

# Figurations

## Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

### ■ THE COLLECTED WORKS OF NORBERT ELIAS IN ENGLISH

Hot off the press, by the time you receive this issue of *Figurations*, the first two volumes of the Collected Works of Norbert Elias in English will have been published by UCD Press on behalf of the Norbert Elias Foundation. They are volume 1 the *Early Writings* (editor Richard Kilminster) and volume 2 *The Court Society* (editor Stephen Menzell).

Next to appear, in 2006, will be volumes 8 *Involvement and Detachment* (editor Steve Quilley), 9 *An Essay on Time* (editor Steve Loyal), and 7 *Quest for Excitement* (revisited by its co-author, Eric Dunning). After that, the plan is to publish the three important thematic volumes of Elias's collected essays, volume 14 containing his writings on the sociology of knowledge and the sciences, 15 those on civilising processes, state formation and national identity, and 16 essays on sociology and the humanities. These should appear in 2007.

Each volume is handsomely produced, printed in Baskerville type and bound in dark green cloth with a ribbon marker, to a uniform design. The black-and-white photograph gives some impression of the spines. (Readers will note that it has been decided to change the previous English titles of some of the volumes. The most radical decision was to change *The Civilising Process* to the more literal and accurate *On the*



*Process of Civilisation*. As Hermann Korte noted, the stress in the title should be on the word 'process', not the word 'civilisation'; this volume will not, however, be published until quite late in the series, around 2010.)

Readers, no doubt, will be more interested in the contents than in the external appearance. The editors of each volume will carefully check the text against previous editions, in English or German, and where necessary will refer back to Elias's original typescripts. Experience with the first two volumes has already shown that a great many errors had crept into earlier editions (Elias was notoriously reluctant to

spend time checking the proofs of his work, and some books appear to have gone to press without any academic involvement in the process of publication). Edmund Jephcott, who translated many of Elias's books into English in the 1970s and 1980s, has undertaken to translate all of the remaining essays and one book (*Humana Conditio*) that have not previously appeared in English. But, in consultation with Edmund, volume editors will also make revisions to the earlier translations in order to achieve as great a degree of consistency as possible throughout the seventeen volumes (plus a consolidated index) that are planned. Thus, for example, *Zwang* will normally be translated consistently as 'constraint' rather than 'compulsion' (which both Edmund and Stephen Menzell used sometimes in early translations), and *ritterlich* as 'knightly' rather than as 'chivalrous'. Some words pose great difficulty: for example, *bürgerlich* in German, *bourgeois* in French and 'bourgeois' in English all have subtly different ranges of connotation, which then change over time.

Brief explanatory notes are being added where appropriate. For example, in *The Court Society* there are many passing references to minor historical figures about whom only specialists in French history and literature of the period can be expected to know. The policy is, however, that editors will not overstep

the mark and embark on the *interpretation* of Elias's writings. This series is meant to be definitive, to remain on the shelves of scholars and libraries for decades, and it is all too easy to write an introduction referring to recent sociological fads and fashions that in consequence will date more rapidly than Elias's writings themselves. The editors' Note on the Text in each volume will therefore discuss mainly the origins of the text itself, and any specific editorial decisions that had to be made in preparing the text for the collected works.

All quotations will be checked, as will Elias's often hazy referencing. (Elias taught us to study the way in which social standards of behaviour and feeling changed from generation to generation; one social standard that he did not study, but which he well illustrates, is the standard governing the principles of bibliographical referencing.) Each volume will contain a consolidated bibliography of all books and sources cited by Elias and by the editor. It has, incidentally, been decided to use on-the-page footnotes throughout the collected works, rather than endnotes or the author-date system of citation.

## The First Two Volumes

Vol. 1 *Early Writings*, edited by Richard Kilminster. Dublin: UCD Press, 2006.

xx + 136 pp.

ISBN 1-904558-39-9. €40.00.

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4 Idea and individual: A contribution to the philosophy of history (1924)

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Not previously available in English are chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5 and the Appendix; several of the remaining chapters appeared in earlier, sometimes incomplete, translations but were not easy to obtain. 'On seeing in nature', written when Elias was a precocious 24, is a particular revelation; his abstrusely philosophical doctoral thesis (chapter 3) demonstrates just what he was anxious to escape from. The text of a rough outline of Elias's proposed (but unfinished) Heidelberg *Habilitationschrift*, which Reinhard Blomert discovered some years ago among Alfred Weber's papers, is included as an Appendix because it cannot be counted among Elias's collected *published* writings. Sad to relate, the fine play *Die Wolke*, included in the corresponding volume in the German *Gesammelte Schriften*, is not included here because – after Edmund Jephcott had translated it into English – the English editors received evidence that convinced them that it was in fact *not* written by Elias. It is hoped to publish the translation separately elsewhere.

Vol. 2, *The Court Society*, edited by Stephen Mennell. Dublin: UCD Press, 2006. xvi + 331 pp. ISBN 1-904558-40-2. €55.00.

Long out of print, *The Court Society* is a classic. Recognised by historians as the benchmark for studies of early modern courts, which were an important but long-neglected phase both in the European civilising process and state formation processes, the book is far from being a merely historical study. In his long introduction on 'Sociology and Historiography', and in many further remarks throughout the book, Elias shows how fundamental a contribution to sociological theory and method he is making too.

An original feature of this edition is the inclusion of the architectural drawings from the *Encyclopédie*, to which Elias refers extensively in chapter 3, 'The structure of dwellings as an indicator of social structure'; these have not been

reproduced in any earlier edition of the work in any language.

## How to acquire the Elias Collected Works

The volumes are being priced as reasonably as hardbacks can be, with a view to making it possible for individual scholars as well as libraries to collect them. The Foundation hopes that readers of *Figurations* will at least ensure that their own institutions' libraries place orders.

Apart from through ordinary bookshops and online services such as Amazon, the separate volumes of the Collected Works can be bought directly from the UCD Press website ([www.ucdpress.ie](http://www.ucdpress.ie)).

## Series Subscriptions

UCD Press is able to offer substantial discounts to readers who wish to subscribe to the series. We should warn, however, that the cost of postage from Ireland to the more far-flung parts of the globe may offset the discount. If you are interested, you should contact:

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## ■ FROM THE NORBERT ELIAS FOUNDATION

### Jason Hughes wins Norbert Elias Prize 2005

Jason Hughes has won the Norbert Elias Prize for his book *Learning to Smoke: Tobacco Use in the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). This, the fourth award of the prize, was for the best first book by a European social scientist published in 2003–4. The jury consisted of the previous three winners of the prize – David Lepoutre, Wilbert van Vree and Nikola Tietze, with Stephen Mennell representing the Foundation in the chair. Their decision was unanimous, and reached

independently without discussion. It is hoped that all the winners will meet each other for the first time when the prize is presented to Jason (see also Forthcoming Conferences).

## Ghana Artist Stipend – Ray Claver Agbo

The second Norbert Elias Ghana Artist's Stipend has been won by Ray Claver Agbo.



Here is how he writes about himself:

'I come from Ho in the Volta Region, where I was born in 1970. I had my education in Lomé, Togo. After secondary school, I opted for a veterinary course but, that proving not to be my vocation, I went back to the art college in Palime, from where I graduated in sculpture in 1992. After my graduation, I taught for two years before coming back to Ghana in 1994.

Because of my love of wood, I established myself in the western part of the country where I could get an abundance of wood and opened an art shop where I do my works. I also have a certificate with the NVTI (National Vocational Training Institute of Ghana) in wood-carving.

I have taken part in numerous exhibitions and workshops such as:

- Panafest 1997, 1999 (Panafest African Historical Theatre Festival Exhibition)
- NAFAC 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003 (National Festival of Arts and Culture)
- SIAO 1998, 2000 (Salon International des Arts de Ouagadougou; Burkina Faso)
- Unknown Ghanaian Artist in 2000

I have had two solo exhibitions under the themes Spirit of Creativity (1997) and Arts and People (1999). I have attended the Congress of Cultural Workers in Accra (2004) and also the third edition workshop of Art in Aktion (2005).

I mostly combine kaolin and pigment colours applied on pieces of wood taken from the bush. I also use nails and other materials to express my thoughts and my feelings. I always want to deeply touch the soul of whoever may be concerned wherever he may be through my works.'

We hope to be able to print some photographs of Ray's art (although merely in black-and-white) in *Figurations 25*.

## Marbach Stipend

The German Literature Archive and the Norbert Elias Foundation, Amsterdam, will once again award a Marbach Graduate Stipend to undertake research for up to six months (starting in July 2006) on the papers of Norbert Elias, which have been deposited in the German Literature Archive. Applications should be sent not later than 15 March 2006 to Dr. Marcel Lepper, Deutsches Literaturarchiv, D-71666 Marbach-am-Neckar, Germany. The committee of the Archive will meet to decide upon the award of the stipend in April 2006. Informal enquiries may be addressed to Dr Lepper (tel. +49-7144-848432; e-mail [MAGG@dla-marbach.de](mailto:MAGG@dla-marbach.de); <http://www.dla-marbach.de>).

