MARBACH STIPEND

The Norbert Elias Foundation, Amsterdam, will in 1999 once again award a six-month Marbach Graduate Stipend to undertake research on the papers of Norbert Elias, which have been deposited in the German Literature Archive. Further details can be obtained from Dr. Christoph König (Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach-am-­Institut für Soziologie, Altenplatz 1, D-73046 Marbach, Tel. ++ 49-0-4425-3229). Applications should be submitted before 31 August 1999 to: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, Pensionstelle, Postfach 1162, D-73066 Marbach am Neckar.

WORK IN PROGRESS

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

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

The first European missionaries to establish a presence in the islands of New Caledonia immediately set about clothing the indigenous Melanesians, known as the Kanak. Since the 1860s, some 140 years after these missionaries arrived in the islands, topless bathing by European tourists on New Caledonia's beaches has become a common event. Kanak women, however, are prevented from sunbathing or swimming in this manner through the threat of clan-based gang rape.

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

To the colonisers of the nineteenth century, the naivete of the Kanak seemed shameful, yet in the second half of the twentieth century westerners view partial nudity as liberating. Nineteenth-century ethnographies conveyed the impression that the sight of bared aged breasts was profoundly troubling to French or other European men. It is perhaps useful here to reflect that the European image of the evil witch, whose history Carlo Ginzburg has so skillfully written, is usually represented with bared, withered breasts. The description of an ordinary evening in a Kanak village by a missionary in 1863 drew attention to the nude bodies of the Kanak around the camp-fire and typified the scene as a 'nocturnal sabbath'. The missionary reinforced this reference to the language and concepts developed in European witch-hunts by typifying the scene as a 'satanic fascination'...

For travellers and colonial officials of the nineteenth century, the exposed breasts of older wives and mothers revealed the embarrassing awkwardness of time and still on youthful femininity beauty. To expose this weathering of the female body shocked their sensibilities and reinforced the impression that Kanak women were especie degraded. Not only did they live the hardship of malnutrition and agrarian labour, their wet breasts were crudely on display for all to see.

The problem of bare breasts was quickly addressed by the colonial authorities. According to Captain Laffitte the Bicephale, the Kanak adopted European-style clothing, so far as they were able, with alacrity. Writing in 1847 Captain Laffitte remarked, 'I spoke of the entire malady of the men upon our arrival, but by the end of our stay they had begun to cover themselves with the pieces of cloth we had given them.' However, other sources testify to Kanak resistance to European clothing. Victor Stiehan wrote, 'The young people who the missionaries would like to clothe are often taken aside by the old people of the class who say to them, 'And what are you going to abandon the clothing of your fathers for that of strangers? Your ridiculous outfit, does it really compare to the simple, masculine dress we gave you? At the very most, the clothing of the
whites is good for women." We begin to glimpse here the patriarchal side of dress and undress in Kanak culture.

If the success of the missionaries was par- tial and patchwork, their efforts were com- plemented by the state authorities. In 1867, the code of indigenisation mandated that Kanak wear clothing when in areas frequented by Europeans. After 1873 the Kanak indulged partial nudity only on their reserves or in their homes.

Evidence exists for the sacred nature of clothing in the nineteenth-century Kanak's eyes. According to the mission- ary-ethnicographer Maurice Leenhart, the initial impulse to wear clothing stems from a perceived inferiority of human vis-à-vis God. In Leenhart's explanation, the first form of clothing was ornamentation de- signed to attract powers to the individual body, a bracelet tied around an infant's wrist, for example, to ward off illness. This association of clothing with magic and di- vine powers was extended by the Kanak to European clothing, which they called 'skin of gods.' Very quickly the Kanak became convinced of the European's mental na- tures, but nonetheless they continued to call European-style clothing 'skin of gods.'


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

In the paintings of Kanak feminist artists Yvette Bouquet and Micheline Néporon and in the poetry of Dëwil Goro, the care- fully covered female Kanak body is un- veiled to offer contemporary Kanak access to the mythical life (la vie légendaire) of their ancestors. Through the metaphor of a feminine interface with the past, contempor- ary Kanak women have reclaimed the identity of the modern Kanak people. This essay suggests that the body images created by these Kanak women can aid French women as well in their battle for au- tonomy within the patriarchal regime.

Alicia Bullard
Georgia Institute of Technology
U.S.A.


3. Kaffirische Weiber, Brüste, Socken and the Last Masculinity in and out of Africa, presented at the 1999 annual American Historical Association meeting in Washington, DC, discusses the writings of George and Reinhold Fenner in which breasts were read as a sign of constructive social de-velopment or degeneration. Western feminism opposes to making the less of one or both breasts in cut- ural studies as same cultural attitude toward the 'ugly' breast.

4. Lefebvre, p. 100.


7. Maurice Leenhart, "Pourquoi vêts-vous l'Amerique," 1811, 76-80 (1925), all references are to the reprint in Journal de la société occident 34:30 (March 1790), p. 7.

8. Interview with Michaela Kelssummer in Moi War (September 1994), Narrows, 71-76, p. 7.


Nobert Elias in Brazil: an Initial Impact

The impact of Elias's work on the social sciences in Brazil is very recent and still diffi- cult to evaluate, given both the geographical size of the country and also the multidisciplinary range of Elias's thought. The reception of his writings in Brazil is a phenomenon of the 1990s, even though scattered references to his work can be found from 1983 onwards. It is important to remember that Portuguese translations of Elias's books began to appear only in 1980 (What Is Sociology?) with a part translation of The Court Society, following in 1987 - both of them published in Portugal. In Brazil, translations began in 1990 and 1993, with the two-volume version of The Civilizing Process. Since then, we have had The Society of Individuals (1994), Measure: The Sociology of a Genie (1997), The...
Germans (1997). Time: An Essay (1996) and The Established and the Outsiders (1996). All of these books were widely reviewed in academic and cultural journals and in newspapers around the world. The remaining works of Elias are now being prepared for publication, as far as we know. The Court Society will be the next. This recent spate of translations in itself shows the increasing interest in Elias’s work in Brazil. It is also highly significant that the traditional and pre-eminent Brazilian university – in just recently published a Decisive Elias, a collection of articles by well established scholars dealing with Elias’s thought.

