

Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

EDITORS' NOTES

- Our editorial policy is to promote the free discussion and use of the work of Norbert Elias from every point of view. In this issue, Daniel Gordon contributes a summary of lectures he gave recently in Paris, in the context of red-in-tooth-and-claw French academic politics. In certain respects he revives criticisms which were current years ago, before Elias's writings were so well-known. But some readers may well find his remarks on Elias in relation to anti-Semitism and to Max Weber reprehensible – respectively morally and intellectually reprehensible. We shall be willing to publish rejoinders in *Figurations* 14.
- Since it has been alleged that Eliasians in France have now moved from being an outsider group to being an establishment, it is good to have a report in *Figurations* 13 of the recent conference at the Université de Paris VII – Denis Diderot, and announcements of two others in France (in September at the Université de Metz, and in October at the Université de Haute Bretagne) – all fora in which some of the key problems relating to civilising and decivilising processes can be openly thrashed out.
- Also highlighted in this issue of *Figurations* is the new edition and thoroughly revised translation of *The Civilising Process*. We would modestly suggest that this supersedes the 1978, 1982 and 1994 texts, and that all libraries – private and institutional – therefore need it on their shelves.
- Congratulations to Eric Dunning, whose book *Sport Matters* (Routledge, 1999) was voted the best book of the year in the field by the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport. Owing to editorial oversight (possibly occasioned by consumption of alcohol at the book launch last year in Dublin), *Sport Matters* has not yet been reviewed in *Figurations*. The omission will be rectified in the next issue.

... AND NOTES ABOUT THE EDITORS

- And congratulations too to Aoife Rickard and William Diamond who are now the proud parents of baby David, born on 17 May, weighing 7 pounds, 5 ounces. Both doing fine!
- Stephen Mennell has been appointed a member of the new Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences, established by the government of Ireland at the beginning of 2000. The Council will fulfil the functions of the research councils found in most other European countries, but which Ireland has hitherto lacked.
- Stephen Mennell has also been appointed founding Director of the new Institute for the Study of Social Change at the National University of Ireland, Dublin (aka UCD). Funding has been received from the Irish government and private donors to erect a new building which will house the new National Social Science Data Archive – something else that Ireland has hitherto lacked – and provide facilities for researchers in economics, political science, sociology and social policy, and work stations for 48 PhD students.

■ FROM THE NORBERT ELIAS FOUNDATION

Second Norbert Elias Amalfi Prize

The second Norbert Elias Amalfi Prize, for a distinguished first book in Sociology published in Europe by a European author, will be awarded for the second time in May 2001. Books published during the calendar years 1999–2000 qualify for nomination.

A formal request for nominations, and details of how and where they are to be submitted, will be sent out by the secretariat of the Premio Europeo Amalfi towards the end of 2000, and included in *Figurations* 14. Readers are however, invited to begin giving some thought to the best first books which appeared in 1999 and are still appearing in 2000. A formal letter of recommendation in English must accompany each nomination.

The prize is awarded 'in commemoration of the sociologist Norbert Elias (1897–1990), whose writings, at once theoretical and empirical, boldly crossed disciplinary boundaries in the human sciences to develop a long-term perspective on the patterns of interdependence which human beings weave together'. The first winner was David Lepoutre, for his book *Coeur de banlieue*, and the prize was presented at the Premio Europeo Amalfi conference in May 1999.

The winning author will receive 1,000 and with his or her partner will also be invited to Amalfi at the expense of the Norbert Elias Foundation for the prize-giving ceremony.

Marbach Stipend

This year's Norbert Elias Foundation Marbach Stipend has been awarded to David Rotman, of the Université de Paris X – Nanterre, who is working on what might be called a 'network' study to elucidate the least well-known period of Elias's life, from his exile to Paris in 1933 through the first years in England, internment on the Isle of Man, teaching adult education classes and the founding of Group Analysis until his appointment to the Department of Sociology at Leicester in 1954. David will make an inventory of everyone with whom Elias corresponded in these years.

■ TWO IN ONE

Hermann Korte's valedictory lecture on *Die Ballade vom Armen Jakob* and its first staging in Germany

This spring, Hermann Korte retired from his post as Professor of Sociology at the University of Hamburg. On 28 March, he gave his valedictory lecture, making it a very special event by organising the first performance in Germany of *The Ballad of Poor Jacob*, a piece written by Norbert Elias (lyrics) and Hans Gál (music) in the internment camp on the Isle of Man in 1940.

The location matched the occasion. The farewell speech and performance took place in the main hall of the Literaturhaus in Hamburg, whose director, Dr. Ursula Keller, welcomed Hermann Korte and his guests – among them Johan and Maria Goudsblom and Stephen Mennell from the 'Elias-community', and former Mayor of Hamburg Klaus von Dohnanyi, who knew Elias and held him in high esteem – and expressed her hope that Hermann would have a long and productive retirement and would give many more of his interesting lectures in the *Literaturhaus*.

Dr Keller's welcome was followed by the presentation of the *Festschrift* entitled *Skepsis und Engagement* (Scepticism and Involvement), edited in Professor Korte's honour by Gabriele Klein and Annette Treibel,¹ who, when introducing the book, managed to give a survey of Korte's achievements in his academic career without making the laudatory speech he had very vigorously opposed. The title of the *Festschrift* both alludes to major publications by two of Korte's most important



Wolfram Maria Märtig (piano), Michail Palewicz (speaker) and Hermann Korte

teachers – Helmut Schelsky's *Die skeptische Generation* (The Sceptical Generation) and Norbert Elias's *Involvement and Detachment* – and describes the attitudes which characterise Korte's political and academic work. Written by friends, colleagues and former students, the *Festschrift* reflects his main areas of research: urban sociology, migration, figurational sociology and socio-biographical research, covering aspects of Korte's life as well as recent discussions and developments in these fields.

Hermann Korte's lecture was entitled 'Poor Jacob. Poor Norbert. Poor Hans'. He began by relating how his search for a topic for the farewell lecture came to an end when he received an unexpected phone call from Simon Fox-Gál, a grandson of Hans Gál, informing him that he had found the musical score of *Der Ballade vom armen Jakob*. Soon Korte was not only content with having found his topic, but also determined to organise a performance of the work.

In 1940, the British authorities decided indiscriminately to intern all Germans and Austrians on their territory. Recognised refugees from Nazi oppression – Jews, politicians, journalists, trade unionists and others – found themselves 'collared' as enemy aliens alongside other Germans living in Britain and sailors of the German merchant navy. The discomfort of this situation was further enhanced by fears that they would be used as a bargaining chip in reaching a separate peace-treaty with Germany. How little the guards knew about the historical

and biographical background of their prisoners is shown in the remark of a camp commander reported by Max F. Perutz: 'I had no idea there were so many Jews among the Nazis'.

At Whitsun 1940, Elias was taken away from his home in Cambridge, and Gál from his in Edinburgh. Thus the composer and musicologist Hans Gál and the sociologist Norbert Elias came to meet at the interim camp in Huyton near Liverpool, from where, after a short stay, they were both shipped to the Isle of Man. In this pre-war holiday resort, the boarding houses were fenced in with barbed wire and crammed with two people per bed.

Drawing heavily on the diary of Hans Gál and the autobiographical work of other exiles, Korte's lecture gave a vivid impression of the everyday lives of the interned. He described their fears for themselves and for their families, their anxious wait to be freed again, the bad hygienic conditions; but he also stressed their ability to make the best of their situation and to organise a busy camp life, creating an established community. Gál notes in his diary that there was a legal branch, an accommodation office, a canteen, a welfare office, and a 'medical hardships' service. Camp life also included a university and even a café with musicians. As early as the time in Huyton, academics, artists and musicians had organised lectures, theatricals and concerts. Gál's composition named the 'Huyton Suite' for flute and two violins dates from that time: those were the only three instruments available.

The camp university had no library; all lectures and seminars were given from memory, presenting the lecturers' own ideas and approaches. Elias was a leading figure in this university life, organising lectures and seminars, teaching sociology and social psychology in English, as demanded by the guards. A few years ago, Elias's notes from the internment camp were rediscovered in England. They not only reveal that the conceptualisation of sociology which Elias eventually published in *What is Sociology?* in 1970 was clearly formed in his course 'Sociology I-III' for the 'Mona University College' as it was called (Mona being an old name for the Isle of Man), but also show the wide range of topics covered by the camp-university: modern mathematics, dialectical materialism, modern English poetry, or Hegel's philosophy figured next to topics like 'cars' or 'colour photography'.

