the main title. It indicates that the author, rather than making sweeping statements, is concerned with nuance and process. The book deals with two related modern trends which pose challenge to any theory of social change. First, interpersonal violence, as indicated by homicide rates, has increased in the Western world over the last thirty years: a reversal of a long-term downward trend since the Middle Ages. Second, violence is now concentrated in urban centres, whereas for some two hundred years, the countryside usually witnessed higher levels of violence than cities. These modern trends are international, but a national case study can help us understand them better. Manuel Eisner's book, dealing with the Swiss case, is one of the best studies I know of which takes up the challenge in question. His empirical evidence consists of causes of death, judicial and police statistics, and an in-depth analysis of violent incidents reported to the Basle police. These quantitative data cover a period from the 1960s to the middle of the 1990s. In its turn, the quantitative analysis is informed by a theoretical perspective which, next to criminological theories, is heavily indebted to the work of Elias.

Thus, Eisner insists on the interdependence of social structure on the one hand and the level and character of *Selbststeuerung* (self-regulation) on the other. The behaviour of individual people is a function of the level and kind of self-regulation expected in specific situations, and the availability of cultural, social and economic resources which foster self-regulation (see the scheme on p.78). This leads Eisner to a two fold explanation (or 'interpretation') of the increase in violence since the 1960s. He sees this trend against the background of processes of individualisation and economic changes. The emergence of a new personality ideal, in which self-reflection and personal autonomy are important values, has brought with it a heightened risk of failing to live up to the ideal. Simultaneously, de-industrialisation has led to a process of marginalisation in which certain groups lack the opportunities to build up a stable self-regulation attuned to a modern way of life. Moreover, these developments are especially marked in big cities, which goes a long way to explain the concentration of violence in urban centres. There is, however, also a methodological problem here. The big cities are centres of the amusement trade, which attracts people from outside at precisely those moments when the chances for violent confrontations are high. Consequently, the automatic coupling of absolute numbers of violence in a city to its population figure becomes increasingly problematic. Other contextual factors analysed by Eisner are the ethnic dimension, the drug market and street traffic as a source of conflict.

One need not necessarily agree with the author's theses and explanations to find this a stimulating and important book.

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Richard Kilminster, *The Sociological Revolution: From the Enlightenment to the Golden Age*, London, Routledge, 1998, 221pp, ISBN 0-415-02920-1

In his book, *The Sociological Revolution*, (1998) Richard Kilminster attempts to unify a collection of essays which were written at different periods. He does this by asserting, from the standpoint of figurational sociology, their common challenge to the intellectual hegemony of the philosophical establishment. In this short review I will outline the main contents of the book before listing some of its minor drawbacks as well as its substantial strengths.

According to Kilminster the emergence of sociology in the late eighteenth century constituted a revolution in knowledge in which ontological, epistemological and ethical concerns which had previously been solely within the purview of philosophy, became adopted and transformed within a sociological idiom. Thus in the early nineteenth century the theories of, *inter alia*, de Bonald, Comte, Spencer and Marx not only focused on society as an emerging reality *sui generis* which could be studied scientifically or empirically, but simultaneously took account of important moral and political considerations in the social world. This approach constituted a sociological revolution. The response of philosophers to this intellectual encroachment, which was resulting in a defunctionalisation of their social group, was to create new areas of specialisation and competence to which they could singularly lay claim as experts. Thus areas including 'pure reasoning' and 'logic', the search for timeless 'transcendental truths' and non-empirical methods of inquiry all came to characterise the new philosophical approach. However, one major consequence of this shift of terrain was that many philosophical arguments no longer possessed any empirically checkable forms of evidence, but instead remained credible only as a result of the established prestige that philosophers had accrued as a social group. This social prestige and high rank also led to many contemporary sociologists, whose group possessed a lower academic rank in comparison, to adopt a number of philosophical tenets and modes of thinking. Thus during the 1960s sociological schools such as phenomenology, ethnomethodology, structuralism and critical theory all found themselves adopting

philosophical concepts from writers such as Hegel, Nietzsche, Husserl and Heidegger. However, having acquired a firmer institutional position, contemporary sociologists are now in a position to move away from philosophy's abstract and timeless theorising back to an empirically orientated approach which was initially but only temporarily established by the sociological revolution .

Kilminster argues that the sociological revolution has by no means been a sudden and clarifying rupture in knowledge; rather it has been and remains a slow and protracted theoretical upheaval, which can be seen by examining the work of Hegel and Marx.