## ■ SISWO

We are sorry to hear that SISWO – the Netherlands Centre for Social Science Co-ordination, which until a few issues ago used to publish *Figurations* on behalf of the Norbert Elias Foundation – has been abolished. Its publications programme was ended two years ago, but now the University of Amsterdam has discontinued SISWO's funding altogether. The staff are taking up posts elsewhere in the university – except for Kitty Roukens, Deputy Director, who will stay on with one other colleague, as a kind of skeleton staff until 2008. We should like once again to thank Kitty for all that she has done over the years

to support *Figurations* and figurational studies in general.

## ■ PEOPLE

• A former student in Sociology at UCD, who now works for an NGO and therefore asks not to be named in *Figurations*, is nevertheless happy for us to report his recent email, which read:

'I now live and work in Cambodia. Nearly every day I am reminded of your lectures on Elias, the civilising process and manners. Open urination (against stationary objects), spitting and eating from a common dish are commonplace in this part of the world. We are doing some work on sanitation, and interestingly open defecation is a source of shame, with wealthier households constructing latrines when they can afford it.

My knowledge of the sociology of development has been of little use, but Elias's writings have helped me better understand the culture that I'm living and working in.'

• José Esteban Castro has been appointed Senior Lecturer in Sociology in the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK. His book on water in Mexico, arising from his Oxford DPhil thesis, will be published shortly (see below).

• Steve Quilley is leaving UCD to return to the UK, where he has been appointed to an interdisciplinary post at the University of Keele, to teach and research in the area of the environment. He will belong two-thirds to a group called SPIRE (Politics, Philosophy, Environment and International Relations) and one-third to Geography.

• Heike Hammer has given birth to a daughter, Mascha, on 3 October. Mother and baby are doing fine. Heike, who has served from the beginning as a member of the Editorial Board for the *Elias Gesammelte Schriften* published by Suhrkamp, is putting the finishing touches to her editing of the three volumes of essays which are among the final volumes to be published in the series.

• Stefanie Ernst was appointed to a Professorship of Sociology in April 2005 at the University of Hamburg, in the Department of Economics and Politics, Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences. The main topics of research involved in the professorship are work, organisation and gender, and Stefanie says she will continue to explore the relevance of Elias's ideas to these themes.

• Aoife Rickard Diamond had to withdraw from helping to produce this issue of *Figurations* for family reasons – literally: she is expecting her third baby. Katie Liston, who helped with one earlier issue, volunteered to take over at short notice. Since the two editors are now in different countries, we shall have to work out a new *modus operandi*. We shall see how we get on with producing this issue and the next.



Katie Liston in ceremonial dress with her University of Chester colleagues Ken Green, Andy Smith and Dan Bloyce]

## ■ EDITORS' NOTES

### Elias and *The Guardian* (1)

Under the rubric of 'British culture', John Sutherland (Professor of English Literature at University College London, who moonlights as a *Guardian* journalist) contributed an article on 25 July 2005 entitled 'Want to know what British civilisation is? Take a look at the self-restrained queue outside the British Museum'. In the course of a rather journalistic canter round the question of British manners, their dependence on the royal family, and whether they were declining or enduring, Sutherland revealed a vague awareness of Norbert Elias. He wrote:

'There is another way of thinking about good manners and the codes that enforce them. Arguably the greatest British sociologist of the twentieth century was Norbert Elias who, after the Nazis drove him out of Poland [*sic*], took up residence in this country, teaching and forming a school around him at Leicester University.

Elias concentrated what he termed the 'civilising' process. How did European societies, a few centuries ago, raise themselves above the Hobbesian war of all against all? The key, Elias deduced, was manners – such apparently trivial things as not picking your nose in public, and using your fork properly and all the manuals of good conduct from Castiglione's *The Courtier* to 'Ask Abby.'

With typical understatement, Joop Goudsblom described Sutherland's account of Elias's theory as 'streamlined'.

### Elias and *The Guardian* (2)

In a rather more substantial article entitled 'It always lies below' in the same newspaper on 8 September 2005 – Timothy Garton Ash offered some reflections on Hurricane Katrina and its social aftermath. In it, he used the term 'decivilisation'. Indeed the subtitle of the article was: 'A hurricane produces anarchy. Decivilisation is not as far away as we like to think.' Interestingly, he attributed the word to Jack London. There was no mention of Elias, but Garton Ash's argument was fully consonant with the famous footnote in *The Civilising Process* in which Elias remarks that: 'The armour of civilised conduct would crumble very rapidly if, through a change in society, the degree of insecurity that existed earlier were to break in upon us again, and if danger became as incalculable as it once was. Corresponding fears would soon burst the limits set to them today'. Does anyone know the exact reference to Jack London's use of the word 'decivilisation'?

### Back Numbers of *Figurations*

PDF files of the full back-run of *Figurations* can be found on Robert van Krieken's website: <http://www.usyd.edu.au/su/social/elias/figsframe.html>.

The first dozen issues – published before the advent of PDFs – can now be seen and downloaded in their original page-image format.

### Elias-I Email Discussion List

Readers are reminded once more about the long-established Figuration Studies email discussion list. Details and the archive can be found at <http://www.losft.com/scripts/wl.exe?SL1=ELIAS-I&H=NIC.SURFNET.NL>. Or, to subscribe, simply send an email to: [LISTSERV@NIC.SURFNET.NL](mailto:LISTSERV@NIC.SURFNET.NL) with the command (paste it!): SUBSCRIBE ELIAS-I.

## ■ REVIEW SYMPOSIUM

### Cas Wouters, *Sex and Manners:*

*Female Emancipation in the West, 1890–2000*. London: Sage, 2004. x + 188 pp. ISBN: 0-8039-8369-7.

There has been a transformation in Irish girls. It used to be that they were chaste, modest, pious young things for whom, sexually, butter would not melt in their mouths. But recent reports in the Irish media suggest the days of the innocent colleen are long gone. It appears that when some teenage girls in Dublin go to a dance they take their knickers off. The reason for this is not clear. Perhaps it is to facilitate a good fingering. There are other more startling stories about how other girls, having given a boy a blow-job at the dance, spit the sperm into the mouth of the next boy she kisses. It is called snowballing. What is interesting about these girls is that they come from 'good society'. So the question arises: will there be a trickle down effect? But we also have to be careful. Are these urban myths? Are they part of the ongoing moral panic about the young generation today?

The problem for social researchers is how to find evidence to substantiate these reports. Even if a social survey were commissioned, and a sample of teenage girls were asked direct questions, there is always the difficulty that there would be a gap between what they say and what they do. One solution is to go through the problem pages

of teenage magazines. Although they do not provide a scientific sample, they do give an insight into changing codes of sexual behaviour. And, sure enough, an examination of teenage magazines shows that plenty of advice is given to Irish teenage girls about how they should enjoy themselves sexually, but refrain from engaging in intercourse.

But how do we find out about the past when there were no social surveys or 'agony aunts'. A good approach is to examine changing advice given in manners books. Although the advice given in manners books pertained to 'good society' we can, following the water-tower concept, expect that this behaviour would eventually trickle down to the rest of society. The problem with Ireland, however, is that few manners books were published. This is related to the monopoly that the Catholic Church held over morality, particularly sexual morality. Moreover, 'good society' in Ireland generally referred to an Anglo-Irish Protestant elite for whom the Catholic masses had a deep disgust.

Reading Wouters's book brings to mind questions about the sexual manners of Irish girls, their courting habits, how these have changed, to what extent they did things differently in the past, and whether they have become more like their European counterparts. Good books stimulate thoughts. This is a good book. Wouters has produced a magisterial collection of Western sexual manners throughout the twentieth century in four different societies, the United States, Great Britain, Germany and the Netherlands. In each of these societies, he uses manners books – and towards the end of the century advice columns – to describe and analyse changes in sexual behaviour between men and women, specifically, in relation to courting practices.

This is a wonderfully detailed social history. But, of course, it is much more because behind the history there is a complex theory of social change, one that is very different from that of other great historians of Western sexuality, Michel Foucault. Wouters barely mentions Foucault except in the Preface when he states that unlike the approach adopted by Foucault, 'this study is

primarily based upon original sources and upon the work of others who use original sources (p. ix). This would suggest that Wouters's reluctance to engage with Foucault was methodological. But it is incorrect to say that Foucault did not use original sources. Of course he did. Both Wouters and Foucault use texts to reveal social action and the way social order was created and maintained. But, because of different theoretical assumptions, they looked at different texts. Foucault examined manuals and dossiers – what he saw as expert discourses that became part of the human sciences – to discover how people were disciplined and controlled. He saw these sciences as central to creating social order. Sexuality is something that is invested in bodies. It is part of a microphysics of power. Wouters does not start with a theory of power. For him, social order is more of an organic process that emerges through human interaction. It is something that emerges out of greater complexity and interdependency. He uses manners books to get to where the action is. This is not to say that Wouters does not recognise power imbalances, but power emerges from human action rather than vice versa. In this sense, original sources can be read as texts that reveal the action. Manners books reflect on existing action, particularly that of 'good society' and indicate what people have to do if they want to be accepted by that society. The crucial difference between Wouters and Foucault is that manners books are not manuals. They reflect changes in social behaviour. Wouters's theory allows for an agency explanation for social change rather than, as with Foucault, changes in discourses.