*The Ballad of Poor Jacob*² formed part of a camp show called *What a life!*, meant to represent the main aspects of camp life and staged in September 1940. Elias wrote it for the second series of performances. The ballad relates the story of the eternal Jew – ending up between the lines wherever he appears, with the fighting parties finally reaching an agreement to his cost. Thus the chorus recites: 'Und dann schlugen alle im Verein auf den armen Jakob ein' (And then everyone ganged up together to beat up poor Jacob). The ballad is written for a speaker, chorus and piano, and it is a peculiar mixture of prose and verse. Gál's music, which distinctly reflects his qualities as an opera composer, begins to play when prose turns into verse and closes the periodically recurring episodes with formal intermezzi.

The lecture led to the second highlight of the event: the impressive performance of *Die Ballade vom armen Jakob* by Michail Paweletz (speaker) and Wolfram Maria Märtig (piano). The piece, directed by Torsten Beyer and Hans-Jörg Kapp, was video-recorded, thus preserving the performance for posterity.

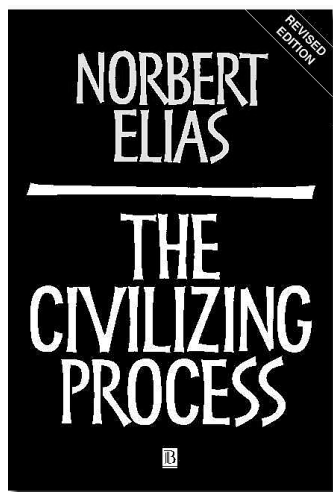
With his valedictory lecture Korte, as one of the main driving forces of the development and recognition of the process and figurational sociology, further promoted Elias's work, this time rather stressing his qualities as a poet and combining it with his own deep interest in music. We all wish Hermann Korte, although formally retired, many more years of fruitful work as a ver-

satile (figurational) sociologist and writer.

Heike Hammer
University of Hamburg

1. Gabriele Klein and Annette Treibel, eds, *Skepsis und Engagement: Festschrift für Hermann Korte*. Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 2000. 437 pp. ISBN: 3-8258-4638-5
2. Norbert Elias: *Die Ballade vom Armen Jakob*. Mit Illustrationen von Karl-Georg Hirsch und mit einem Nachwort von Hermann Korte. Frankfurt am Main/Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1996. ISBN: 3-458-19165-8.

■ NEW ENGLISH EDITION OF THE CIVILISING PROCESS



Norbert Elias, *The Civilising Process*. Revised edition, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. xviii + 567 pp. ISBN: 0-631-22160-3 (hardback), 0-631-22161-1 (paperback).

Blackwell's need to reprint *The Civilising Process* afforded an opportunity to make some revisions to the text. Although not many people seem to have noticed, quite a number of serious errors had crept into the 1994 one-volume edition, which was produced by scanning the 1978/1982 two-volume edition. Most notably, in the famous excerpts on behaviour at table from medieval and early modern manners books, the running footnotes containing comparative texts had been hopelessly scrambled in with the main text. So the Board of the Norbert Elias Foundation suggested that the book be reset, to which Blackwells readily agreed. The three of us took on the task of

making corrections, and they proved to be rather more extensive than we originally intended. In the event we did not merely correct the 1994 text, but undertook a thorough revision of the original English version. Translation is an imperfect art, and translating Norbert Elias's German into English poses peculiar problems. They arise mainly from his attempt always to write in a *processual* way, minimising the use of static concepts, and also to avoid referring to 'the individual' in the singular and as something separate from other people – what Elias was later to call the *homo clausus* image, prevalent in Western thought. Edmund Jephcott's fine translation of *The Civilising Process*, published in 1978 and 1982, was one of the earliest of Elias's German writings to appear in English, and since then there have been many discussions among Elias scholars about the best ways of rendering his ideas. In addition, Heike Hammer's definitive scholarly edition of the German text of *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation*, published by Suhrkamp in 1997, was extremely useful in correcting the English text, especially in relation to bibliographical details.

The book has been entirely restructured. Hitherto, it has been common for the two original volumes of the English translation to be misperceived as two separate or only loosely-connected books. Many American sociologists, in particular, have cited the book they knew as *The History of Manners* without apparently being aware that it is only one half of a single book, without referring to the other half which centres on state-formation processes, and (most seriously) without reading what is perhaps the most sustainably brilliant part of the entire work, the so-called Synopsis which shows how the 'macro' and 'micro' aspects of the overall process of development are interwoven with each other. The sequence of contents in this revised one-volume edition has now been amended to make clear that this is indeed a single book, and to bring it into line with the German edition. There are now four parts: Part One on the concepts of civilisation and culture; Part Two, to which the original title 'Civilisation as a Specific Transformation of Human Behaviour' is now restored; Part Three, on feudalisation and state-formation; and Part Four, the concluding 'Synopsis' or synthesis. The misleading title 'the history of manners' disappears completely, and the title 'Changes in the Behaviour of the Secular Upper Classes in the West' is restored to the original first

volume (containing Parts One and Two). The long introduction which Elias wrote in 1968, when *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation* was first reprinted, appears here as a Postscript – for that is what it is, the author’s afterthoughts thirty years after he wrote the book. For most new readers it will perhaps make better sense *after* they have read the book itself; but readers who are looking for a general statement of Elias’s intellectual position (subsequently developed in the many other books he wrote in the 1970s and 1980s) should turn *first* to the Postscript.

The whole text has been carefully compared line by line with the German original and very extensively revised. Apart from correcting some major errors that had crept in, such as unscrambling the texts on behaviour at table, we have made a number of changes which we hope will clarify the text. For instance, writing in German in the 1930s, Elias frequently used the term *Habitus*, which in the 1970s and early 1980s was quite unfamiliar in English, and was therefore generally translated by expressions such as ‘personality makeup’. Since then, particularly through the writings of Pierre Bourdieu, the more precise term ‘habitus’ has re-entered the vocabulary of anglophone social scientists, and therefore we have restored it in the present text. Another example is the word *ritterlich*, which we render literally as ‘knightly’ in place of Jephcott’s ‘chivalrous’, since it most fundamentally connotes a rather violent way of life. And we have in places restored Elias’s use of Freudian terminology, to help make a little clearer the influence of Freud which Elias always acknowledged to have been strong. In this revised translation, the word *Trieb* is translated as ‘drive’, *not* as ‘instinct’; Elias was one of the most important contributors to what are now called ‘the sociology of emotions’ and ‘the sociology of the body’, and nothing could be more misleading than to convey the impression that his theory rests on essentialist assumptions of the kind usually associated with the concept of instincts. We have also taken the opportunity to make corrections to the text of Parts One, Two and Three corresponding to those which Elias, in consultation with Johan Goudsblom, made in the English translation of Part Four. In particular, the 1939 German text contains many examples of *homo clausus* expressions that Elias later rejected, for the sorts of reasons that he sets out in the 1968 Postscript, and we have silently corrected these. Towards

the end of his life, Elias also came to feel strongly that exclusively masculine expressions should be avoided where females as well as males are being referred to; we have made appropriate amendments. On the other hand, Elias in the 1930s used a number of concepts such as ‘mechanism’, ‘cause’ and ‘law’ of which he became critical in the 1960s. In these cases, we have generally left the original text unchanged, largely because Elias did not concern himself at length with this issue in the 1968 Postscript.

For those familiar with the 1978/1982 text, one of the most striking differences is that we have made extensive changes to the tenses used in the text. In *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation*, Elias wrote much of the time throughout the work in the historic present, which is (or was) more acceptable in German than in English, where good style requires that it be used only sparingly for rhetorical effect. Thus Elias’s historical narrative of French history in Part Three has now been changed mostly into the past tense; this should make it easier for the reader to distinguish between when Elias is providing narrative as empirical evidence (past tense) and when he is drawing general theoretical conclusions from the evidence (present tense).

Four of the plates from *Das mittelalterliche Hausbuch*, to which Elias refers in the section entitled ‘Scenes from the Life of a Knight’, are included in an appendix for the first time in any edition in any language. We trust they will contribute greatly to readers’ understanding of that part of the book.

We hope that our efforts have resulted in a clearer and more readable, as well as more accurate, text that will make this twentieth-century sociological classic newly relevant to a twenty-first-century audience.

Eric Dunning
Johan Goudsblom
Stephen Mennell
Leicester, Amsterdam and Dublin

[The above is extensively adapted from the Editors’ Note to the Revised Translation.]