According to Kilminster, Hegel's thought represents the furthest point that philosophy could reach as a self-contained theoretical discipline before it became sociological. Drawing on Gillian Rose's idiosyncratic interpretation of Hegel, he argues that Hegel surmounted a number of Kantian dualisms by claiming that the 'infinite' as well as the 'finite' was knowable since it was actually embededded in the particularities of the finite and expressed through the concrete universal. Nevertheless, for Kilminister, Hegel's solution to the Kantian dualisms remained trapped within the realms of metaphysics, and it was left to Marx to attempt to move beyond them, particularly through his conception of human practice. Although this represented a massive yet partial breakthrough in the direction of sociology, Kilminister believes that as a result of the political standpoint which pervaded Marx's work, a number of these dualisms became reproduced particularly in his conception of social being determining social consciousness and in the base and superstructure metaphor.

In the second section of the book Kilminster goes on to look at the limits of transcendental philosophy, in which he broadly includes the work of Kant, Hegel, Durkheim, Simmel, Weber and Giddens, as well as sociological schools such as phenomenology, ethnomethodology, critical theory and structuralism. By comparing the work of Parsons, structuralism and Giddens with the 'developmental-figurational' approach of Elias, Kilminster is able to show the difficulties of such forms of sociology and how it still remains possible to transcend them. Parsons, he argues, reifies his concepts, besides providing an overly consensual view of the world. In parallel structuralism again draws too heavily from the philosophical idiom by seeking to unveil the transhistorical patterns embodied in all social and cultural activities – which, for example, is demonstrated in Levi-Strauss's Kantian preoccupation with the universal hidden structures of the human mind. This also is the case with Foucault, whose problematic Nietzschean conception of power is submerged within a Kantian transcendental method which seeks the conditions of possibility for social and cultural forms. However, following Rose, Kilminster contends that all transcendental analysis is circular since:
The condition of the possibility of experience (meaning) is likewise the condition of the object of experience (meaning) whether the condition is life, social situation, *Dasein* or history [or discourse or episteme]. The analysis revolves within a hermeneutic or transcendental circle, that is a circle without result. (p.87)

In turn, Giddens's theory of structuration is seen as a world-view in which there are concepts and arguments whose inclusion cannot be accounted for solely in terms of rational or intellectual criteria, but which arise from extra-theoretical factors. These factors include the incorporation of liberal, conservative and socialistic political tenets within Giddens's synthesis. Here, the liberal component with its belief in the freedom and self-actualisation of the rational individual as a sovereign and autonomous actor remains dominant, though it is merged with a conservative romanticist view of human relations with nature and with a socialist economic ontology. Moreover, not only does this position explicitly embrace a philosophical, non- empirical form of inquiry and remain limited to the study of modernity, it also fails to question how the sociological dualisms with which it is concerned arose historically in the first place. In contrast to all these theories, Kilminster argues that Elias's figurational sociology, through its sociogenetic method, provides an historically broader developmental form of inquiry which can account for social constraint through interdependency, the multi-perspectival positions of actors and an analysis of the changing regulation of affect controls which ground rationality.

Kilminster also looks to the concept of globalisation and, by drawing on Elias's work in *The Germans* and Wouters's elaboration of Elias's concept of 'informalisation processes', attempts to transcend the crude materialism of Wallerstein and the reductive culturalism of Robertson by arguing for the global world as a figurational reality *sui generis*.

In the final chapter of the book, Kilminster provides a three-phase model which attempts to tie together theoretical developments in sociology since 1945 with the extra-theoretical dimensions of institutionalisation, functional democratisation and informalisation. The first stage in the development of Western sociology, during the period 1945-65, took place in a society characterised by relatively stable power differentials and can be termed a 'monopoly stage'. Here sociology secured its position in the academy by providing a monopoly of interpretation, in this case characterised by a structural-functionalism framework. However, following a period of functional democratisation and informalisation which radically altered group structures and social conduct, this monopoly stage became replaced by a 'competitive stage' lasting from 1965–80 in which a number of theoretical groups such as Marxists, ethnomethodologists and symbolic interactionists all competed to gain a leading theoretical voice. This phase then itself provided the conditions for a new phase of synthesis, a 'concentration stage' which has existed from 1980 up and to including the present, is reflected in an equalising change in power ratios, in which mutual identification through informalisation has allowed groups to merge and form alliances and a mutual conceding and changing of concepts. It is in this context of a new synthesis, in which sociology is becoming institutionally more firmly established and moving closer to scientific forms of detached analysis that sociologists now find themselves. Kilminster, however, is far from sanguine in his assessment of sociology's present position which he believes is still far from reaching its full potential.

Before examining the strengths of Kilminsters' account, I want to look at some problems. The first concerns his analysis of Marxism. Although Kilminster argues that Marx made significant developments in sociology, particularly through his notion of practice, he adds that Marx subsequently slipped back into dualistic metaphysical and economically reductionist thinking. However, Marx's assertion that social being determines consciousness was not an attempt to prioritise the material over the ideal but was written in a context which questioned or denied the very possibility of distinguishing the material from the ideal. Conciousness for Marx was a facet of social activity or social being and its separation from the latter or from 'the individuals [who] are its basis and ... their actual conditions (*The German Ideology,* 1846 p.276)

was for Marx a form of inadmissable ideology. The same argument has been convincingly extended by Derek Sayer in *The Violence of Abstraction* (1987) in relation to the base superstructure metaphor (though E.P. Thompson and MacIntyre have made the same point before).