Wouters seeks, then, to describe how sexual behaviour changed in good society in the West during the last century. He shows that while there were some important variations in the four countries he examines, there was a gradual process of increased permissiveness. Strict formal codes governing courting behaviour began to give way to looser more informal codes. In a nutshell, at the end of the nineteenth century, in the heyday of Victorian prudery, women had to be formally introduced to men at social gatherings. If they began to

court, they could only do so under the supervisory eye of a chaperone. However, by the end of the century some city women were going out on their own into cafés and nightclubs in search of a man for the night.

Since the vast majority of manners books refer to women, in tracing this transformation, Wouters has effectively written an alternative history of women's emancipation. The sexual revolution that took place in the twentieth century was dependent on women's emancipation. Sexual emancipation was linked to women having the right to go out to work, get a job and earn their own money. Women gradually became equal sexual partners and equally erotic. There used to be lusty men and romantic women. The emancipation of women has led to them proclaiming their sexuality and seeking to satisfy their carnal desires and, thus, to a sexualisation of love and an eroticisation of sex.

Wouters shows how slowly but surely courting women broke free from the confines of the drawing room and the chaperone and began to go to public dance halls. Here was the first opportunity for women to give into lustful behaviour in public, literally to shake their bodies free from Victorian censures. Soon they were being taken out on dates where they were able to engage in more lustful behaviour. The problem was, however, how to kiss, neck and pet and still maintain sexual honour. Wouters argues convincingly that the art of modern-day dating began in the United States and that it was related, among other things, to the youth culture and to co-educational schools and colleges. Women had to learn how to let go without letting go completely, a controlled decontrolling of their lust. They had to learn how to give men sexual favours in return for having being given a good time. Women, so to speak, had to forget the rules of the road as taught to them by their parents and learn how to handle their drives in increasingly fast sexual traffic.

Wouters describes the contemporary era as a balancing act between the desire to have unfettered sex with an interest in long-lasting love and intimacy. However, despite a decontrolling of

sex, the drive towards love and intimacy is stronger among women. While there are increasing numbers of women who seek a 'zipless fuck', mainstream women are oriented towards a love and relationship dominated sexuality that is uncontaminated by power and dominance. But they still have to deal with many men who are oriented towards sex for the sake of sex. The question remains, however, whether women are biologically less driven to lust. Or is it cultural? Will feminists always maintain that giving into lust is giving into men and their sexuality? Perhaps it is time to get back to the dance hall where the action is.

This book revolves around a simple but difficult question: how and why did sexuality develop as it did in the West? This is a good question given that how the West developed has universal significance. Wouters's explanation is rich and complex. Increased competition led to increased differentiation of social functions. There were more functions fulfilled by different people. This led to greater social interdependence, which, in turn, led to diminishing power inequalities. This is what gave rise to short-term phases of informalisation. This is what happened around 1900, in the 1920s, 1960s and 1970s. There is a sudden spiral in the 'We-I' balance away from we-identities in the direction of the I. There is a shift in the balance from external social controls to self-control. An increasing number of social groups emancipate themselves from traditional external constraints. There is a weakening of the boundaries between class, ethnicity, sex, age and religion. New groups begin to orientate themselves to alternative codes of manners and feelings. They identify with each other. They become the new 'We' in the 'We-I' balance. They became powerful. They became the new established. A new phase begins to emerge. There is increased co-ordination and integration of social function and the social institutions that fulfill them. Power begins to be consolidated. There is less accommodation of difference and less opportunity for individual emancipation. There is increased identification with the established, their manners, codes and forms of symbolic domination. Tradition and hierarchy becomes

formalised and enforced. But differentiation of functions continues and soon new groups and codes will emerge.

I would have liked Wouters to have expanded on this theoretical explanation, particularly for those not familiar with Eliasian theory. It appears in the Introduction, but I felt that it was too dense and might have been integrated more throughout the book. I also felt that he might have outlined somewhere how manners books articulated with Christian sexual ethics and the way they were disseminated and embodied. The emancipation of women and the revolution in human sexuality were major characteristics of the twentieth century in the West, but the other major transformation was the way in which religion and sex became decoupled.

*Tom Inglis*

University College Dublin

Cas Wouters's book is in this reviewer's opinion a masterly achievement and a fascinating read for anyone interested in changing attitudes to manners and sex, and in changes in women's lives in relatively developed countries including Britain, Germany, the Netherlands and the USA. More generally, and for those who regard themselves as sociologists first and foremost, this text is an empirical and methodological *tour de force* for its explication and extension of the Eliasian perspective and the author's vibrant use of data.

As with all texts, the reviewer always begins the process of reading and digesting the various arguments within the context of his or her life experience, and drawing from the pool of academic knowledge and personal life experiences, examples of which can be seen in my fellow reviewer's comments. Being a 'good' modern-day female (in Wouters's sense), I cannot claim to have personal knowledge of the sexual practices to which Tom refers, but I have been drawn to Wouters's outline of the differences in relationships between men and women, changes in courting and dating, and the consequences of this for women's (and men's) self-images. I have to agree with Tom that the Introduction is a thoughtful and insightful discussion of some of

the social patterns constituting a civilising process and more specific dimensions of changes in people's personality structures (e.g. informalisation of manners, rising demands on self-regulation and increasing mutual identification). And, the author will be delighted to hear that, in this context, 'this woman wanted more' (in the theoretical sense, of course)!

Having said that, there is a subtle blending of figurational sociological principles with vivid data, and it is this which should mark this text out in the growing body of knowledge about the sources of women's power and identities, and changing power balances between the sexes. Paradoxically, the empirical evidence of processes of informalisation in the twentieth century offers some support for feminist claims of women's empowerment, but also provides food for thought about the social sources of this empowerment. According to Wouters, processes of informalisation involve 'rising social constraints towards such self-restraints as reflection, presence of mind, consideration, role taking, and the ability to bear and control conflicts' (p. 2). As I read this book I was reminded that one can have a degree of power and not be powerful in the absolute sense.

Wouters's sensitive use of data is evident throughout this book, for example, in his illustration of changes in popular dances from the waltz to more individual dancing styles and variations in between, and in the expansion of women's sources of power and identity from the drawing room to the living room, into the boardroom and beyond. Trends towards the equalisation of power relations between the sexes (as evidenced in the increasing pressure on women to become their own chaperone, to have a job, to go to work and to learn) are also reflected in the zigzag movement towards the emphasis of personal identity rather than group identity. As an aside, the latter theme – the increasing emphasis of personal identity – is a welcome and timely extension of Elias's work on individualisation (see, for example, *The Society of Individuals*). In passing, I was also particularly interested in the role of sport as a way of escaping parental control and meeting

the opposite sex, and the ways in which this gradual shift was reflected in various periodicals published in the twentieth century. I also wonder whether the authors of these periodicals considered non-contact sports such as camping, canoeing and cycling as an opportunity for women to meet members of the opposite and the same sex.

Given the status of Elias's work in *The Civilising Process*, Wouters had an almost 'Everest-like' task in some ways. However, his explication of the emancipation of women's sexuality, and concomitant processes of longing

for sexual gratification and enduring intimacy, is – as I have said – an original and insightful contribution to figurational work. Wouters has also provided a scientific framework for further research that might test the adequacy of his claims about national differences in the cultural lag in trends towards the equalisation of power relations between the sexes in a 'new' social context, Ireland being a possible case in point. According to Wouters (and Elias before him), the history of sex and manners reveals a great deal about relations between individual people and groups of people, and relations within indi-

vidual people (including the formation of personality structures). And *Sex and Manners* reveals Wouters' intimate relationship with this longstanding empirical project over the past two decades or more. There are few, if any, current publications that reveal the intricacies of women's empowerment and changing identities in the West over the last one hundred years or so with such depth and scientific understanding.

Katie Liston  
University of Chester



## ■ RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

**Jérôme Thomas**, *Corps violents, corps soumis: Le policement des moeurs à la fin du Moyen-Age*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003. 214 pp. ISBN: 2-7475-4992-5.

When, looking for a base-line from which to trace the civilising process, Norbert Elias chose the late Middle Ages, he was under the influence of Johan Huizinga's still recent book on the 'autumn' of the Middle Ages (published in Dutch in 1919, in English in 1924), which emphasises the 'vacillating moods' prevalent at the time and the general 'brutality of the age'. It was only to be expected that medievalists would reject this description and date the beginning of the civilising process to 'their' period. This is what C. S. Jaeger did in *The Origins of Courtliness* (1985), focusing attention on the courts of bishops, and Jonathan Nicholls in *The Matter of Courtesy* (also 1985), with special reference to the training of medieval monks. This is also the central argument of a recent book by a young French scholar, Jérôme Thomas. He makes no reference to the work of Jaeger or Nicholls or to that of Dilwyn Knox, who has

also emphasised the 'clerical origins of European civility', but he is well aware of recent French research on violence and civility, by Robert Muchembled on the early modern period as well as by Jean-Claude Schmitt, Jacques Rossiaud and others on the Middle Ages. So far as social theory is concerned, Thomas treats Elias as a central figure, but juxtaposes him to the French tradition of social analysis from Marcel Mauss on 'les techniques du corps' to Pierre Bourdieu on habitus, as well as to the American tradition, including Edward Hall and Erving Goffman.