■ THE CANONISATION OF ELIAS IN FRANCE: SOME CRITICAL THOUGHTS

In *Figurations* 9, Roger Chartier defended Elias against some critical remarks I made in a book dealing with the history of French thought and manners in the early modern period (*Citizens Without Sovereignty*, Princeton, 1994). As Chartier noted, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie had given publicity to my remarks in an article he published in *Le Figaro* in 1997, an article provocatively entitled ‘The Second Death of Norbert Elias’. Chartier’s article in *Figurations* was a response to Le Roy Ladurie’s effort to circulate my criticism of Elias to a wider audience. The controversy continues, for Le Roy Ladurie has recently published a book on the French court that is very critical of Elias (*Saint-Simon, ou le système de la cour*, Fayard, 1997). Among other things, this book contains an interesting chapter on religiosity and asceticism among the courtly elite, a chapter that portrays the spiritual tensions and anxieties of the courtiers with considerably different nuances from the analysis found in Elias’s *The Court Society*. But even more, Le Roy Ladurie raises questions about the idealisation of Elias in the French social-scientific community. He shows very clearly (especially in his appendices and critical bibliography) that Elias is a key reference point for many prominent French academics and he suggests that criticism of Elias circulates much less in France than in other countries.

I agree with Le Roy Ladurie that the French relationship to Elias is problematic. So I accepted an invitation from him to give four lectures on Elias at the Collège de France in January, 2000. The lectures were moderately well attended: 30–40 were present at each talk. This was certainly not a major academic event in France. Nevertheless, the discussion following the talks was learned and serious, and I tried to break a taboo that appears to exist in France against any criticism of Elias while also explaining why this taboo exists and how it limits scholarly inquiry. My intention here is to give only the briefest of summaries of how I approached these lectures. I hope to publish the work I presented in France and to indicate later to readers of *Figurations* where this work will appear in print.

The main issues I raised in France were the following:

1. The canonisation of Elias in France.

The reception of Elias in the early 1970s was mixed. French scholars appreciated his sociological imagination while also noting exaggerations and omissions. The French relationship to Elias changed when Pierre Bourdieu published *Distinction* in 1979 and made it clear that Elias was a principal inspiration for his vision of elitism in French society. At this point, Elias, whose political identity escapes easy classification, became an icon of the academic Left in France. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Chartier further contributed to the canonisation of Elias through a series of prefaces he wrote to various French editions of Elias's works. (Most of these have been reprinted in Chartier's *On the Edge of the Cliff*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997.)

Chartier portrays Elias as a great thinker in general, but he especially praises Elias for being a sophisticated postmodernist who grasped the constitutive role of discourse without entirely relinquishing his hold on social reality. In fact, *On the Edge of the Cliff* as a whole is about the dilemmas of being a postmodernist scholar, and Chartier presents Elias as the thinker who best negotiates these dilemmas.

My reaction to this French presentation of Elias is to note a number of complications. First, Bourdieu relies uncritically on Elias's distinction between French 'civilisation' and German 'culture' – a particularly debatable aspect of Elias's work (see below). Secondly, Chartier does not fully appreciate that his effort to postmodernise Elias is not consistent with Elias's own outlook, which was considerably more deterministic and reality-centred than any postmodernist today would accept. A deeper way of formulating these problems is that Elias wrote his most famous works in the 1930s, but he gained popularity in France (and elsewhere) only in the 1970s. This chronological gap is responsible for a number of misreadings. Thus, while it is probably true that Elias, overall, was a man of the Left, it is also true that the meaning of Left and Right have changed considerably since the inter-war period. Methodological scepticism was associated with liberalism and the Right before the Second World War. The appropriation of radical scepticism by the French Left beginning in the 1960s has created a disjuncture between the French Left today and the early twentieth-century thinkers, such as Elias, that this Left

chooses to venerate. In a sense, the French Left cannot afford to participate in the scholarly study of Elias's thought because such study inevitably reveals the degree to which it has constructed Elias in its own image. In the Paris lectures, I focused on Elias's philosophy thesis and early writings with this disjuncture in mind.

2. Elias's nationalism revisited.

In *Citizens Without Sovereignty*, I suggested that Elias's analysis of French 'civilisation' and German 'culture' in the beginning of *The Civilising Process* owed much to a tradition of anti-French discourse among conservative German academics. The point was not to claim that Elias was an active nationalist on the political scene but that his sociological categories derived in part from a nationalist intellectual tradition. Chartier considers it entirely implausible that Elias, a Jewish refugee, could be associated in any way with nationalism. Yet we should not underestimate the paradoxes of early twentieth-century intellectual history in Germany and of Elias in particular. We know from Peter Gay (*Freud, Jews, and Other Germans*, New York, 1978) that German Jews could be not only nationalistic but anti-Semitic. In Elias's case, it is a matter of understanding the tremendous identity tensions he experienced in the 1920s and how the old culture/civilisation and Germany/France dichotomies helped him to resolve some of these tensions. In the Paris lectures, I placed special emphasis on Elias's relationship to his two teachers, Alfred Weber and Karl Mannheim. Weber was an idealist who believed in the independence of the spiritual realm. Mannheim was a materialist who argued that even culture was based on the pursuit of outer prestige and distinction. The insistence on a radical difference between the German and French traditions allowed Elias to preserve the ideas of both of his teachers. Essentially, he gave Germany to Weber and France to Mannheim. In this way, he created a synthesis, but he also sustained an old prejudice against France. This prejudice happens to appeal to French intellectuals seeking a critical perspective on their own society – but it remains only a prejudice, even though it has gained currency in the country against which it is directed.

3. Elias against Weber.

A number of harsh remarks against Max Weber appear in Elias's writings. Among other things, Elias says that Weber had no sense of the social dimensions of reality and

this had a 'disastrous' effect on sociology. He also suggests that Weber never developed intellectually beyond the level of a child who sees the world from a self-centred point of view. (See *What Is Sociology?* for a sample of such remarks; but similar remarks appear in other works as well.) I am struck by the fact that the community of scholars working on or with Elias's thought has not fastened on this anti-Weberianism. They suggest that Elias is not a reliable guide to the history of his own discipline. In my opinion, they also reflect Elias's intense dislike of any form of epistemological modesty. He considered the concept of ideal types to be too 'nominalist' and he presented his own concept of process as the 'realist' alternative. Elias's opposition to relativism of any kind originated in the inter-war period when Leftist thinkers regarded relativism as a bourgeois form of political stalling. It is interesting to see, however, that traces of this anti-subjectivism survive in Elias's later works. I also believe that Elias's doctoral thesis in philosophy (*Idee und Individuum*, 1924), a rarely consulted work, shows very clearly that Elias made a decisive commitment to a kind of Hegelian methodology – one in which the researcher overcomes Kantian subjectivism by discovering the objective laws of history. And I believe this commitment helps to explain the rather inflexible manner in which Elias formulated historical generalisations throughout his career. This is a far cry from the popular image in France of Elias as a postmodernist.

4. The informalisation debate.

In *Citizens Without Sovereignty*, I argued that Elias's preoccupation with the court led him to ignore non-courtly forms of civility in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France that emphasised informality and equality. Chartier admits that the forms of civility in early-modern Europe are more diverse than Elias suggested, but he argues that courtly civility, with its emphasis on self-discipline, was the 'precondition' for all other forms of civility. In short, Chartier has brought the informalisation argument (Elias's claim that the relaxation of manners in the 1960s was premised on a higher degree of self-discipline than before) back into the early modern period. This is a fascinating move because it creates the potential for early modern scholars such as Chartier and myself to interact with sociologists of the post-war period. I believe, however, that the critics of informalisation have had the better part of the argument and that it is

relatively easy to import their reservations into the discussion of the early modern period. But also, we should not forget the order in which Elias's thought developed.

First he wrote about the early modern period, leaving out such things as egalitarian sociability, the critical Enlightenment, and the radicalism of the French Revolution. Having excluded all liberal and democratic dynamics from his early conceptualisation of Western history, he had no choice, when confronting tangible informalisation in the 1960s, but to explain it with reference to the disciplinary structures that his sociology did contain. It seems to me that Chartier is simply going in an unproductive Eliasian circle when he tries to argue that all forms of civility in early modern Europe stemmed from the court. This is patently not so – there were forms of politeness in ancient and medieval times, and the egalitarian sociability that I focused on in *Citizens Without Sovereignty* is not chronologically posterior to the evolution of the court. Early modern history is more variegated than Elias's linear conception of civilisation-stemming-from-the-court allows one to see.