Secondly, the book has a certain unevenness in argument and scope which may be explicable by the fact that it was written at different periods. The most problematic chapter is that on globalisation which not only tends not to sit very easily with the rest of the book but also lacks empirical background for its arguments, and fails to take into account a host of other theorists who have written on globalisation apart from Wallerstein and Robertson – for example Lash and Urry, and Giddens.

Finally, although Kilminster draws on Mannheim as well as Elias, he does sometimes tend to underplay or not discuss at all the relation between the political dimension of social analysis and the changing relations of informalisation and functional democratisation. For example although Kilminster does make reference to the political dominance of the right as well as functional democratisation in accounting for the decline of Marxism within the sociological academy, it seems hardly possible to understand the decline of Marxism in sociological institutions without making explicit reference to the fall of state socialism. Again when Kilminster rightly discusses the political underpinnings of Giddens's thought, for example, he does not make clear how this relates to the institutional dimension of sociology or to the functional democratisation of society.

However, these minor quibbles notwithstanding, the book is beautifully written and possesses great clarity despite the fact that some of the arguments are unavoidably dense. In addition, it displays a depth of insight and breadth of reading into sociological thinkers and theory which one rarely comes across. Kilminister has brilliant and deep insights not only into the work of Hegel, but also into that of Habermas, Lévi-Strauss, phenomenology and, most significantly, Giddens. In fact, the essay on Giddens is by any standards a *tour de force*. In a recent four-volume set of essays dealing with Giddens's work, Kilminster's essay stands head and shoulders above the rest. Finally, although Kilminister rightly criticises transcendentalism for its metaphysical *a priori* universals, his own analysis can be said to show the conditions of possibility of how sociology emerged and shifted, unlike transcendentalism through concepts which are historically and empirically grounded. What, following Elias, he calls a sociogenetic approach (and which is also present in Marx, Mannheim and Bourdieu) allows Kilminister to explain precisely what is taken for granted or left unquestioned by most other sociologists, and enables him to provide a sociology of sociology. It is this which makes *The Sociological Revolution* such a powerful and thought-provoking text.

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Tom Inglis, *Lessons in Irish Sexuality*. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1998. vii-203pp. ISBN 1-900621-16-9.

Irish attitudes towards sex have changed dramatically over the last thirty years. Young people today are caught in the middle of a significant shift from traditional views of sex and sexuality dominated by the Catholic Church and the more liberal views of today supported and promoted by agencies such as the state and the media.

In his book *Lessons in Irish Sexuality*, Inglis argues that the changes relating to sex and sexuality which have been occurring in Western society throughout the twentieth century have filtered into Irish society primarily through the media. It is this type of society in which we now live where traditional Catholic ideas such as protecting the family and the innocence of young children and maintaining moral standards are being challenged by liberal, radical and progressive groups who oppose the church's monopoly over morality, who see an urgent need in educating young people in such issues and who feel young people should have the right to choose, to feel free, to decide for themselves what is right and wrong and good and bad. They want to break the taboos of the past and the silence which has surrounded sex. Sex can no longer be swept under the carpet. Feelings of fear, shame and guilt which surrounded sex and the body in Ireland for centuries must be eliminated.

Inglis begins by examining the Catholic Church's traditional opinions regarding sex education. It is true that in order to understand the present and look positively towards the future, we must be able to understand the past – such as how the church's mechanisms of sexual control were linked both with morality and structural factors. He shows how in the nineteenth century the control of sex and the protection of the family were linked to the modernisation of Irish agriculture and how modesty and chastity were considered great virtues which were internalised in children and became part of Irish people's habitus – automatic and central elements of behaviour which take many years – or generations – to rid oneself of. Along with this Inglis sees secrecy, guilt and shame about sexual activity as learnt dispositions also, which take many years to overturn.

Inglis focuses on the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme which was introduced into Irish schools by the state in 1998 as being vital in teaching young children not only about sex and sexuality but also about themselves, their relationships and how to become 'self-aware, self-confident, self-assertive and critically reflective about themselves, their family and the community and society in which they live' (p171–172). This liberalism has been met with opposition particularly within the field of education over which the church had and still has considerable power. Inglis approves of the programme but admits that sex and sex education are causing one of the most serious challenges to the Catholic Church's 150-year monopoly over morality.