Thomas examines two aspects of civilisation in particular, table manners and violence. In the first place, he discusses the literature of manners in medieval France, reprinting three anonymous texts on 'la contenance de table' as they call it, as well as commenting on treatises by the Lyon merchant François Garin and the preacher Jacques Legrand. In the second place, Thomas considers what he calls 'la culture de la violence', emphasising the role played by youth groups, the so-called 'abbayes de jeunesse', in the gradual pacifica-

tion, disciplining or (as the author calls it) 'le policement des moeurs'. Although there is little here to surprise specialists in the late Middle Ages, Thomas both mounts an effective critique of the chronological assumptions of *The Civilising Process* and shows by example that Elias still remains good to think with.

Peter Burke  
Emmanuel College, Cambridge

**Farhad Dalal**, *Race, Colour and the Process of Racialisation: New Perspectives from Group Analysis, Psychoanalysis and Sociology*. Hove: Brunner-Routledge, 2002. xi + 251 pp. ISBN: 1-58391-291-6 (hb); 1-58391-292-4 (pb).

In *Race, Colour and the Process of Racialisation*, Farhad Dalal has produced a stimulating, important and highly original book. It is no exaggeration to describe it as a *tour de force*. What it centrally involves is a richly successful synthesis of ideas from psychoanalysis, group analysis and sociology, the sociology being chiefly

that of Norbert Elias. Indeed, it is fair to say that Elias's work is the key to the success of Dalal's synthesis and that, without it, his (Dalal's) breakthrough, for that is what it is, would have been impossible.

Farhad Dalal starts his enquiry by, as he puts it, 'rethinking race'. This he does very successfully, concluding in this connection with the Eliasian idea that 'the primary thing is neither race nor racism, but rationales of subjugation'. In other words, 'race' is fundamentally an issue of power and exploitation. In this connection, Dalal successfully challenges and reverses the 'discourse determinism' of those post-structuralist and post-modernist writers who are unable to see that 'racism' could exist before 'race' had been explicitly named as such.

The principal psychoanalytical theories that Dalal uses are those of Freud, Melanie Klein, Fairbairn and Winnicott. However, he also reviews the work of scholars such as Dollard and Adorno, but rather surprisingly only refers once in passing to the work of Erich Fromm. In addition, in a chapter he calls 'Peeking into the Consulting Room', Dalal undertakes a systematic content analysis of the treatment of 'race' in a variety of British and American psychoanalytical journals. His principal finding is that 'the overwhelming majority of the papers treated the topics of racism and prejudice as a symptom – as the external effect and social expression of internal psychological dynamics'. Among the trenchant examples that he cites in this connection are Basch-Kahre's (1984) attribution of one of her black African patients' deep feeling of worthlessness to 'his experience of weaning' and his 'oedipal conflict', without taking account, as Dalal tells us, of 'his inability to advance in his job'. Myers (1977), we are told, similarly understood a black female patient's 'increasing involvement with black militant groups as a flight from her rage with him.'

Farhad Dalal eases his way towards Elias through largely sympathetic reviews of the work of Franz Fanon and Elias's friend, S.H.Foulkes. The latter, he tells us, had been heavily influenced

by Elias but never grasped the concept of figurations or the centrality of power in Elias's understanding of them. As Dalal cleverly puts it: 'Elias's notion of figuration is a resolution both of Freud's error (which was to overemphasise the internal at the cost of the social) and Marx's error (which was the reverse).' It is perhaps understandable that a psychoanalyst will not have seen the importance of Max Weber and the latter's theory of 'the state' for Elias's synthesis, to say nothing of the importance of lesser figures such as Alfred Weber with his 'culture sociology' and Karl Mannheim with his 'sociology of knowledge'.

Dalal's arguments about 'racialisation' – a term which shows his secure grasp of process thinking – are subtle, sophisticated and steeped in an on the whole thorough and accurate understanding of Elias. Notions of race, he (Dalal) tells us, started to gain increased significance in the later stages of the Western European civilising process as treated by Elias – that is, from the first half of the eighteenth century, especially with the growing strength of emergent nationalisms, and the correlative shift from civility to civilisation codes. As Dalal puts it: 'Where Elias has subjected the changes in etiquette to his analysis, I will subject the semantic history of black and white to the same process.' And, while Elias 'demonstrated that the function of good "manners" was primarily the differentiation of a more powerful "us" from a "them"', Dalal seeks to do the same for black and white by showing that 'the European "us" is manufactured by a progressive whitening of European insides (emotions) and outsides (skins), with the simultaneous blackening of "their" insides and outsides' (p. 134). Dalal also successfully shows how Elias has moved beyond 'discourse theorists for whom discourse sort of floats above the material world' (p. 128). Presumably he had Foucault and his followers in mind in writing this.

This short dip into Farhad Dalal's rich and complex book must be enough for present purposes as an illustration of the compelling way in which he seeks to use Elias and go beyond him. That said, there are, in my opinion, one or

two minor weaknesses and one major weakness in Farhad's account. The minor weaknesses include the fact that he refers on several occasions to 'the history of manners'. He is seemingly unaware of the fact that such a term was foisted on Elias against his will by Urizen, the publishers of the first (published!) English translation. Dalal also uses the distinctly non-Eliasian term, 'the logic of power', not realising that Elias spoke and wrote of the dynamics of power, regarding the 'logic of power' as an idealist construct. Nor, arguably, has Farhad Dalal properly grasped the concept of 'functional democratisation' or the differences, according to Elias, between 'phases of colonisation' and 'phases of repulsion'.

The major weakness, in my view, is Farhad Dalal's insufficiently critical embrace of the concept of a 'social unconscious'. I am sure that Elias would have regarded it as an example of *homo clausus* thinking and a reification, and would have written instead of a 'shared we-image' or, to push it to a deeper level, 'social habitus'.

May I conclude this review self-centredly by adding just one more thing. I was disappointed to discover that Farhad Dalal appears to be unaware of my own figurational work on 'race'. Perhaps that is because some of it appeared in the 1970s in the now defunct journal *Race*, and because some of it deals with the still partly low status subject of sport and 'race'. I wish to stress, however, that neither this nor any of my criticisms should be seen as in any way intended to detract from the magnitude of Farhad Dalal's achievement. His book is a major, highly significant contribution to knowledge; and it deserves, in my view, to be not just read but studied in depth.

*Eric Dunning*  
University of Leicester and  
University of Chester

**Patrick Dolan**, *The Development of Consumer Culture, Subjectivity and National Identity in Ireland, 1900–1980*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2005

*Abstract:* This study concerns the social development of consumer culture, subjectivity and national identity using Ireland as an empirical case. Within much sociological discourse consumption is posited as either the site of individual celebration and resistance or, alternatively, as the outcome of manipulation of one sort or another. As such, the sociology of consumption mirrors the agency–structure dualism of much social theory. Frankfurt School theorists stress the power of capitalist entrepreneurs to control the needs and desires of the consuming masses, while Foucauldians locate the construction of the sovereign consumer in the mobilisation of social scientific discursive practices. The individual consumer is seen as directly produced through discourse, but this theoretical position is tautological; consumer subjectivity is defined as the outcome of discursive practices.

I adopt the theories developed by Norbert Elias to formulate a conception of the individual consumer as formed over time through the complex and fluid interweaving of multiple social processes sustained by shifting figurations – networks of interdependent people. As the figurations multiply and become denser and more extensive, encompassing global dimensions, the symbolic formation surrounding aspects of consumption develops accordingly. Concepts such as luxury undergo a relative moral neutralisation, while needs become seen as more individualised – an outcome of the socially induced self-compulsion and self-restraint brought about by denser and longer social interdependencies. The elevation of ‘the consumer’ as an individual sovereign is a dimension of the shift in tension between social identities that Elias describes as the ‘we–I balance’. The scope of mutual identification between people broadens beyond former international conflicts and nation-state borders, which reconfigures the emotional meaning of objects used by other national groups. These developments are entirely social, therefore bypassing the false dichotomy between society and the individual, and largely unplanned due to the increasing complexity of social figurations.