In sum, Elias's position on informalisation since the 1960s strikes me as very awkward. And instead of applying it to the early modern period as Chartier does, we should try to appreciate how the position he established on the meaning of the 1960s was conditioned by his incomplete representation of the early modern period.

It goes without saying that Elias is a major historical sociologist with a fascinating agenda of problems and a provocative set of hypotheses. My aim is not to negate his stature but to promote a debate in which it is possible even for his admirers to acknowledge some important limits to his contribution. The German, American, and British admirers of Elias seem to be open to such discussion. But in France, it appears that Elias is currently being treated the way Heidegger was in earlier decades – as a thinker who is sacred ground. When Chartier claims (as he did in *Figurations* 9) that it is inherently absurd to regard Elias as a vector of nationalist ideas, or that Elias did not exaggerate at all the role of the court, he is promoting a kind of orthodoxy that will ultimately do more harm than good to the appreciation of Elias.

Daniel Gordon
University of Massachusetts

Roger Chartier has sent us this description, written by Daniel Gordon himself and circulated by e-mail to announce the lecture he was to give at MIT on Tuesday, April 11 2000, suggesting that it may shed some light on the Janus-faced character of Gordon's attitude to Elias:

'In 1998, an international association of sociologists voted the most significant sociological writings of the twentieth century. *The Civilising Process* by Norbert Elias (1897–1990) was ranked as the sixth most important work, coming ahead of all works by Habermas, Parsons, Merton and many other famous figures. In France, the reputation of Elias today is especially strong. The distinguished cultural historian, Roger Chartier, recently described himself and Pierre Bourdieu as Elias's 'champions'. In spite of this acclaim, Elias's thought has rarely been studied in a scholarly way. In the presentation, I will be summarising a series of lectures on Elias that I gave at the Collège de France in January, 2000. I will be comparing Elias's actual intellectual and sociological perspective with his reception in France since the 1970s. While stressing Elias's contribution to cultural sociology, his fine analysis of the royal court and the history of manners, and other achievements, I hope to shed some light on little known elements of nationalism, anti-Semitism, and methodological inflexibility in his thought. The French have canonised Norbert Elias, but it is time to have a serious debate about him.'



■ RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. 311 pp. ISBN: 0–19–821765–X. £46.60.

The very title of Anna Bryson's well-writ-

ten and readable book implies a debt to Norbert Elias's pioneering discussion of the European manners literature, which she generously acknowledges at many points. She herself deals with a shorter period, mainly the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and with only one country, England. In consequence, she provides a more comprehensive discussion of English publications. Since the continental conduct literature was also influential in England, however, readers familiar with Elias are able to greet old friends such as Erasmus, Cato, *Galateo* and Courtin. I particularly enjoyed the last of Bryson's main chapters, 'Anti-Civility: Libertines and Rakes' – a topic not much explored in *The Civilising Process* but which would have delighted Elias.

Apart from scholarly qualifications in matters of detail, the picture Bryson paints is not vastly different from Elias's. All the same, Bryson's book once again nicely demonstrates the differences in the professional *eidōs* of British historians and British sociologists. Bryson mildly criticises Elias – no doubt with some justice – for having paid, in his pursuit of the big picture, insufficient attention to locating particular texts in particular social contexts. There is some implication that Elias was not so bad as most sociologists in that respect. Yet, in return, one can point out that historians often fail to see the relevance of reading other works of sociologists like Elias, works dealing neither with the early modern period nor with manners, for the sake of gaining a more sophisticated grasp of a pattern of theoretical and conceptual reasoning. Thus only *The Civilising Process* and *The Court Society* are cited by Bryson. She does not seem to have made much even of the final section of *The Civilising Process*, where she could have found ideas useful to an interpretation of her material like the trend towards diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties, and towards more even, more 'all-round' and more automatic self-constraints. And, for instance, in *The Germans* she could have found the useful concepts of the formality–informality span and formality–informality gradient, as well as material relevant to the short passage in which she refers to duelling – but *The Germans* is concerned neither with her period nor her geographical area.

Lacking this wider understanding of Elias's work, Bryson says that Elias's view of changing manners is linear and progressive; she is aware that he made important qualifications to this view, but does not

seem very sure what they were. In one respect at least, Bryson is more linear and ethnocentric than Elias ever was. She writes:

All societies at all times have had 'manners' in its broad and now rather old-fashioned sense of customs. ... Yet only Western society, or part of it, has evolved 'manners' in the more restricted sense of 'good manners'. (p. 6)

I write this review, of course, as a specialist in the work of Elias. Bryson's book is not about Elias, though he features prominently in it. It is about early modern English manners, and it is essential reading for anyone who wishes to gain a deeper knowledge of that literature.

SJM



Randall Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998. xii + 1098 pp. ISBN: 0-674-81647-1

How can I review *The Sociology of Philosophies* in 500 words, as I was requested to do? This is a book of 1100 pages, all packed with ideas and information. It is awesome in its erudition, and truly path-breaking and daring in its approach.

The title and the subtitle already speak volumes. There are plenty of books about 'the philosophy of the social sciences'. Those books assign to philosophy the role of a singular arbiter capable of putting the plurality of the social sciences each into their proper places. In Collins's book the tables are turned, and sociology (in the singular) gets pride of place over the plurality of 'philosophies'. This is very refreshing, and very much in the spirit of Norbert Elias (who, I must add, is never mentioned by Collins.)

According to its subtitle, Collins's book presents 'a global theory of intellectual change'. Each of the four terms in this subtitle has a programmatic thrust. Philosophy is presented as an intellectual enterprise, which has been continuously subject to change. Change has not been haphazard but structured and explicable, and therefore the presentation is more than descriptive: the

wealth of historical material is ordered in the context of a theory. In its scope this theory is not confined to any particular area: it is, in tune with humanity's current self-understanding, global.

If this programme may sound overly ambitious, Collins convincingly proves that it is feasible. He has been working on the book for more than twenty-five years. His learning is almost unequalled in its breadth and profundity. And most importantly, he is able to command this huge field by virtue of the methodological procedures and the theoretical perspective which he has developed.

Still, the field *is* huge. It comprises more than 2,500 years of philosophical writing, in cultures as far apart in time and space as ancient Greece and Rome, China, India, Japan, the Muslim world, and modern Europe and America. The amount of literature produced in those traditions is of course overwhelming. But Collins has found an ingenious principle that serves as a criterion of selection. 'The total number of philosophers who are significant in world history is approximately 135 to 500 persons; ... if we add the minor figures ..., the total is still only 2,700'.

This low number allows Collins to refrain even from drawing a sample. He can survey the total population of philosophers who are 'significant' in the sense of having achieved long-term fame. These are the persons who form the starting point for his empirical investigations and theoretical reflections.

Yet, although Collins's characteristics of individual philosophers are often striking and revealing, they are not the true foci of the argument, for 'it is not individuals ... that produce ideas, but the flow of networks through individuals.'. This thoroughly sociological viewpoint pervades the whole book. There is no room here for Elias's *bête noire* in philosophy, the ghost of *homo clausus* which has been haunting modern Western philosophy for several centuries. Instead, the emphasis is entirely on networks.

Networks, as Collins states in his preface, 'are the actors on the intellectual stage'. He even argues that 'if one can understand the principles that determine intellectual networks, one has a causal explanation of ideas and their changes'. This contention

verges on recklessness; but its saving feature may lie in the loose manner in which the word 'determine' is being used here.

In the actual analysis Collins uses a three-tiered form of explanation, focusing on the internal dynamics of philosophers' networks, and moving from there to the organisational structures of these networks such as patronage systems or universities, and then to the larger political and economic settings of those structures. The argument is bolstered by a few additional concepts and principles, such as 'emotional energy', 'cultural capital', and 'the law of small numbers'. As a secular dynamic in the entire development of philosophies Collins points to the trend toward greater abstraction and reflexivity.

Collins's book, with its highly original, wide ranging and irreverent sociological approach to philosophy, is bound to arouse criticism and controversy. It deserves attention and discussion for some time to come, as an important and timely contribution to intellectual life which, according to Collins, 'is first of all conflict and disagreement. ... The heartland of disagreement is difficult to avoid; to deny it is to exemplify it'.

Readers of *Figurations* are likely to find *The Sociology of Philosophies* fascinating and congenial. Apart from its substantive tenor, the book also bears a peculiar stylistic similarity to Elias's writings. Collins shares with Elias a problem-oriented approach. He does not start with a survey of 'the state of the art'. He raises a highly interesting and important question, and then proceeds to seek an answer by assembling evidence and applying theoretical reasoning. The notes at the end contain all the references and, occasionally, the polemics.