In developing an RSE programme, the Irish state has slowly followed in the footsteps of its European western counterparts. Its delay in entering the field has been due to such opposition by the church and also to do with Irish people's ambivalence. Young people in Ireland today are aware of their new sexual freedom but are also conscious of the legacy of the Catholic Church. This ambivalence is something which needs to be addressed. 'Learning to be sexually street-wise for young people in Ireland means growing up to realise that there are two sides to every street: the side of chastity and modesty and the side of sexual experience...young people [must]...adapt to the rules of the road, most of all, watch out for the traffic which may knock them down.'

Schools are now obliged to include an RSE programme in their curriculum. The

programme is devised by the Department of Education and is also supposed to reflect the ethos of each individual school. It is here, Inglis argues, that the problem lies. By attempting to create a new form of self-critically reflective, self-directed people who are confident about their sexuality and who understand the consequences of and take responsibility for their behaviour goes against traditional forms of Catholicism in which people accepted without questioning the rules of the church. Inglis believes that the RSE programme needs to move away from this traditional view and place emphasis on how the programme is taught in order for it to be successful. The emergence of individual moral responsibility, according to Inglis, signals the decline of the Catholic Church's role as the conscience of Irish society, and a sort of implicitly 'protestantisation' of the country – in effect 'the Reformation has come late to Ireland'.

The central argument of the book is to show that in an increasingly liberal and individualistic world, there is no one truth which can be easily identifiable or no single perspective about sex and sexuality in Ireland. It is a wonderful and insightful view into the current changes in Irish society.

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Patrice Pinell 'Modern medicine and the civilising process' *Sociology of Health and Illness* 18 (1) 1996:1-6.

Author's Abstract: Medical sociology, mainly an Anglo-Saxon invention, was developed almost without any theoretical reference to Norbert Elias's work. One of the consequences of this ignorance was that a very challenging idea has been lost. This idea addressed the sociological problems associated with the historical changes that in turn affected the role played by hygiene in the normalisation of human behaviour. According to Elias's theory of civilising processes, the progressive changes in human behaviour were part of global dynamics involving the transformation of both social structures and individuals' habitus. In the construction of the 'civilised behaviour' characteristic of the dominant group, hygienic preoccupation played no role. The medical discoveries of the nineteenth century about the infectious diseases gave *a* posteriori an addition of legitimacy to this civilised behaviour.

Adopting Elias's perspective, I try to answer a question left unexplored in his work, i.e. the place of contemporary medical knowledge and practices within the ongoing civilising process. This question leads me to analyse:
1. the role played by 'Pasteurian hygiene in the policy of civilisation' of the lower classes in France;
2. the tendency towards the medicalisation of self-control behaviour and the emergence of the patient as medical auxiliary involved in the division of medical works.

Rob Stones, *Key Sociological Thinkers*. London, Macmillan Press, 1998. vii–366. ISBN: 0-333-68767-1.

This is a brilliantly organised book. *Key Sociological Thinkers* introduces 21 of the most influential sociological thinkers from Marx, Durkheim and Weber to Foucault and Giddens and of course contains a chapter on Norbert Elias by Jason Hughes.

Each chapter has a common format – containing a section called driving impulses, key issues, seeing things differently, legacies and unfinished business What impressed me most about this concise book was the section called 'seeing things differently'. Here the authors relate how the perspective of their key thinker has made them see the social world in a new and illuminating way, drawing their attention to aspects of the world that otherwise would have passed them by. In this section, they do not draw directly on examples given in the work of their thinker, but use examples from everyday life, literature and film.

Jason Hughes saw Elias's work differently and wrote a section called 'From the use of tobacco as a means to lose control to its use as a means of self-control'. Others include Whitney Pope on Durkheim, 'The collective symbols and rituals of American collegiate football', Ken Plummer on Blumer, 'Studying sexuality up off the seat of your pants' and Williams on Goffman, 'What it is about licensed bars that makes us behave differently'.

This book is full of great thinkers and great biographers. It is a lovely and insightful way to write a book and I think if more sociology books were written in this manner we would make ourselves much more accessible to people from many other disciplines.

Aoife Rickard
University College Dublin

Arpad Szakolczai, *Max Weber and Michel Foucault: Parallel Life-Works* London: Routledge, 1998, 321pp. ISBN: 0-415-16681-0.