**Peter Burke**, *History and Social Theory*. 2nd edn, Cambridge: Polity, 2005.

If one counts *Sociology and History*, published by Allen & Unwin in 1980, this is the third – not the second – edition of Peter Burke’s valuable book. It is of course a trademark of Polity (founded by Tony Giddens) that the word sociology is universally censored and replaced by the term ‘social theory’, which for many of us sums up a great deal that has gone wrong in the discipline in recent years. (Elias spoke of the ‘philosophoidal’ tendency.) That is not a criticism of Burke’s invaluable book, however, for like its predecessors it provides social scientists with an indispensable guide to currents of historiographical fashion, as well as a guide for historians to some of the saner bits of the social sciences. I still cringe a bit when *The Civilising Process* is described as ‘the most important work of historical sociology in the Spencer tradition’ (p. 149, my emphasis), but Burke is perfectly fair in drawing attention to the complexities of using the term ‘civilisation’ in comparative-historical research. And he includes bibliographical references to many of the key discussions in the figurational literature on problems such as ‘informalisation’ and ‘decivilisation’. I should have liked to see Burke deal in some detail with the arguments advanced by Elias in his introduction, ‘Sociology and Historiography’, to *The Court Society*.

SJM

**Andrew Linklater**, ‘A European Civilising Process’, chapter 17, pp. 368–87 in Christopher Hill and Michael Smith, eds, *International Relations and the European Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. xxvi + 469 pp. ISBN: 0-19-927348-0.

International Relations, along with criminology, is one of the areas of the social sciences in which the work of Elias has lately made a big impact. Articles by Andrew Linklater have been mentioned in several earlier issues of *Figurations*, and in this very impressive student textbook, it is highly significant that his chapter – along with the editors’ own overall conclusion – constitutes the final ‘Evaluation and Conclusion’ section of the whole book.

Linklater summarises his chapter as follows: One of the most famous portrayals of the EU casts it as a security community in which national governments have renounced the use of force between themselves and where mass publics are acquiring a palpable sense of ‘we feeling’. Another celebrated approach depicts the EU as a civilian power committed to ending power politics between the member states and in the world at large. These reflections on the EU can be linked with what some sociologists call ‘the civilising process’ – the process in which individual European societies came to be pacified and the members of national populations came to identify more closely with one another between the sixteenth century and the present day. One of the three questions discussed in this chapter is whether it is useful to regard the EU as an experiment in taking the civilising process beyond the nation-state – and not just within Europe. What specifically is the relationship between the EU’s role in transforming political community on the continent and its conduct towards the rest of the world?

How the EU should behave towards other societies is the second key question which is raised in this chapter. What moral criteria should be used to decide whether the EU is realising its potential as a civilian power in world affairs? What should the EU as a civilian power aim to achieve in future? Although the study of ‘the civilising process’ is a sociological one, it offers some clues as to how to approach normative questions of this kind. One of its central empirical claims is that all societies must ask how their members can satisfy their basic needs without injuring, demeaning, frustrating and in other ways *harming* each other time and time again. It is a small step from here to the question of what any society *should* do to prevent harm to its inhabitants and indeed to the members of other societies. The EU has tried to persuade neighbouring states to abolish the death penalty, but should it take this moral stance? More specifically, what should the EU do to ensure that its attempt to build closer co-operation in Europe does not cause unnecessary harm to people who live elsewhere? A third question is whether a moral audit of the

EU would reveal significant achievements in promoting common interests without harming the members of other societies or major deficiencies which the EU should aim to reduce in future.'

**Katie Liston**, 'Established-Outsider Relations Between Males and Females in the Field of Sports in Ireland', *Irish Journal of Sociology* 14 (1) 2005: 66–85.

*Abstract:* This paper will introduce readers to the field of sports in the Republic of Ireland with specific reference to changing power relations between the sexes. It will situate a present-day social phenomenon, that is, Irish females' increasing involvement in what are seen traditionally as male-associated sports such as Gaelic football, rugby and soccer, within the context of social processes in which more or less independent groups of people (that is, male and female sportspeople) are becoming more interdependent. Qualitative data including 12 in-depth interviews with high performance (elite) female athletes (conducted between 1999 and 2002), three in-depth interviews with leading Irish sports officials (1999–2003) and participant observation notes (from the author's involvement in the field of sports since the early 1990s) will be used to examine aspects of the sport–gender nexus in Ireland. These will be situated within a sociological analysis of the emergence and development of sports for women since the 1970s, and they will be used to argue that the relatively slight shift in the balance of power in favour of females since the 1970s has led to feelings of emancipation amongst females and resistance amongst males, though this resistance is gradually becoming weaker. Elias's theory of 'established-outsider' relations will be applied to suggest that females who participate in sports such as rugby, soccer and Gaelic football to a lesser extent, can be described as an 'outsider' group, that is, as one that has lacked the organisational resources and networks of mutual assistance to significantly shift the uneven balance of power between the sexes. Moreover, typical of outsiders in their relations with the established, dominant stereotypical views of females remain embedded in the personality structures of 'outsiders'.

**Joseph Maguire and Jason Tuck**, 'National Identity, Rugby Union and Notions of Ireland and the "Irish"', *Irish Journal of Sociology*, 14 (1) 2005: 86–109.

*Abstract:* This paper seeks to examine issues of identity and national habitus from an Eliasian perspective. In doing so, it casts critically light on the making of Irish identity in the post Second World War period. Specific reference is given to one case study, namely the sport of rugby union. This sport does appear to have been significantly connected to the national habitus of Ireland during the post-war period (especially since the 1960s) and creates a highly visible, 'glocal', arena for the testing of 'Irish' and 'British/English' identity. This case study highlights how contested notions of Irish identity are, and how, in this post-war period, a less deferential and more assertive Irish habitus was and is evident relative to their former colonial masters, the English. In that sense, instead of exhibiting a sense of group disgrace, the Irish now claim a widening field of identification and a more confident group charisma.

**Erica Burman and Stephen Frosh (eds)**, *New currents in contemporary social theory and implications for group analytic theory and practice*. Special issue of *Group Analysis* 38 (1) 2005.

This special issue of the journal *Group Analysis* explores implications for Group Analysis of current debates in social theory. The 'post-foundationalist paradigm' (broadly including poststructuralist, postmodernist, performative and postcolonial ideas) in contemporary social theory has prompted both new preoccupations and alternative perspectives on old problems – problems of individual and collective meaning, and subjectivities. *Group Analysis* has previously featured some of these frameworks and highlighted possible applications (e.g. Craib, 2001), and we aimed to build on these to identify and introduce specific areas or fields of newly emerging enquiry that are currently transforming the conceptual landscape of social theory. These have key implications for how we formulate contexts of distress, and usher in alternative

interpretive approaches to therapeutic, and other group analytic, work.

This issue updates a longstanding relationship since, as readers of *Figurations* will know, group analysis has historical connections with critical theory dating from Foulkes' own work in Frankfurt in the 1920s (E. Foulkes, 1990; Rothe, 1989). While the Frankfurt School formulated the initial critiques of the enlightenment project (in the form of 'reason', 'science', 'history'), post-World War II social theory (e.g. Lyotard, 1982) extended these further in response to global changes in communication technologies and capitalism.

Norbert Elias is clearly a key figure connecting the two sets of intellectual currents. As well as linking group analysis and social theory, his work additionally functioned within sociology to provide a critique of dominant structuralist and adaptationist paradigms and to assert the need to attend to process, including language, culture and the changing material tools available to mediate social relations – i.e. technology. Indeed it may be significant that Elias was a relative latecomer to sociology, first training in medicine and then philosophy before arriving at the conviction that only sociology could provide the answers to his preoccupations with the socialised character of embodiment and the societal management of aggression. He explicitly aimed to build on Freud's key work in this area, but to ground it within a deeper understanding of changing social processes (Elias, 1994).

Although the papers make little reference to his work (since they address more recent developments in social theory), Elias lives on in this enterprise – both in terms of his analytical rigour and the sustained critical inquiry that prompted his cross-disciplinary investigations. A key theme or current arena of debate within contemporary social theory forms the focus for analysis of each of the specially commissioned papers in the issue: feminisms, postcolonial theory, queer theory, narrative analysis, translation and space. Each paper – written by academic experts – describes why and how this approach has arisen, explains the new perspectives on methodological and interpre-

tive issues it has instigated, and the areas of tension and convergence with other current perspectives. Overall, group analysts are both specialists and beneficiaries of multidisciplinary dialogue, and this issue addresses the need to maintain connections with more recent innovations in social theory that extend the scope of such analysis, bringing new themes and reciprocal relationships to the fore. We hope that readers of *Figurations* will find it a useful bridge to make further connections with group analysis.

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**David Rotman**, 'Trajectoire intellectuelle et expérience du camp: Norbert Elias à l'île de Man'. *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 52 (2) 2005: 148–67.

Elias used not to talk very much about the eight months in 1940–1 that he spent interned as an 'enemy alien', most of it with hundreds of others on the Isle of Man. He said he was able to take advantage of enforced leisure to take courses in English, and we also know that he himself was a leading light in the impromptu 'university' that the internees established for themselves. We know, too, that it was on the Isle of Man that he wrote the *Ballade vom armen Jakob*, set to music by the composer Hans Gal. David Rotman has now greatly extended what most of us have hitherto known about this period in Elias's life. Rotman was one of the holders

of the Norbert Elias Foundation's 'Marbach Stipend', which enabled him to spend time working on the Elias papers in the Deutsche Literaturarchiv in Marbach and der Neckar. Rotman has read Elias's surviving correspondence from the time, with both German and British friends, including Peter Galliner, D.W. Harding, C.P. Snow, Patrick Gordon Walker, Richard Löwenthal, Alfred Glucksmann, Ilse Seglow, Morris Ginsberg. Rotman relates the experience to Elias's life before and after it, and suggests how it may have helped to shape such key ideas as established-outsider relations.