The Sociology of Philosophies is not an immediately inviting book. Its sheer size looks forbidding; and its substantive contents do not always make for easy reading. The writing is always clear, however. For those who prefer to start dabbling, the eighty pages of notes may provide a tantalising beginning.

Johan Goudsblom
University of Amsterdam



Sarah Colwell, 'Feminisms and Figurational Sociology: Contributions to Understandings of Sports, Physical Education and Sex/Gender.' *European Physical Education Review*, 5 (3) 1999: 219–40.

This paper seeks to examine the relationship between various sports feminisms and figurational sociology. A number of feminist and figurational contributions to understandings of sports, physical education and sex/gender are discussed, and their relative adequacy considered. The key differences between feminist and figurational approaches are highlighted, particularly in relation to the role of values in sociology. Particular attention is paid to the work of Scraton on physical education, and Hargreaves's criticisms of figurational sociology are also addressed. Finally, the difficulties raised when attempts are made to synthesise these approaches are considered, via a critical examination of Maguire and Mansfield's preliminary attempt at a synthesis of feminism and figurational sociology. [Journal Abstract]



Sabine Delzescaux, *La Theorie du lien social selon l'œuvre de Norbert Elias* [The Theory of the Social Bond in the Work of Norbert Elias]. Unpublished PhD thesis, Université de Paris VII – Denis Diderot, 2000.

Sabine Delzescaux successfully defended her thesis on 3 May, 2000, before a jury chaired by Simonetta Tabboni. The first chapter is entitled 'From philosophy to sociology', and deals with Elias's critique of the Western philosophical conception of the individual. Chapter 2 discusses the sociogenetic approach to social change, chapter 3 is headed 'From state formation to the formation of a civilised habitus', while the final substantial chapter deals with the problem of the civilised habitus and decivilising processes. The thesis was supervised by Eugène Enriquez and Pierre Ansart.



Adrian Franklin, *Animals and modern cultures: A sociology of human-animal relations in Modernity* London: Sage, 1999.

ISBN 0 7619 5623 9. 213 pp.

Back in 1967, Nash's ground-breaking *Wilderness and the American Mind* charted successive transformations in the cultural and psychological relationship between New World landscape and American society. Since then, culturally-embedded understandings of the relationship between nature and humanity have become a central concern for historians (see for instance Keith Thomas's *Man and the Natural World*, 1983), as well as a smaller number of sociologists whose horizons extend beyond the long present. Building on Leach's injunction that animals are 'good to think with', Franklin argues that human-animal relations have been transformed during the course of the twentieth century and that such changes can be traced back to much broader processes of social change. If nothing else, this book provides a useful and concise review of the literature, bringing together within a single analytical framework debates in such disparate areas the sociology of nature, and the history and social anthropology of animal-human relations. The author presents a lucid and compelling account of the reshaping of animal-human relations during the twentieth century in areas such as the operation and rationale of zoos and wildlife preservation, pet keeping, the moral and legal regulation of hunting and angling, the emergence of animal rights, and the position of animals within agriculture and wider culture and economy of food.

However Franklin's analytical ambitions extend beyond simply servicing a broad and disparate literature. He has a theoretical point to make, which is that the transformations in human-animal relations bear out the fashionable interpretative schema, centring on the idea of a transformation from modernity to post-modernity. Predictably he rounds up the usual suspects (Beck, Giddens, Harvey, Lash & Urry) before elaborating his central thesis: 'that something in the twentieth century did change the sentiments expressed towards animals, namely that a number of social processes associated with post-modernity further eroded the social distance between humans and an increasing number of animal categories' (p.194). These processes relate to increasing 'ontological insecurity'; a generalised misanthropy and ecologism in opposition to modernist narratives of progress; and growing risk-reflexivity. Like many sociologists, Franklin's understanding of the prefix 'post' is literal: post-modernity

meaning *after*-modernity, and therefore synonymous with post-Fordism (and post-'post-war').

There are a number of problems with this kind of theoretical architecture. The modern/post-modern binary implies changes in the last quarter of the twentieth century that were greater in scale, scope and significance than comparable processes of transformation during other periods. To establish such a watershed would require painstaking primary research, or at the very least a comprehensive reworking of existing documentary evidence. However Franklin's theoretical claims rest, to a great extent, on a resonance with the generalities of the secondary literature in relation to post-modernity and post-Fordism. There are frequent assertions that during the 1970s the 'modernising project ... broke down', and that the 'moral dimension of modernity evaporated ... [giving way to] a culture dominated by economic rationalism, selfish individualism, ethnic conflict, consumerism and New Right politics focused specifically on destroying the jewel of modernity: welfarism' (pp. 35–6). And it is specifically in this context that we should understand the closing emotional and ontological gap between animals and humans. But was it not in a similar context that the socialist reformer Henry Salt articulated his argument for *Animal Rights*, as far back as 1892? And was not a similar aversion to cruelty linked for Byron and the Romantic poets, to a wider critique of the utilitarian rationalism of the satanic mills? Modernity as a social and economic formation has been unfolding over hundreds of years and is certainly not synonymous with Fordism (*vide* p. 34). And as Nash and Thomas demonstrate, it is possible to chart the constantly changing relationship between human culture and embedded understandings of nature and animals, without *a priori* privileging any particular historical juncture. As Franklin himself points out the movement to include animals into the human moral universe is at least two hundred years old and there has been an evolving social pressure in this direction ever since (for example the RSPCA was established in 1824; the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection in 1898; the League Against Cruel Sports in 1824; the Vegetarian Society in 1847; and so on). But as Elias noted, 'Nothing is more fruitless, when dealing with long-term processes, than to attempt to locate an absolute beginning'.

In short, Franklin's own schematic review of the existing literature suggests more drawn out and uneven processes of change than can be captured by the temporal tram-lines of Fordism and its aftermath. Specific interpretative problems notwithstanding (pp.11–23), Thomas's quasi-Eliasian approach seems to provide a less intrusive, and ultimately more useful theoretical platform, which can do better justice to such long term, sedimentary processes of change. However, theoretical gripes aside, Franklin's book does offer a useful, and for the most part well-written introduction to the debate.

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Abram de Swaan, *Dyscivilatie, massavernietiging en de staat* [Dyscivilization, Mass Extermination, and the State]. *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift*, 26 (3) 1999: 289–301.

Is massive violence and destruction a manifestation of 'modernity', even its very essence, or rather its total opposite: 'a breakdown of civilisation'? Although ostensibly Norbert Elias mainly occupied himself with the civilising process, he was always – though mostly implicitly so – preoccupied with its complement and counterpart: violence, regression and anomie. In recent years, a number of his students have returned to these themes. Whether they wanted to or not, they were drawn into a debate that in this century has never subsided for long. This paper argues for a position that transcends this opposition between 'modernisation', and 'regression': at the core of the civilising process, another contrary current may manifest itself, allowing extreme violence on a mass scale to be perpetrated towards specific categories of people, while civilised relations and modes of expression are maintained in other sections of society. The concepts of identification,

disidentification and compartmentalisation should help to describe and explain these 'dyscivilising' processes in their complex relations to processes of civilisation. [Journal Abstract]

Arpad Szakolczai, *Reflexive Historical Sociology*. London, Routledge, 2000 xxii+281 pp. (ISBN/ISSN: 0-415-19051-7).

The book *Reflexive Historical Sociology* is a follow-up to Szakolczai's earlier monograph, *Max Weber and Michel Foucault: Parallel Life Works* (Routledge, 1998 – see *Figurations* 11). It brings together the writings of a series of major contemporary thinkers whose works so far have remained disconnected. It is argued that, taken together, the work of such thinkers as Elias, Voegelin, Borkenau and Mumford, in conjunction with the work of Weber and Foucault, lays the ground for a coherent field called 'reflexive historical sociology'. The book consists of two main parts. The first reconstructs the themes and dynamics of the life-works of Elias, Voegelin, Borkenau and Mumford using the method developed by Szakolczai for the understanding of authors and already applied for the life-works of Weber and Foucault. The method is based on the works of Victor Turner, Pierre Hadot, and also Foucault and Voegelin. The second part explores the 'visions' of modernity contained in their best known works, and those of Weber and Foucault. It is argued that these visions and interpretations of modernity can be brought together in the concept of 'permanent liminality', which the author offers as a new diagnosis of the modern condition.

Arpad Szakolczai, 'Norbert Elias and Franz Borkenau: Intertwined Life-Works', *Theory, Culture and Society* 17 (2) 2000: 45–69.