Foucault devoted his last two courses at the Collège de France to truth-telling. In particular, he focused on parrhesia. This is a form of truth-telling which is based on personal conviction. It is about revealing things which exist, but which are not seen or understood. It is about taking risks. It is not about winning philosophical arguments (rhetoric), nor is about passing on an established body of knowledge (teaching). The parrhesiast tries to reveal in free, open, honest and clear manner the world in which we exist.(180)

It was only in his last four years that Foucault saw clearly what his life-work was about. The key to Foucault's life-work, Szakolczai argues, is a lecture on 'Subjectivity and Truth' given in California in October, 1981. In this he explores the link between truth and the telling of truth, that is between telling the truth and forms of reflexivity about the self. How, through entering into and playing the game of truth, individuals can critically reflect about themselves. His whole archaeological analyses of discourses and his genealogical analyses of power were a preparation for this final problematisation of his life-work. (81) In these studies he had sought to discover the way power is exercised over souls and bodies, and how people come to live regular, methodical lives. This led him to focus on sexual ethics and ancient philosophy. These were the keys to understanding the links between power, knowledge, rationality and modernity and how we came to be the way we are.
Szakolczai argues that Weber was also a parrhesiast. He compares the last ten years of Weber's life with the last four of Foucault's. In a letter written in 1909, Weber announced his decisive inner need for 'intellectual righteousness': to say what

is.(181) Weber had begun to lecture again; a significant achievement for someone who could not speak in front of an audience for years . He began to take risks in what he said. He challenged and provoked his audiences. For Szakolczai the key to this period is his lecture on 'Personality and Life Orders' – which ended up published as 'Science as a Vocation' – and his essay on 'Value Freedom'.

But it is the similarity in the way Weber and Foucault searched for truth, the reading influences they encountered along the way, and how this search interacted with events in their lives, which intrigues Szakolczai. The game of searching for the truth is necessarily played as part of the wider game of life. Throughout the book, Szakolczai adheres to a schema in which he shows how Weber and Foucault's struggle to define who they were, what they did, and the world in which they lived, was tied into struggles for personal identity and status, professional recognition and acceptance of their work, and social and political engagement in the world. (85)

Szakolczai emphasises this kind of reconceptualisation of life experiences is essential to the reflexive historical sociology undertaken by Weber and Foucault. Following Weber, he argues that certain experiences can shatter the mental categories which, once stamped on us, frame the way we read, understand and relate to the world. Following Victor Turner, he calls these liminal experiences.

It is possible, however, to remain in a permanent state of liminality, continually questioning existing knowledge and reflecting about the self. Szakolczai argues that it is possible to identify key liminal moments in Weber's and Foucault's lives, which are often associated with reading experiences and which lead them to critical reflections about themselves and their life work. He says that there are certain key texts which provide an insight into their thinking during these liminal moments. For Weber it is the 'Author's Introduction' to the Collected Essays on the Sociology of Religion – published in the second edition of *The Protestant Ethic*. For Foucault it is the 'Introduction' to the *History of Sexuality* – published in the second volume, *The Use of Pleasure*. He links the writing of these pieces to Nietzsche's preface to the *Genealogy of Morals* and, in particular, how they show the ways in which the will to knowledge about oneself is tied in with the will to find the truth about the world in which we live. But, more important, Szakolczai argues that what connects Weber and Foucault is that at the height of their liminality, at the height of their struggle to tell the truth, they both read Nietzsche. What makes this book unique and important is Szakolczai's careful and painstaking re-reading of Weber and Foucault in light of their own life experiences and of Nietzsche's project of truth-telling.

Tom Inglis
University College Dublin

Arpad Szakolczai, 'Reflexive Historical Sociology', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 1 (2) 1998: 209–27.

Author's Abstract: This paper attempts to reassess the standard sociological canon and sketch the outlines of a new approach by bringing together a series of thinkers whose works so far have remained disconnected. Introducing a distinction between classics and background figures who were crucial sources of inspiration, it shifts emphasis to the late, reflexive works of Durkheim and Weber. These are sources for two types of reflexive sociology: historical and anthropological. The main background figures of reflexive historical sociology are Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Freud, while its protagonists include Foucault, Elias, Voegelin, Borkenau, Mumford, Ariès and Koselleck. A short introduction is given to the four main field of interest within the approach: the reconstructive histories of subjectivity, of forms of thought, of forms of knowledge, and of closed space and regulated time.

William H. McNeill, *The Disruption of Traditional Forms of Nature: Essay and Discussion*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1998. viii + 184pp. ISBN: 90-5589-121-5.

This book takes an unusual form. It centres on the 25-page essay on 'The Disruption of Traditional Forms of Nurture' by the great American historian William McNeill, among whose most celebrated earlier books are *The Rise of the West*, *Plagues and Peoples*, and *Keeping Together in Time* (see *Figurations* 5). The rest of the book consists of an edited transcript of the conference called to discuss McNeill's essay at the Luxembourg Institute for European and International Studies on 12-13 July 1996.

McNeill characteristically takes a very long-term view of human society and its modes of bringing up new generations. He points out that the era when all human communities were hunters and gatherers of some type, together with the subsequent period in which the vast majority of people in agrarian societies lived in relatively autonomous village communities, account for perhaps 99% of the time that *Homo sapiens* has existed as a species. During that whole period, he sees co-operative families as the basic units of production and consumption, embedded in village communities. In that context, the relation between generations were, he contends, close and harmonious. Thus the disruption of traditional modes of nurture, which McNeill associates mainly with rapid urbanisation principally in this century, is something new and recent. McNeill compares the youth gangs and violence of many modern cities with traditional banditry. The kernel of his thesis is that 'the rural base is where human continuity has lain' (p176), and now it is altering.