**Marcello Strazzeri**, *Figurazioni letterarie del mutamento sociale nella prospettiva di Elias*. [Literary figurations of social change in Eliasian perspective.] Lecce: Manni, 2003. 198 pp. ISBN: 8881765047.

In this highly original book, Strazzeri applies figurational theory and concepts to interpreting literature, particularly that of Sicily, and using literature to understand how Sicilians and Sicilian society have changed.

**Olivier Remaud**, 'Norbert Elias e il crollo della civiltà: Le Studien über die Deutschen', *Iride: Filosofia e discussione pubblica*, 43, anno XVII, 2004, pp. 671–83.

In this article Olivier Remaud provides a thorough account for Italian readers of the main arguments of *Studien über die Deutschen* and a survey of the discussions and debates to which they have given rise.

#### ■ ADVANCE NOTICE

**Stephen Quilley and Steven Loyal**, 'Eliasian Sociology as a "Central Theory" for the Human Sciences'. *Current Sociology*, 53 (5) 2005: 809–30.

This very recent and important article will be discussed further in *Figurations* 25, along with the critical comments on it by Arpad Szakolczai and Nidhi Srinivas, and the authors' rejoinder to their critics ('Science, Cumulative Knowledge, Secondary Involvement and Synthesis: A Reply to Our Critics', *Current Sociology*, 53 (5) 2005: 845–52).

Tom Scheff writes:

The preface and table of contents of my Goffman manuscript is now available on my website, no. 44 (at <http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/faculty/scheff>). The provisional title is now *Toward a New Microsociology: Building on Goffman's Legacy*. Elias's work plays an important role in some of the chapters. Needless to say, there is a lot of coverage of shame, humiliation and embarrassment, as well as detailed treatments of anger, love, and, to a lesser extent, disgust. I am hoping it will appear in print by September or October (Paradigm Press).

#### ■ FROM THE AUTHOR

**José Esteban Castro**, *Water, Power, and Citizenship: Social Struggle in the Basin of Mexico*. Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan (in press, forthcoming December 2005). 256 pp. ISBN:10: 1-4039-4879-8 (hb).

Taking an historical-sociological perspective, this book provides an interdisciplinary investigation of the intertwining between water and citizenship in Mexico. Drawing on the work of, among others, Norbert Elias, Marx, T.H. Marshall, and von Clausewitz, the work provides an empirical study of the import of social struggle in the explanation of structural social change from pre-Columbian times to the late twentieth century. The evolution of water's manifold social character and values – as a source of power, as a public good, as a commodity, or as a universal right – are examined in the light of the ever-changing and mutually binding social and ecological processes. The basin's rich water history becomes the vantage point to cast light on one of the most crucial challenges facing the international community: the protracted social inequalities that account for the large share of the world population affected by preventable water-related diseases and death. The author concludes that, in the face of the current reversal of the values of universalism, the defence and further conquest of the territory of citizenship has become a truly radical endeavour, which in this particular sphere of human activity takes the form of a struggle for eliminating water inequality and injustice.

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Introduction  
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 Water and the Territory of Citizenship  
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**Joseph L. Soeters**, *Ethnic Conflict and Terrorism: The Origins and Dynamics of Civil Wars*. London: Routledge, 2005. 170 pp. Hb: 0-415-36587-2; Pb: 0-415-36588-0

The original Dutch version of this book was reviewed in *Figurations* 22. Now it is published in English. The blurb from Routledge reads:

In the early 1990s a number of violent civil wars and large-scale ethnic crises shocked the world. In Rwanda, Bosnia, Chechnya and elsewhere atrocities were committed that led to hundreds of thousands of dead and displaced people. Explaining the origins and dynamics of such inhuman actions and events, this new sensitive and detailed analysis includes:

- \* full analysis of the origins of civil wars, terrorism and ethnic strife
- \* insights drawn from across the social sciences
- \* practical and topical illustrations of the information provided
- \* fully updated assessments with details of key contemporary events

Although the number of these conflicts has diminished over the years, the phenomenon has not disappeared: in the Sudan, the Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria, Afghanistan and Iraq people are still being killed in large numbers, without authorities being able to avert or end the hostilities. On 9/11 large-scale terrorist attacks in Washington and New York shocked the world again, and since then other violent events have taken place in Bali, Casablanca, Riyadh, Moscow, Istanbul and Madrid.

This book of concern to all people, because recent history has shown us that such violence can strike everywhere and at any time. The final chapter delivers a number of constructive

considerations aiming at the development of policies to prevent and stop such conflicts. This is an important new contribution to tackling the complex challenges of the twenty-first century.

**Guy Ankerl**, *Global Communication without Universal Civilisation, vol. 1, Coexisting Contemporary Civilisations: Arabo-Muslim, Bharati, Chinese, and Western*. Geneva: INU Press, 2005. 530 pp. ISBN: 2881550045.

Important questions discussed in this book include:

- Are there any civilisations other than the Western one living in our so-called Global Age?
- ‘Eastern civilisation’? Is the concept of East anything more than non-West? Or do there only exist, in reality, a distinct Chinese, Indian, Arabo-Muslim, and Western civilisation?
- Is the construction of large civilisation-states such as China and India an unparalleled historical achievement?
- Do economic ties always eclipse other forms of affiliation such as those formed through kinship or between speech communities?
- What is the role of the ‘Latin’ and the Jewish peoples in our Anglo-American-led Western world?
- Is English today the global language or merely international?
- Is the Chinese thought pattern closely related to its writing system?
- Is today's world one of (symmetrical) interdependence? Or rather one of hegemony?
- If the so-called North-South or East-West dialogue fails in constructing a universally accepted world civilisation, then what is the appropriate arrangement for reaching such a consensus within humankind?

The book, a publication of the Interuniversity Institute of Geneva (INU), can be ordered by email: [inu@inuge.ch](mailto:inu@inuge.ch), or from INU Press, case 5044, CH-1211 Genève-11, Switzerland.

## ■ BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RETROSPECT

Following some discussion on the Elias-I list about the connections between Elias's work and Georg Simmel's writings, Peter Herrmann

volunteered to review Nicola Eber's book, published a decade ago but not reviewed at the time in the then-new *Figurations*.

**Nicola Ebers**, *Individualisierung: Georg Simmel – Norbert Elias – Ulrich Beck*. Würzburg: Verlag Koenigshausen & Neumann, 1995.

Individualisation is probably one of the core topics of social science – undoubtedly employing contemplation throughout centuries and nevertheless appearing again and again entirely topical. Beyond being a social fact *sui generis* it is consequently also a useful topic for meta-theoretical analysis and in particular the comparison of different theoretical approaches.

Nicola Ebers does this by looking at three approaches each of which can be taken as both coining social thinking of their specific era and focusing on individualisation as major issue of their analysis of the *Zeitgeist*.

Focusing on Simmel, Elias and Beck follows from four criteria, namely:

- their meaning for certain epochs of the history of sociology;
- their focus on individual and society as relationship which is not dichotomous;
- their orientation on analysing processes of socialisation and societation and
- their work from different paradigms (see p. 28f.).

Elias is in particular included as he is seen as an ‘established outsider’, a scientist who stands outside of the mainstream of (German) sociology.

This is already linked to the topic of Ebers's work, namely the reflection of individualisation. She refers to the fact that ‘with his theoretical construction of the central category of figuration, Elias establishes an inherent connection between individual and society’ (p. 30ff).

The guiding line of Ebers's work is a brief socio-historical review of the ‘development of the occidental image of the human being (*Menschenbild*)’ (p. 37): the efforts of liberation from mythical, religious, naturalist and political powers, initially, combined with claiming individual self-respect and self-determination. Being first limited

to elites, these efforts spread from the eighteenth century into a wide process of emancipation.

Concentrating here on the chapter dealing with Norbert Elias, its main feature is the presentation of his work under the guiding idea of individualisation. An important account is given of the 'deduction of the topic of sociology' (IV.2.2.). Ebers points on Elias's emphasis on the fact that the developmental process means that behaviour and functioning is getting more and more complex and cannot be explained by investigating the individual parts; instead, the organisation, the mode of organising and relating the individual parts is getting more and more decisive. From here, Ebers points to Elias's rejection of individualist and collectivist approaches alike. The other way round, we have to look for the simultaneity of individuality and societal bonds.

Unfortunately Ebers fails to really clarify the fundamentally new character of Elias's approach – though pointing to his rejection of interpenetration (p. 169), it is not made really clear what is the actual difference between Elias and his sociogenetic and psychogenetic investigation on the one hand and, for example, Weber's and Parsons's paradigms on the other hand.