This paper argues that the life-works of Norbert Elias and Franz Borkenau can be best understood together, as they were developed in close interaction during the 1930s. Deriving inspiration from Freud, they took up the project formulated by Weber at the end of his 'Anticritical Last Word'. However, in two significant respects they went beyond the Weberian

problematics. First, overcoming the centrality attributed to economic concerns, they rooted the Western civilising process in the long-term attempt to harness the violence that was escalated by the emergence and then collapse of the Roman Empire. Second, they emphasised the crucial importance of periods of transition that follow an overall dissolution of order and stamp the possible future course of events.

■ AUTHORS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dennis Smith and Sue Wright, eds., *Whose Europe? The Turn Towards Democracy*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999. x +321pp. ISBN: 0 631 21918 8. £12.99

Whose Europe? is a Sociological Review Monograph edited by Dennis Smith and Sue Wright. *Whose Europe?* explores the barriers and bridges to greater democratic participation and accountability within Europe. This is timely, in view of the revolt by Europe's parliamentarians against the Commission in 1999, whose reverberations are still being felt. As the introduction puts it, 'A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of democracy.'

One way of posing the question contained in the title is to ask: on whose behalf is the European Union being run? Alternatively, one might ask: what identities and expectations are fuelling the politics and planning that shape the complementary processes of Europeanisation and devolution? Who are 'we' with our three-tier identities: Welsh–British–European, Catalan–Spanish–European, Flemish–Belgian–European, and so on? What do 'we' hope to gain from the European project?

Readers of *Figurations* will probably be drawn first to the last section of the book entitled 'Processes'. In this section, Dennis Smith, Pablo Jáuregui and Harald Wydra all draw upon aspects of the work of Norbert Elias.

Dennis Smith looks at the part played by the United States during the 1940s and 1950s in pacifying the European nations and imposing a framework of rules for the conduct of their economic and diplomatic affairs. He argues that as states in Western Europe have been increasingly locked into tight bonds of interdependence, this movement is complemented by the disembed-

ding of regions and large businesses from their close ties to the national state. Brussels has become Europe's Versailles, a place where the courtier's skills are employed by the modern lobbyist.

For his part, Pablo Jáuregui questions the suggestion that the development of the European Union means Europe is entering a 'post-nationalist' era. Jáuregui does not believe that nationalism and Europeanism are mutually incompatible. However, he emphasises that they may be related in a variety of ways. For example, in Britain, the idea of going into Europe was associated with a decline in national status and the 'loss of world power'. By contrast, for Spain entering Europe meant a considerable enhancement of national prestige following the collapse of a 'backward dictatorship'.

Finally, Harald Wydra turns to Eastern Europe and challenges the vision of East and West as two isolated blocs that gradually converged. He sees the rise of democracy in Eastern Europe as a long-term social process interwoven with the collapse of communism. Wydra argues that dissident movements created a 'second reality', undermining communism's official myths. Dissidents took their standards and aspirations from Western experience but found themselves largely ignored by the West. Since 1989, the influence of western models and standards has increased but, ironically, there has also been a breakdown of self-restraint and an upsurge of violence.

Ruud Stokvis: *Concurrentie en Beschaving: Ondernemingen en het commerciële beschavingsproces* (Competition and Civilisation: Enterprises and the commercial civilising process). Amsterdam: Boom, 1999.

I wrote this book to draw the attention of sociologists and economists to the important role of enterprises in modern societies. The central proposition of the book is that in capitalist societies entrepreneurs, in competing with other firms, have to transform their enterprises and these transformations have a deep impact on the societies in which they are embedded.

To analyse the competitive process and its consequences I used the concepts of monopolisation and the commercial civilising process. The first three chapters are devoted

to the analysis of the competitive process and the transformations of firms. I analyse the rise of industrial competition, the ways in which it affects different kinds of entrepreneurs and firms and the monopolisation that results from their competition. Elias's ideas on monopolisation, as developed in *The Civilising Process*, combine very well with the ideas of the economist and sociologist Joseph Schumpeter about economic life as an evolutionary process. According to Schumpeter, firms in capitalist societies have to compete in order to survive. Their most important way of competing is by introducing innovations that give them – if successful – monopolistic advantages over their competitors. The conclusion is that the behaviour of firms in capitalist societies has to be explained by their attempts to gain monopolistic advantages. The result of this behaviour is a tendency towards monopolistic relations in the different branches of economic life. I analyse the relations of firms with the state, their activities in the fields of technical innovation, marketing and organisation from the viewpoint of their fundamental need to gain monopolistic advantages.

In the two chapters that follow I analyse the consequences of this industrial competition for the societies in which the enterprises are embedded. One chapter is devoted to demonstrating how in capitalist societies technological change itself, the material aspect of civilising processes, is dependent on the competition between firms. Not only the development of technology, but during the second half of the twentieth century, also the development of science have become dependent on this competition. The last chapter deals more in detail with the commercial civilising process. This process has to be comprehended as resulting from the interaction of the innovations of entrepreneurs and the resistance of the people on which they depend to implement their innovations. It is a civilising process in so far as it can be observed that these changes force people to adopt new forms of self control. Innovations in the technical methods of production and their organisation have resulted in changes in industrial and class relations and in new forms of self control in the enactment of these relations. Innovations in products and services have created the possibilities for new lifestyles and new forms of social organisation. This is encouraged by developments in the field of marketing, especially advertising. One example of new social pressures for self control is the combination of an abundance of

food, the diminishing need for movement in daily life and the necessity in service societies to have a socially approved appearance. This combination exerts pressure on individuals to control more consciously than used to be the case the intake of food and the shape of their body. New firms arise to assist with these new needs for self control. Another example concerns the tolerance for forms of cultural expression, produced by the entertainment industry, that used to be considered vulgar and despicable.

I hope to find a publisher who could make it possible to translate this book in English. For more information on the book, please do e-mail me.

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'Elias and Organisations' forthcoming issue of *Organisation*, 8 (1) 2001.

The February 2001 issue of the journal *Organisation* will contain a special 'thematic symposium' on 'Elias and Organisations', edited by Tim Newton (and published by Sage Publications, London).

The symposium explores the relevance of Elias to social/organisation theory and analysis and contains papers by Tim Newton; Ad van Iterson, Willem Mastebroek and Joseph Soeters; Dennis Smith; and Sue Dopson.

Tim Newton's paper considers a range of Elias's argument within, and beyond, his studies of court society. Attention is paid to the way in which an Eliasian perspective reframes existing organisational theory, including Foucauldian theory, labour process theory, and actor network theory. In addition, consideration is given to the relevance of Elias to current fields of organisational analysis such as organisational strategy and change, globalization, emotion in organisations, the management of knowledge, business history, industrial relations, and organisations and the natural environment. Certain limitations of Eliasian argument are also discussed.

Ad van Iterson, Willem Mastebroek and Joseph Soeters explore the interrelation between changes in identity and the formation of nation states, and their monopolisation of violence and taxation. These arguments are then applied to social and organisational

analysis, including the relation of *Kultur* and *civilisation* to European industrialisation, the relation between industrial organisation and discipline and restraint, and the significance of informalisation processes for organisational processes and for organisational structuring, differentiation and integration.

Dennis Smith challenges Elias's emphasis upon the 'civilising' direction of human history. Smith argues that we have witnessed a 'humiliation' process as much as a 'civilising' process, illustrating his argument through reference to human rights, the salience of shame, and the retreat from older forms of bondage based on patriarchy, feudalism and colonialism toward the bureaucratisation and marketisation of social relationships.

He uses a case study of a British university to further explore the significance of humiliation as a key aspect of human habitus.

Sue Dopson's paper draws on her Eliasian study of the UK National Health Service. It examines the relevance of a number of Eliasian concepts to organisational analysis, including interdependency, interweaving, and the use of game models as a means of exploring figurations. Dopson's paper particularly focuses on the significance of Elias to our thinking about processes of organisational change. She explores the significance of *unplanned* change, and as with the papers by Newton, and Ad van Itersson et al, and Smith, she stresses the need to view organisations from within a long-term social and historical context.

Ann Buckley (ed.), *Hearing the Past: Essays in Historical Ethnomusicology and the Archaeology of Sound*, Études et Recherches Archéologiques de l'Université de Liège 86 (Liège, 2000).