Like everything McNeill writes, this essay is highly intelligent and studded with arresting insights. Nevertheless, as he himself observes, he is by no means a specialist in the vast literature about family forms and patterns of nurture; and, moreover, he admits that he writes as an old man with some affection for the world in which he grew up. Many of the commentators on his paper argued that it was a little too nostalgic, perhaps a little too close to the once-dominant Parsonian view of the family.

Among the participants in the conference was an unusually large proportion of those strongly influenced by Elias: Eric Dunning, Joop Goudsblom, Peter Spierenburg and Cas Wouters and myself. This group has long been in dialogue not just with McNeill himself but also with several of the other participants, who included Randall Collins, Eiko Ikegami, Jean La Fontaine and Olga Zdravomyslova. Partly in consequence, the discussion was surprisingly coherent for such a conference – at least it seems so once the contributors have had chance to tidy up their remarks! Questions central to the discussion were:

Is W.H. McNeill's 'civilised [between urban elites and village autonomy] compromise' a fair way to describe traditional urban-rural relations?
Is the role of population balance within villages anything like what McNeill suggests?
What was the scope for youthful rebellion and violence in traditional village societies? Were there fully peaceful villages, e.g. in Java?
What were the landmarks of market penetration of village autonomy? Is W.H. McNeill right to emphasise the recency of the development so strongly?
What precedents are there in cities of the deeper past for street gangs and the like?
Is the break-up of family 'diversified production and shared consumption' as complete as W.H. McNeill says? Are there any possibilities for restoring it?
How long can inherited rural nurture carried into cities by immigrants persist? Is a new sort of 'civilised compromise' imaginable based on continued inflow from the countryside?
What sorts of community can be imagined within urban settings to take the place of decayed villages?

SJM

Colin Keaveney, 'La Bruyère and the "Civilising Process"', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies* 19, 1997: 83-94.

Keaveney sets in the context of the theory of civilising processes La Bruyère's mordant account – especially in *Les Caractères* – of the uncouth habits of the greater aristocracy and his satirical observations on bourgeois mores in seventeenth-century France. Elias himself used La Bruyère as a source, and Keaveney broadly agrees with his interpretation. He does, however, enter the qualification that the 'civilising process' from the end of the seventeenth century may have been less hierarchical than Elias suspected. The centres of polite society multiplied and became ever more socially porous. Academies, cafés and salons prized content over mere social nicety.

This caveat is a mild echo of Daniel Gordon's more extreme criticism in *Citizens Without Sovereignity* (1994). For a counter-argument to Gordon, see Roger Chartier's article in *Figurations* 9.

SJM

I.G Iakovenko, 'Civilisation and Barbarism in Russia's History: State Power and the "Criminal World"', *Russian Politics and Law* 35 (4) 1997: 43-58.

This author makes no reference to Elias's work, but we mention the article here in order to draw attention to the interesting fact that, among social scientists in Russia, the terms 'civilisation' and 'barbarism' have been much employed in debates since the fall of the Soviet bloc. Indeed they have entered into popular discourse and journalism about the way Russians live now. Iakovenko's article begins 'A barbaric element still exists in one pure form, a marginal form, within Russian society. It is the "purest" mixture of the archaic and the barbaric diametrically opposite to a modern type of state and society.' In my view these debates in and about Russia could benefit greatly from a more processual, less dualistic way of thinking, and from a sophisticated knowledge of the Eliasian literature on civilising and decivilising processes.

SJM

Joanna Swabe, *Animals, Disease and Human Society: Human-animal relations and the rise of veterinary medicine.* London: Routledge, 1999. viii+243pp. ISBN: 0-415-18193-3.

In recent years, the issue of animal disease has seldom been out of the headlines. The emergence of BSE and the threat of food-borne infections such as E.coli and salmonella have focused public attention on the impact of animal disease on human society. However, the problem of animal disease is far from new. *Animals, Disease and Human Society* explores the history and nature of our dependency on other animals and the implications of this for human and animal health.

Writing from a historical and sociological perspective, Joanna Swabe's work discusses such issues as:
animal domestication;
the consequences of the human exploitation of other animals, including links between human and animal disease;
the rise of a veterinary regime, designed to protect humans and animals alike;
the implications of intensive farming practices, pet-keeping and recent biotechnological developments.

This account spans a period of some ten thousand years, and raises important questions about the increasing intensification of animal use for both animal and human health. All those interested in human-animal relationships or in public health issues will find *Animals, Disease and Human Society* a thought-provoking and rewarding work.