This may be characteristic of the entire presentation. Providing a well organised and deeply informed presentation of the arguments of the three authors, she lacks a critical reflection of their work and an in-depth discussion. By this, a real insight into the different concepts of individualisation falls short. Instead, individualisation remains a heuristic tool, eclectically bringing together the perspectives of the different authors.

An interesting aspect in Ebers's presentation, however, is the attention she pays to the bridge Elias builds to the welfare state. As well as dealing directly with this question, a wider perspective is given: the change of the balance between 'I' and 'We' (see p. 247 ff). And it is actually only here in Ebers's work that Elias's actual view on individualisation becomes clear. It is presented as matter of integrating the individual in long chains of interdependence that allow a 'strengthened

I-identity, going hand in hand with a weakened We-reference' (p. 249).

Such a view allows not least the use of Elias's work as a major tool for analysing current processes of reshuffling welfare relations in a globalising world. This is definitely a worthwhile point for further studies of the welfare state – and the concept of individualisation. And though not openly stated, it is here that Elias definitely goes far beyond what the other authors contributed to this debate. Finally it was his merit that he went beyond institutionalist (Simmel) or voluntarist (Beck) approaches, developing a relational approach, bringing together the sociogenetic and psychogenetic investigation. Keeping the promise of providing a metatheoretical investigation would have clarified these differences much more.

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In addition to Ebers's book, Anke Barzantny also mentioned: Sighard Neckel, 'Etablierte und Außenseiter und das vereinigte Deutschland: Eine rekonstruktive Prozeßanalyse mit Elias und Simmel', *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 7 (2) 1997: 205–15.

## ■ RECENT CONFERENCES

Towards widespread self-regulation of health, body and living?: Dialogues in relation to Norbert Elias

9 June 2005

MSH-Paris Nord

The patient claiming to be the privileged guardian (whether real or potential) of his or her own health, the increasing demand on the part of the ill to control their end of life, women's revolt in the face of any contraceptive or procreative failure, the widespread concern to control one's diet, growing wariness of 'soft' addictive substances (alcohol, tobacco): the self-regulation of health and bodily practices seems to have become a highly demanding ideal in the last 40 years – at least for some social groups.

This development is beginning to be examined in detail by scientific work. Some of this work, inspired by the work of Norbert Elias, is valuable for our understanding these contemporary developments, insofar as he had made 'self-regulation' a key to long-term interpreting changing mores.

Yet what does 'self-regulation' mean when applied to very contemporary practices? And to whom would this self-regulation apply, and who encourages it? In other words, is there not a danger that the specific features of contemporary self-regulation may be diluted in this theory with its long-range historical perspective? Bringing together these foreign scholars with French specialists on health and bodily practices, the conference was intended to 'break open' the notion of 'self-regulation' by describing the way it has been disseminated over time, over social areas, as well as the specific content to which such a notion might refer in a very contemporary context.

Two lines of questioning were thus proposed: Self-regulation of what? Self-regulation of whom?

*Self-regulation of what?* Elias talked mainly about a process of self-regulation of *impulses* (theme of 'second nature'). Is this still the case today in recent works on the contemporary situation? Does it not refer instead to self-regulation of *discourse* (theme of the adaptive duplicity of social agents), or of thought itself, self-regulation having become more reflective and sophisticated (theme of the 'subjectivation' of values and of the 'third nature')? Or, yet again, a self-regulation of *bodily destiny* (theme of control over one's 'body')? And what are the motives behind contemporary self-regulation? What role does fear play in it (fear of adversely affecting one's health, for example, by being too lax); guilt (not complying with standards in health matters); shame (showing a lack of control in matters of procreation and end of life matters)? What instruments do we have to decide on this point?  
*Self-regulation of whom?* We know that the amount of care given to watching one's health, weight, diet, activity and physical exercise today is socially

variable. Some social groups manage far less well than others to comply with contraceptive standards, or are less fiercely demanding regarding their end of life. Should we see this as mere resistance to ‘widespread self-regulation’? Does this involve the dissemination of actual practices or is it a mere ideal, unreachable for some social groups and hence highly discouraging? And, in fact, in what sense does such dissemination take place: from the upper to the middle classes, or from the middle classes towards society as a whole? Which groups and professions carry out the dissemination? Is it possible that our average meaning of the term ‘self-regulation’ might traduce the specific practices of some social groups? What are the specific forms, for example, that self-regulation takes in working classes?

Another purpose of the conference was to examine the sometimes very active role played by institutions, particularly medical and political ones, in disseminating the ideal of self-regulation of behaviour. An *institutional* and *political* approach (can institutions become ‘civilising’ forces?) as well as a very *sociological* one (which groups are the most active here?) were to be welcome here, even if this interest for institutional power and class stratification was expected to be more present in French papers, as it turned out to be.

The conference was organised into three successive workshops aimed at creating a dialogue on a single object between one of the foreign participants – identified by their claim to be in line with the work of Norbert Elias – and French scholars. Three types of social practices related to the body and to health were thus approached: those surrounding *death* (C. Wouters, S. Nonnis, D. Memmi), *orality* (consumption of tobacco, alcohol, and food: S. Mennell, J. Hughes, J-P. Poulain), and *illness* (J. Goudsblom, P. Pinell, J.C. Weber).

*Dominique Memmi*  
Paris

## The 37th World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology

Stockholm, Sweden  
5–9 July, 2005

The 37th World Congress of the IIS was held in the glorious Stockholm summer, which meant long sunny days and short starry nights.

Overall attendance of the conference was good, and there certainly was an abundant representation of very different approaches in sociology and room for neighbouring disciplines. In that respect the IIS paid tribute to its interdisciplinary tradition. The ‘figurational sessions’ took place rather at the end of the congress, and this allowed for a good exploration of the other sessions and indeed Stockholm.

Owing to the large and enthusiastic response of contributors to the session ‘New Directions in Figural Sociology’ we asked for, and were granted, two extra sessions. Although this meant there were now three sessions in total, time was still limited if all were to present their papers. The challenge was to put together a varied group of scholars, consisting of established ‘Eliasian experts’ and some newcomers, allowing a lively exchange on what is currently happening within ‘figurational sociology’. Indeed, variety proved to be the keyword for it was almost impossible to categorise the extremely diverse papers on offer. The first session had a whirlwind start due to a technical mishap, which was masterfully handled by Stephen Menell who managed to condense his paper on ‘The American Civilising Process?’ to five minutes. This must be a record of some kind! Cas Wouters spiced things up by talking about ‘The Social Legacy of the 1920s Dating System in the USA’. Next, Dominique Memmi discussed ‘Recent Developments of Contemporary Control over one’s own Body – Procreative and Dying Body’. This transition from discussions on changing processes within the USA to changes in practices involving the beginning and end of life were symbolic for the variety of subjects discussed in the different sessions.

While it is fair to say that everyone employed a historical approach – after all ‘figurational sociology’ is *process* sociology – some took their empirical material from more contemporary sources: for instance Ali de Regt’s thought-provoking analysis of ‘The Social Constraints of Testing in Primary Schools – Welcome to the Rattrace’ and Val Owen-Pugh’s fascinating input on ‘Extending Eliasian Theory to Analyses of Learning within Small Groups: the Case of the Coach-Athlete Dyad in Basketball’. While the latter used a figurational perspective on relatively small groups over a limited period of time, Hirofumi Utsumi’s ‘Inquiry into Organised Violence in an age of Globalisation’ and indeed Yi-Tung Chang’s ‘The World Society in the Perspective of Civilising Process Theory’ talked about larger groups on a global level.

Other contributions were based on specific historical data: Helmut Kuzmics discussed ‘The Habsburg Monarchy’s Lost Battles: A Sociology-of-Emotions Enquiry on the Causes of the Fall of Empires’, while Barbara Evers explored ‘The *Freikorps* in Weimar Germany’ and their particular habitus formation. The distributed paper ‘Civilisations and Civilising Processes: statics and dynamics in recent studies of resurgent Islam’ by Philip Sutton and Stephen Vertigans combined contemporary and historical material.

Some speakers focused on the figurational perspective itself by discussing theoretical concepts and themes, for instance François Dépelteau’s ‘Toward a Figural Approach of Social Structures and Agency’ and Norman Gabriel and Lars Bo Kaspersen’s presentation on ‘Survival Units at the Point of Departure for a Relational Social Theory’. This specific focus on theory was used at many levels, Steve Quilley’s invigorating talk on ‘Norbert Elias’s “Great Evolution” and Organicism in Twentieth Century Biology’ certainly approached this in a superb ‘life and the universe’ manner. Others combined discussions on theory with an interdisciplinary approach, Maarten Hogenstijn and Daniël van Middelkoop added a different (geographical) perspective by looking at ‘The Importance of Scale in established-outsider Figurations’, while

Tamás Melegy and Heinz-Jürgen Niedenzu considered 'Anthropological Presuppositions of Elias' Process and Figuration Theory and the Theory of Social Evolution'. Steven Loyal and Steve Quilley incorporated all of the above approaches by considering 'Elias and Wittgenstein on Human Nature, Language, Symbol Emancipation and Language Games'.