'These essays represent one set of explorations concerning the role of music and humanly-organised sound in long-term human history. They demonstrate the riches of interdisciplinary collaboration, of cross-cultural surveys which are also cross-temporal, and of the value of this subject in elucidating any number of questions concerning social processes and mentalities based on a wide range of evidential types. They are offered as a collection of ideas and observations which will hopefully be tested and further developed in the future, not just with respect to prehistory and the Ancient

world, but in any processual investigation of music and human behaviour.' (Extract from Introduction, by Ann Buckley).

Contents:

- Ann Buckley (Cambridge): Organised sound and tonal art in long-term perspective
- Cajsja S. Lund (Akarp): What is wrong with music archaeology? A critical essay from a Scandinavian perspective, including a report about a new find of a bullroarer
- Catherine Homo-Lechner (Brno): False. Authentic. False authenticity. Contributions and failures of experimental archaeology as applied to music instruments
- Inge Skog (Lund): North Borneo gongs and the Javanese gamelan: a new historical perspective
- Kenneth J. DeWoskin (Ann Arbor, Michigan): Symbol and Sound: Reading early Chinese instruments
- Reis Flora (Monash): Music-archaeological data for culture contact between Sumer and the greater Indus area: an introductory study
- Jane M. Snyder (Ohio): Sappho and other women musicians in Attic vase painting
- Jon Solomon (Tucson, Arizona): The representation of musicians on Greek Geometric pottery: musicians as decorative symbols
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■ BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RETROSPECT

Eric A. Johnson and Eric H. Monk-konen, eds, *The Civilisation of Crime: Violence in Town and Country since the Middle Ages*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1996. ISBN: 0-252-02242-4 (hard-back); 0-252-06546-8 (paper).

By another of our too-frequent oversights,

we failed to mention this book directly in earlier issues of *Figurations* (although we have cited Pieter Spierenburg's chapter in it). The flavour of the book is captured by the editors, who write:

'Some of the essays in this collection may seem to be inattentive to customary social theory. Where are the classical social thinkers who address the centuries-long transformations of the West? Durkheim, Weber, and Marx are underplayed, as is even Michel Foucault. Instead, a shadowy figure, Norbert Elias, appears, his presence announced by the English historian James Sharpe's reference to the 'civilising process', in the first chapter. Starting from differing (if traditional) theoretical perspectives, a large number of historians of crime have become interested in Elias because his work better describes what they have found than has that of other social thinkers. Even if all of the contributors to this volume do not explicitly see their work as grounded in the theories of Elias, almost all of them, although they study different societies and come to their work from a variety of intellectual perspectives and national backgrounds, have discovered that their empirical finding do not fit with customary social theorising.' (p. 2)

SJM

■ WORK IN PROGRESS

Thomas J. Scheff, *Individualism and Alienation in Popular Love Songs, 1930-99*

This essay applies a theory of social integration to one type of collective representation, popular love songs. Since modern Western societies focus on individuals rather than relationships, we would expect the same in US popular songs. Romance words in all titles in the US Top 40 for the seventy-year period are counted, and the lyrics of romantic songs for one sample year in each of six decades analysed. There are three main types: heartbreak, infatuation and love. These types are fairly stable despite massive changes in popular songs between 1930-59 and 1970-99. Most of the romance lyrics are highly individualistic, entirely concerned with individual desire, rather than mutuality between two persons. Heartbreak and infatuation lyrics are

dominated by the lover's suffering or impairment, treating the loved one abstractly. Since there are exceptional romance songs from the earlier period implying joy and mutuality, the overall trend suggests increasing alienation. [Tom adds that this study demonstrates the utility of Elias's concept of *homo clausus*. – *SJM*.]

Norman Gabriel, 'Children in communities: Cross-cultural comparisons in learning processes'. (Abstract of paper accepted for the conference on Norbert Elias and Social Anthropology, Metz, 20–22 September 2000.)

In the past ten years or more there has been a growth in the social studies of children focusing on how they experience their own cultural worlds. Although academics working within areas like developmental psychology have made important contributions to our understanding of childhood, they have usually adopted culturally-specific theories to explain the universal stages of child growth. Social constructivists have responded to these theories of 'developmentalism' by incorporating the wider social contexts in which different individual childhoods are produced, but have a tendency to make assumptions which undermine an important value of scientific research – the distinction between participant and observer.

This paper will argue that Elias's theoretical framework on long-term changes within societies can make an important contribution to the debate about the generation of knowledge in social anthropology. Rather than artificially constructing a false dichotomy between the 'natural' and 'cultural' world as if there existed two independent entities, what is required are comparisons which help us to understand how 'separate' cultures may be connected through specific directional stages in human history. In order to avoid the trap of cultural relativism, examples from different cultures will be made compared to show how children use a social fund of knowledge to become members of their communities.

■ RECENT CONFERENCES

Norbert Elias: A Non-Normative Sociology 22–23 October, 1999
Université de Paris VII – Denis Diderot

This conference was organised and directed by Professor Simonetta Tabboni for the Centre de Sociologie des Pratiques et des Représentations of the University Paris VII – Denis Diderot, and divided in three sessions: Modernity and Civilisation; The Theory of Established–Outsiders Relations; and Norbert Elias and Contemporary Sociology. After an introduction by Simonetta Tabboni, the conference was opened by Professor Hermann Korte (University of Hamburg) with a paper entitled 'Perspectives on a Long Life: Norbert Elias and the Civilising Process' in which some interesting circumstances in Elias's life were recalled and linked to his preferred themes of research. Professor Carlo Mongardini (University of Rome), who had conferred the Amalfi European Prize for Sociology on Elias in May 1988, discussed the 'Two figures of the individual subject in Elias's oeuvre'.

The session was closed by Michel Wieviorka (EHESS) with a paper called 'What Norbert Elias means by violence: Is his paradigm adequate to answer the questions of contemporary violence?' A long and lively debate followed. The afternoon session opened with Simonetta Tabboni's paper 'Sociological ambivalence: from the theory of civilising processes to the theory of the Established and the Outsiders', followed by Professor Danilo Martucelli (University of Lille) who discussed 'A pattern for exclusion: a critique', and by Professor Gerard Namer who spoke about 'Some doubts on the adequacy of the Winston Parva pattern'. After a debate on these contributions, the papers of Dr Sabine Delzesco, 'The Established and the Outsiders: from a case study to an empirical paradigm', and of Dr Marie Gaille, 'Winston Parva and the question of the exclusion', were presented and discussed. Professor Hans Peter Müller (University of Berlin) closed the session with a very interesting paper on 'The Established and the Outsiders as a social mechanism'. On Saturday four papers were presented: 'How to become a classic', by Professor Alain Garrigou (University of Paris X – Nanterre), 'The theme of Power in Elias's oeuvre' by Professor Bernard Lacroix (University of Paris X – Nanterre) and 'Some misunderstanding about Elias's thought' by Professor Nathalie Heinich.

The conference was particularly interesting because, through the studies of Norbert Elias's work, it allowed representatives of

very different approaches in sociology – in Europe and France – to confront each other in an extremely intense way.

■ FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

International Conference: Norbert Elias and Social Anthropology
20–22 September 2000
University of Metz (France)

Organised by the University of Metz, the French Society of Ethnology, and the Norbert Elias Foundation.

The work of Norbert Elias has attracted the attention of historians, political scientists and sociologists. At a time of renewed interest in Elias's researches, we would like to examine how his 'cross-disciplinary' thought illuminates the anthropological approach.

Programme

Wednesday 20 September, morning and afternoon

'Norbert Elias's anthropology: Theoretical implications and new directions for enquiry'

A. Burguière (France), J. Goody (UK), H. Korte (Germany), S. J. Mennell (Ireland), J. Duindam (Netherlands), E. Dunning (UK), J. Goudsblom (Netherlands), P. Neubauer (D), P. Nixon (UK), and L. Petzoldt (Austria).

Evening: Round table on 'Civilisation and Schooling'

N. Gabriel (UK), N. Murard (France), E. Prairat (France), and D. Reed-Danahay (USA)

Thursday 21st September, morning and afternoon: 'Elias's cultural approach tested in the field'

A. Blok (Netherlands), S. Chevalier (France), W. Kaschuba (Germany), F. Raphael and G. Herberich-Marx (France), G. Sanga (Italy), J.H. Dechaux (France), D. Guillet (USA), P. Jauregui (Spain), A. Luse (Latvia), E. Timm (Germany), J.Y. Trepos (France).