SJM

Detlev Schöttker, 'Norbert Elias and Walter Benjamin: an exchange of letters and its context'. *History of the Human Sciences* 11 (2) 1998: 45–59.

A letter dated 12 June 1938 from Walter Benjamin to an unknown correspondent has long been famous among Benjamin scholars because, when it was published in 1967, it sparked off a dispute concerning Benjamin's relation to the Frankfurt school and whether Adorno had 'erased' the Marxist-materialistic side of Benjamin's thought. It is now known that this letter was part of a series of letters between Benjamin and Norbert Elias. Elias had sent the first volume of *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* to Benjamin and pleaded with him to review it Benjamin declined on grounds of firmly Marxist disagreement with what he perceived to be Elias's theory. The letters of Elias and Benjamin are reproduced at the end of the article.

SJM

Wolfgang Ludwig-Mayerhofer, 'Disziplin oder Distinktion? Zur Interpretation der Theorie des Zivilisationsprozesses von Norbert Elias' [Discipline or distinction? On the interpretation of Norbert Elias's theory of civilising processes] *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 50 (1) 1998: 217-37.

Abstract: The basis for the popularity (at least in Europe) of the sociology of Norbert Elias is above all his theory of civilising

processes. Critical discussion is now revealing major problems in his work. In particular, there is the question of Elias's account of 'civilised people' being ever more restrained through super-ego constraints and feelings of shame and embarrassment is still valid in the light of developments in the twentieth century. The recurrence of violence and also the processes of pluralisation and the relaxation of rigid norms seem to argue against it. It can be argued that Elias bases his analysis of civilising processes on four mechanisms, which he saw as all acting in the same direction of social integration and individual restriction ('discipline'). Other conceptualisations of these mechanisms, are however possible, and are to be found in his work ('distinction'), so the one-sidedness of Elias's interpretation should not necessarily continue to be accepted.

■ ELIAS FOUNDATION WEBSITE

New on the internet, the Norbert Elias Foundation website: http://home.wxs.nl/~elias. The website, which will replace the UCD one, is meant to complement *Figurations* and the Elias-l newsgroup by providing information which is bulky or not easily accessible elsewhere. The website contains general information on the Norbert Elias Foundation and several bibliographies: one of Norbert Elias' publications, at present in 18 languages, Willem Kranendonk's bibliography of figurational studies in the Netherlands, and a non-exhaustive list of recent publications in figurational studies. In addition, there is a list of reviews of Elias's books, one of published interviews with Norbert Elias, and the inventory of the Elias archive part 1 and 1a. In the course of time, items will be expanded and others added. The bibliographies and list of reviews will be regularly updated.

■ ELIAS-I: THE ELECTRONIC DISCUSSION LIST

Electronic discussion lists are now much used by researchers in many fields for sharing information on research, meetings, grants, and for initiating informal discussion of research topics. There is a discussion list specifically of interest to readers of *Figurations*. Its name is ELIAS-I.

All you need to participate in this international network is an e-mail address.

You subscribe to the ELIAS-I list simply by sending a message to:
LISTSERV@nic.surfnet.nl

with this text in the BODY of the message (*not* in the subject heading space):
subscribe ELIAS-I your full name.

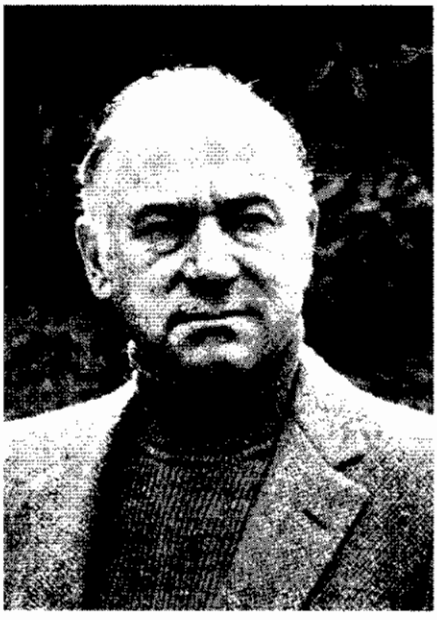
LISTSERV is a computer program, so please mail the list-owner for help with subscribing, unsubscribing or any other problem with the list:
roukens@siswo.uva.nl

Messages meant to be distributed to all the members of the list should be sent to: ELIAS-I@nic.surfnet.nl

The archive of all previous contributions to the list is available in html format at the address: http://listserv. surfnet.nl/archives/elias-i.html

■ OBITUARY

The death has been announced of Eric Wolf, a prominent U.S. anthropologist who knew Norbert Elias in war-time internment in Britain. The younger Eric was shipped off to Canada with many others, via unspecified convoy and facing U-boat hunter packs en route.