A category of his own, perhaps, is deserved by Ruud Stokvis's paper on 'The Commercial Civilising Process', in which he connected the ever-expanding commercial interdependency networks with the rise of civilising pressures and the emergence of new forms of self-controls.

This attempt at categorising arguably shows that the figurational perspective embraces an enormous variety of topics. All sessions provoked lively debate and were well attended. The overall atmosphere was fantastic with enthusiastic discussions that spilled over into post-conference dialogues over drinks and dinner. In any case, it is fair to say that 'figurational sociology' is alive and kicking in many parts of the world.

*Barbara Evers*  
Murdoch University  
Perth, WA

■ FORTHCOMING  
CONFERENCES  
Erasmus University Symposium  
**Rotterdam, The Netherlands,**  
**31 March 2006**

The Norbert Elias Prize will be awarded March 31, 2006 at Erasmus University in Rotterdam. The prize, which will salute a distinguished first book in sociology or related discipline that has appeared in 2003 or 2004, will be awarded during a special symposium on the recent achievements and future prospects of sociology. Among the participants in the symposium are Johan Goudsblom, the Danish social scientist Bent Flyvbjerg, author of *Making Social Science Matter* (Cambridge UP 2001), and Godfried Engbersen, professor of sociology at Erasmus University and chairman of a recent commission of the Royal Dutch Academy of Sci-

ences (KNAW) on the future of sociology. A report on the winning book and the symposium will appear in the next issue of *Figurations*. For more information contact Johan Heilbron (heilbron@fsw.eur.nl).

**Elias in the Twenty-First Century: Call for Papers**

**A three-day residential conference  
10–12 April 2006, Beaumont Hall at  
the University of Leicester, UK**

Since his death in 1990, Norbert Elias has come increasingly to be recognised as one of the leading figures in twentieth century sociology. His work has been translated into 29 languages, and he is one of the few sociologists of the post-war era to have a chair named in his memory (at the Erasmus University, Rotterdam). He has been acknowledged as an important influence on such key social thinkers as Bourdieu and Foucault. As a result of the vagaries of Hitler and the Second World War, his first paid full-time employment was at the University of Leicester where he was appointed to a readership in 1954 at the age of 57! Leicester was his home during an era when its University became one of two key sociological training and research Centres in the UK and its Department of Sociology one of the leading sociology departments in Europe. Among his distinctive contributions was his treatment of the classical legacy as a living resource aimed at exploiting and developing an historical and comparative approach to sociology. Among the key areas to which he made landmark contributions are: the body; emotions; consumption; identity; violence, genocide and war; crime and punishment; globalisation; 'racial' and other forms of social stratification; power; the 'three worlds' of development; the sociology of everyday life; sport and leisure; science and knowledge; the balance of power between the sexes; and many more. Elias was one of the first white sociologists not merely to display a moral commitment to the Third World, but to engage practically with it — he taught in Ghana at the University of Ghana, Legon from 1962 to 1964. Leicester is the natural venue for celebrating Elias's achievements, critically appraising his contribution to the

field, and for judging his usefulness for the twenty-first century. Paraphrasing Alan Sica (Penn State University) 'the task is to go beyond Elias, but not without first thoroughly digesting what he has to say'. This sums up the spirit of the Leicester conference.

The conference will be organised around a number of themed sessions that (1) represent some of Elias's central concerns, (2) reflect new directions in sociological theory anticipated by Elias, and (3) evaluate the Eliasian perspective in relation to other traditions of sociological thought. Papers are invited in any of the above fields. More concretely, anticipated themes for papers include: Elias and current theories of the body and emotions; Elias and the study of organisations; Elias and national identity; Elias and sport and leisure; Elias and Foucault; Elias and Bourdieu; Elias and the nature/culture 'hinge'; Elias and manners; Elias and state formation; the future of figurational sociology; Elias and 'method(ology)'; Elias and masculinity; Elias and gender relations; and 'Actor Network Theory meets Elias'. Proposals for papers are invited on these or any other related topics. The conference organisers are keen to promote cross-disciplinary and cross-paradigmatic dialogue and debate. It is hoped that limited funds will be available to assist the costs of attendance by postgraduate students.

Speakers include:  
Tim Newton (University of Exeter); Ian Burkitt (University of Bradford); Claudia Opitz (University of Basle); Eric Dunning (University of Leicester); Stephen Mennell (University College Dublin); Johan Goudsblom (University of Amsterdam); Cas Wouters (Utrecht University); Chris Rojek (Nottingham Trent University, Sage Publications); Hermann Korte (University of Hamburg).

Abstracts (no longer than 300 words) should be submitted by 30 November 2005 to Jason Hughes at Jason.Hughes@le.ac.uk or by post to:  
Jason Hughes  
CLMS, University of Leicester  
7–9 Salisbury Road, Leicester  
LE1 7QR, UK.  
Please include with the abstract: institutional affiliation, e-mail address,

telephone number, and postal contact details. Any enquiries can be addressed to the conference organisers: Anne Witz [aw81@le.ac.uk](mailto:aw81@le.ac.uk); Eric Dunning [ed15@le.ac.uk](mailto:ed15@le.ac.uk) and Jason Hughes [jrah1@le.ac.uk](mailto:jrah1@le.ac.uk).

## XVI ISA World Congress of Sociology

**Durban, South Africa,  
26–29 July 2006  
'The Quality of Social Existence in a  
Globalising World'**

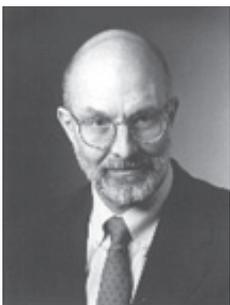
Ad Hoc Groups on Figural Soci-ology were successfully organised at the last three World Congresses, in Bielefeld 1994, Montreal 1998, and Brisbane 2002. We had hoped to upgrade our status to that of Thematic Group for the sixteenth World Congress in Durban. There were long delays – partly occasioned by the ISA secretariat's lack of comprehension of 'figural sociology', given that the organisation is geared to very specific research fields like family, organisations, health and what have you. In the end, we missed the boat completely, and not only do we not have an upgrade to Thematic Group but there won't be even an Ad Hoc Group this time. A pity, but perhaps we should get our act together for 2010, wherever that will be.

Figurationists who are, nevertheless, going to Durban to participate in the various Research Committees and other events, may like to let each other know through the Elias-I list ([ELIAS-I@NIC.SURFNET.NL](mailto:ELIAS-I@NIC.SURFNET.NL)), and will no doubt meet up informally.

## ■ OBITUARY

### **Eric Monkkonen, 1943–2005**

Eric Monkkonen died on 30 May 2005, after a ten-year fight with cancer. He had been a professor at UCLA since 1976. As an urban historian, he became interested in the subject of



crime and justice at an early date. He sent in a paper for the session of the Economic History Conference in Edinburgh in 1978, where the International Association for the History of Crime and Criminal Justice (IAHCCJ) was founded, but he could not attend there. I met him at the IAHCCJ's first major conference at the University of Maryland in 1980. His chief interest then was in quantitative approaches, but he also had a keen eye for theory. Initiated in the Netherlands, the IAHCCJ, in its early years, had an important Dutch component and several of the scholars involved were inspired by the theoretical work of Norbert Elias. I remember that Eric once asked me 'explain to me the ideas of this Dutch sociologist that you guys are always talking about'. I began my explanation by pointing out that Norbert was no Dutchman. Meanwhile, Eric set up the criminal justice network of the Social Science History Association, of which he later became president.

Eric had an open mind, not restricting himself to the kind of theories that were current in his American environment. He soon acquainted himself with Elias's work. At about the same time he focused his scholarly efforts on the history of violence, in particular homicide. During the 1990s, the widespread interest in the problem of homicide and its history has proved a vehicle for the spread of knowledge about civilisation theory and Elias's work generally in the United States. Eric Monkkonen was a major player in this process. In 1996 he specifically referred to Elias – a 'shadowy figure' still for many American scholars – in the introduction to *The Civilisation of Crime*, jointly edited by him and Eric Johnson. At the Elias centenary conference in Amsterdam, December 1997, Eric Monkkonen presented a paper in a session on violence that I had organised. His book *Murder in New York City* appeared in 2001. In the same year he opposed himself to many of his UCLA colleagues, who heavily criticised my lecture on violence, American history and Elias's theory.

A forum discussion on American homicide will appear in the February 2006 issue of the *American Historical Review*, with the lead article by Eric

Monkkonen. Death deprived him of the opportunity to respond to his critics. Eric died amidst his family in his home in Culver City.

*Pieter Spierenburg*  
Erasmus University Rotterdam

## ■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO *FIGURATIONS*

The next issue of *Figurations* will be mailed in May 2006. News and notes should be sent to the Editors by 1 April 2006.

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

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Graphic Design and Desktop Publishing: Annette van de Sluis. Printed by MultiCopy, Weesperstraat 65, Amsterdam.

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