Evening: Round table on 'The potential impact of Elias on social anthropology'

R. Chartier (France), D. Fabre (France) and N. Heinich (France)

Friday 22nd September, morning and afternoon: 'Adopting and adapting Elias's

concepts'

J.P. Calde (France), F. Eckardt (Germany), E. Leyton (Canada), R. Maier (Norway), A. Perulli (Italy), J.M. Leveratto (France), J. Malerba (Brazil), R. Petzoldt (Germany), J.M. Privat (France)

17.00: Closing Session: Overview of the Conference

Details may be obtained from the conference secretariat : Christiane Neumann, e-mail: neumann@zeus.univ-metz.fr Tel : +33 3 87315903

The official languages of the conference will be: French, German and English (with translation)

International Norbert Elias Colloquium - Issues in the Theory of Civilising Processes, 13-14 October 2000

Université de Haute Bretagne – Rennes II

Call for Papers

The work of Norbert Elias is more and more recognised as one of the major twentieth-century contributions to the development of the social sciences. But, at the same time, it has provoked important controversies, notably about whether the Holocaust of the European Jews and other great genocides can be reconciled with the theory of civilising processes, about how the 'informalising' trends of recent decades may best be interpreted, about the existence of a long-term trend of increasing social constraint towards self-constraint over impulses and emotions (especially with regard to the body and sexuality), and about whether other contemporary trends can be regarded as *decivilising* processes.

The Rennes Colloquium will be organised around these issues. Papers are particularly invited on two themes:

Theme I: Civilisation, Barbarism, Violence

Can the theory of civilising processes take account of the twentieth-century genocides? And do recent developments contradict a vision of the diminution of violence in social relations and the idea of a growing level of 'mutual identification' among human beings?

Papers under this theme could confront the Eliasian theory with:

- current trends in urban violence and incivility

- the persistence or institutionalisation of 'decivilising processes' in ghettos
- the disruption of social bonds in the sphere of employment
- possible reversals or deviations in long-term patterns of state-formation – in matters of changes in identities, authority, socialisation, and the connections between politics and everyday civility.
- genocides and large-scale massacres
- the 'foreign policy' of civilisation: how 'civilised' states have treated the populations they regarded as 'barbarians'.

Theme II: The Rise of Informality: Reversal of civilising processes or more sophisticated self-constraints?

Elias noted in the late 1930s how the trend of 'bathing manners' appeared to defy interpretation in terms of increasing self-constraints and emotional reserve among 'civilised' people. The 'liberation of manners', the airing of private and intimate problems in public (particularly via television and radio chat shows), the prevalent discourse of authenticity and openness – do these trends invalidate an excessively linear and Victorian conception of the civilising process? Or can they be read, as Elias and then Wouters suggested, in terms of an informalising process, a 'highly controlled decontrolling of emotional controls', of a further mastery over affects – as suggested by the work of J.-C. Kauffman on 'policing the gaze' in relation to naked female bodies on the beach? And do these developments reflect a trend towards what Elias called functional democratisation: are there actual tendencies towards relatively more equal power ratios between sexes, generations and classes, or are the disparities persisting?

Offers of papers should be sent to, and further details may be obtained from the Colloquium organiser:

Yves Bonny

Université de Haute Bretagne – Rennes II

6 avenue Gaston Berger

F-35043 RENNES Cedex

France

e-mail: yves.bonny@uhb.fr

International Sociological Association: XV World Congress of Sociology, Brisbane, Australia, 8–12 July 2002

Highly successful sessions of an Ad Hoc Group on Figurational Sociology were organised at the thirteenth World Congress of Sociology in Bielefeld in 1994 and the

fourteenth in Montreal in 1998. At the final session in Montreal, it was resolved that for the next Congress, in Brisbane in 2002, we should seek to climb one further step up the ISA's hierarchy of entities, from Ad Hoc to Thematic Group. The effect of this is to put the figurational presence at the sociological olympiads on a somewhat more formal and permanent footing, and to make it a little easier for us to organise activities within the ISA between Congresses. In addition, we are applying to the ISA for approval to organise a separate Ad Hoc Group at Brisbane on the comparative historical sociology of empires.

Thematic Group on Figurational Sociology

The upgrading of our status to that of Thematic Group is being masterminded by Robert van Krieken (University of Sydney), who has secured the necessary number of signatories from among fully paid-up individual members of the ISA. In his application to establish the Thematic Group, Robert has written:

'The activities planned for the 2002 ISA Congress revolve around both building on ... the research activities of scholars pursuing figurational sociology, and strengthening the linkages between the different groups working in this field in different parts of the world. There has been a surge of interest in figurational sociology in a number of language areas, particularly France and South America, and in an expanding range of topic areas. The Thematic Group would provide a forum for these new developments. ... The group believes that an important element of the unique and distinctive appeal of a figurational approach is its interdisciplinary character, drawing on all the social sciences – history, anthropology, politics, and social psychology as well as sociology – so as to develop a synthesising approach which constitutes a genuine 'human science' or *Menschenwissenschaft*. ... Figurational sociology generally, and research into the changing dynamics of civilising and decivilising processes in particular, have not been a theme in any of the other ISA Research Committees or Groups ...'

Ad Hoc Group: The Comparative Historical Sociology of Empires

The initiative for this group has been taken by Johann Arnason (La Trobe University, Australia), who has submitted the following proposal to the ISA:

'The problematic of imperial formations is a strikingly underdeveloped area of histori-

cal sociology. Since the publication of S.N. Eisenstadt's *The Political Systems of Empires* in 1963, there has been no large-scale comparative survey of the field. Historians and sociologists have, however, produced a large body of work on specific cases; much less has been done to link the results to new developments in social theory.'

The workshop to be organised in Brisbane would focus on four main topics:

- the specific problematic of imperial power structures in the context of theories of state formation;
- the 'developmental' dimension of empires, i.e. the question of their contribution to the growth of social power (raised in Michael Mann's *The Sources of Social Power*, volume 1, but not much discussed since then.
- the role of empires in early modern history – an issue closely linked to the unfolding debate on 'early modernities'.
- the question of imperial crises and reconstructions in the twentieth century, perhaps with particular reference to the trajectories of Communism in East and West.

Given the specific research interests of those involved in the project, it is likely that there would be a strong emphasis on the historical empires which survived into the twentieth century, especially the Habsburg, Ottoman, Russian and Chinese empires, but other cases would also be taken into account.

Membership and Participation

We expect to be able to report the outcome of these two applications to the ISA in *Figurations* 14. The Brisbane Congress is of course still more than two years away, and formal calls for papers will be published in *Figurations* and elsewhere in due course. In the meantime, we would urge readers to pay the modest subscription to join the ISA as individual members, and thus be ready to sign up for Brisbane, the Thematic Group, and the Ad Hoc Group. Further details of ISA membership may be obtained by e-mailing ISA@sis.ucm.es.

■ OBITUARY

Gisèle Freund, photographer, sociologist of photography, student and friend of Norbert Elias, died on 31 March 2000.

She was born in Berlin on 19 December 1908, and enrolled for her doctorate in sociology with Karl Mannheim in Frankfurt.



Freund's photograph of Norbert Elias

Elias's tasks as Mannheim's assistant included doing much of the donkey work of supervising students' thesis, and in her contribution to the *Festschrift Human Figurations* presented to Elias on his eightieth birthday in 1977, she related how it was he who suggested to her that she write a doctoral thesis about her hobby, photography. They both fled to Paris in 1933, and continued to discuss her doctoral thesis, although it was presented not to the University of Frankfurt but to the Sorbonne. Anyone familiar with Elias's ideas – including the essay 'Kitsch und Kitschzeitalter' which he wrote in Paris in 1935 – will be able to detect his influence on the thesis, which was published as *La Sociologie de la photographie*. It has often been thought to be heavily influenced by Walter Benjamin, particularly in the light of his most famous essay, 'The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. Indeed, Gisèle saw Benjamin regularly, but did not talk about the thesis with him. Her dramatic photograph of Elias in Paris is reproduced from Elias's own copy – she said that she sadly had to dispose of many others. She was present at the celebrations of Norbert's 90th birthday in Amsterdam in 1987.

Unlike Elias, Gisèle Freund remained in France, fleeing south to join the Resistance when Paris was occupied. She was then invited to Argentina, where she worked for the Free French propaganda agency and from 1947 to 1954 covered the whole of Latin America for the celebrated Magnum agency. Returning to Paris, she continued to work as a freelance and wrote and illus-

trated many books; an updated treatment of the concerns of her doctoral thesis was finally published in English as *Photography and Society* in 1980.

■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

The next issue of *Figurations* will be mailed in November 2000. News and notes should be sent to the Editors by 1 October 2000.

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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), Rich Text and plain text files can all be handled. Do not use embedded footnotes. Hard copy is accepted reluctantly.

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