Many will know his 1977 essay 'Encounter with Norbert Elias' in *Human Figurations* (pp 28-35). Some may know Eric's appreciation conveyed elsewhere, expressly in 'Kinship, Friendship, and Patron-Client Relations in Complex Societies', in Michael Banton (ed.), *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies*, London 1966, 1–22. His book *Europe and the Peoples without History* (1982) attracted particular international attention.

Of late he was prominent in administering Wenner Gren Foundation anthropological research funding in New York. He was known to be critical of shallow expositions of ethnographic data, in that familiar rootless one-thing-after-another style which has captivated many.

In correspondence this anthropologist showed nuanced endorsement for Elias's many contributions to a broadly-conceived human science. He seems to have had no doubts as to the relevance of Elias's conceptualisations. Perhaps I can add that I for one have never understood the unwillingness of some modern anthropologists to connect details of their small-scale empiricisms with an explanatory framework which is consistent, and which, if necessary with modification in the light of experience, generates further enquiry. That is what Elias's work is about, not patches of stardust or hailstorms of abstractions. But among other things HE was an anthropologist of long-term European history.

Paul Nixon
University of Cambridge

■ FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

4th European Conference of Sociology – Will Europe Work?

Amsterdam, 18 - 21 August.

Special Sessions on Figurational Sociology. The programme of the sessions, with abstracts of the papers, is available at the address http://www.siswo.uva.nl/ nieuwsbr/figurati/esaelias.html

Norbert Elias in Wroclaw/Breslau

24-25 September 1999

Wroclaw University – Collegium Antropologicum, Kuznica 25, Wroclaw, Poland

On Friday 24 September 1999, a memorial plaque will be unveiled at the house in Wroclaw where Norbert Elias lived as a

child. This will be followed by a conference organised by Herman Tak and Don Kalb. Lectures will deal with:

Elias in Breslau/ Wroclaw, Elias and the human condition (Johan Goudsblom, Abram de Swaan), Elias and the human condition in East Central Europe (Ton Zwaan, Piotr Sztompka, Zsuza Ferge).

Those who wish to be present and to take part in the conference should contact Herman Tak, e-mail: htak@wxs.nl

Civilising and Decivilising Processes

Paris, 22-23 October 1999

Sinonetta Tabboni (Université de Paris 7–Jussieu) is organising a two-day conference on current developments in relation to Elias's sociology. There will be three major thematic sessions, on: Civilising and decivilising processes, Established-Outsider applications, Towards a sociology of figurations (focusing on methodological and conceptual issues).

If you would like to participate in this conference, please contact Prof. Simonetta Tabboni, UFR Sciences Sociales, Université Denis Diderot (Paris 7), 2 Place Jussieu, 75251 Paris cedex 05, tel. +33 1 44 275669. E-mail: talpa@clubinternet.fr

International Conference: Norbert Elias and Social Anthropology

21–22 September 2000
French Society of Ethnology and University of Metz (France)

The work of Norbert Elias has attracted the attention of historians, political scientists and sociologists. At a time of renewed interest in Elias's work, we would like to examine how his 'cross-disciplinary' thought illuminates the anthropological approach. The conference will focus on two main topics:
What is the place of anthropology in Elias's work? His work refers explicitly to classics like Radcliffe-Brown, Mead, Evans-Pritchard and Levi-Strauss. He lived in Africa, where he confronted the cultural 'Other'. This experience led him to reconsider European culture and more broadly the epistemological position of self-distanciation.
How can Elias's works enrich anthropology? Apart from occasional references to Elias in recent anthropological writing, there has been no systematic attempt to incorporate his perspective into the various fields to which it is obviously relevant. These might include: uses of the body, everyday life, organisation of public and private space, etc; concepts such as habitus, process, interiorisation, etc; and the definition of 'culture'.

This conference, beyond paying homage to Elias, will aim to stimulate a critical reading of Elias's works. We will explore the heuristic value and formative potential of his thought for contemporary anthropology.

For more information, including conditions of financial support, please contact :
Dr Sophie Chevalier, lecturer in social anthropology at the University of Franche-Comté, co-organiser of the conference: SophieChevalier@ compuserve.com

The official languages of the conference will be French, German and English.

■ ANARCHISTS

Peter Neville 'Norbert Elias: Civilisation and De-civilisation', *Total Liberty: A Journal of non-aligned Anarchism* 1 (4) Spring 1999: 5-7.

Articles about Elias's work now turn up in the most unaccepted places! Peter Neville, both an anarchist and a long-time Elias enthusiast, has written a short essay introducing figurational sociology to British anarchists. He contends, in particular, that 'For anarchists to understand state development and decline they must study the creation of civilisation and decivilisation…'

■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO *FIGURATIONS*

The next issue of Figurations will be mailed in November 1999. 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 Mackintosh); WordPerfect (up to 5.1), Microsoft Word (up to 7) and plain text files can all be handled. Do not use embedded footnotes. Hard copy is accepted reluctantly.

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