Nevertheless, the impact of Elias on academic thinking has to be kept in perspective: it is just beginning and, of course, will take some time to be fully accomplished. According to data from the National Center for Historical Reference, the most comprehensive Brazilian index of historical writing, only 5 out of 2,300 articles published by Brazilian authors in 450 volumes of periodicals in 1994–96, are specifically related to Elias. Of course in other areas, such as sociology, psychology, sports and leisure, the picture will be different. It is possible to find many references to Elias in doctoral and master’s theses in the last decade, although that does not mean there is a solid appreciation of the conceptual tools and the general framework of the “familial” sociology. There are, however, some theses which deal specifically with Elias’s theory, especially worrisome on the sociological level (Silva 1990; Albiero 1998; Silva 1998; Schwarcz 1998). Elias’s sociological model is receiving increasing attention as graduate programmes, in areas like history, sociology, education, physical education (which in Brazil also means sports and leisure). In the last ten years some Brazilian scholars have been dealing with Elias’s thinking in a more accurate way, showing the paradigmatic potential of his writings (Kurtz 1995; Nascimento 1996; Silva 1996; Silva 1998; Gehara 1996).

Three recent events indicate the increasing interest in Elias’s theory. From 11–13 November, 1990, the Third International Symposium on Civilizing Process: Education, History and Luxury was held on the Faculty of Education at the Methodist University of Piauí in Brazil. The published proceedings present twenty-two papers produced by graduate students, and eight by lecturers, dealing with the theory of civilizing processes, and showing an increasing number of new research projects, discussing Elias’s books, and the central concepts of familial sociology.

Many questions were raised about civilizing processes in a non-European environment. This Symposium already has its own history. Eric Dunning was present at the first one in 1990, and he returned in 1997 with Mike Featherstone, generating the group, which served to increase considerably both the interest and the accuracy of the discussions on Elias’s writings. These general meetings have been organised both by the Faculty of Physical Education/UniCamp, and more recently the Faculty of Education/UniCamp, this year in November – we are planning a new symposium on the subject The Civilizing Process: Corporate and Religion, in which Professors Stephen Mandell and John Gough-Nimbom will be taking part.

Another very important initiative was taken by the Maringa State University (Pará State), where the Department of History publishes its journal Dialogues; it organises a round-table session, in which an unpublished article is discussed by three scholars, the article and their commentaries then being published together in the journal. Norbert Elias was the centre of the discussion, published in full in the 1998 issue. The Mexican historian Carlos Antonio Aguirre Rojas pointed to Elias, among other intellectuals such as Weber, Braudel and Foucault, as taking a long-term view, and asking the question of the modernity. The comments make clear that Rojas’s argument is far from achieving general acceptance, but it promises to bear fruit. Elias has finally arrived in Brazil; his influence on Brazilian social science will perhaps become clearer over the next few years. In the meantime, the visits to Brazil by social scientists broadly involved in the familial research tradition – such as Eric Dunning, Roger Chartier and Mike Featherstone – and the contact that they have been maintaining with many Brazilian research groups, are also evidence of the deepening of the interest in Elias’s work.

Work cited


Jairard Malhebra
Maringa State University
Ademil Gehara
Methodist University of Piauí.

The ‘stolen generations’, civilisation, citizenship and governance in Australia

Late in 1998 I was fortunate enough to receive research funding support from the Australian Research Council (ARC) for a project titled ‘The stolen generation: implications for Australian civilisation, citizenship and governance’, which was set to run over 1999–2000. It was stimulated by the publication of a report by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Bringing Them Home, which outlined the history of the removal of Indigenous Australian children from their families, mostly over the course of the twentieth century. What struck me in particular was that while the current feelings of dismay about the past treatment of Aboriginal children and their parents were experienced as expressions of ‘civility’, of disapp...
proved of ‘barbaric’ practices, at the same time the object of the policies of child removal was precisely to bring Aborigines into civilisation as it was understood at that time. It seemed to me that a detailed analysis of this history which focused on how the understanding of civilisation was used in the Australian context and how it changed, as ‘civilising processes operated at their ‘fringes’, at their interfaces with peoples and ways of life constructed as ‘barbaric’—could tell us a lot about the nature of European civilising processes themselves. The project will be organised around three central concepts: civilisation, citizenship, governance:

1. ‘Civilisation’ was perhaps the most central concept around which relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians were organised from when they first encountered each other. Europeans regarded themselves as the bearers of civilisation, and all that they wished to change in Aboriginal culture and social life was seen as quintessentially ‘barbaric’, diachronically opposed to what all human beings should regard as civilised. So-called ‘half-castes’ Aborigines were seen as lying on the boundary between civilisation and barbarism, and this ambiguity was an important element of the political will to transform them into different sorts of Australian citizens. The policies and practices of child removal are thus usefully understood as a ‘civilising offensive’.

2. Aboriginal child removal was also regarded as part of a process of making Aboriginal children properly ‘Australian’, fit to take their place in Australian social life as citizens equal in status to non-indigenous Australians. Indeed, it was often presented as the proper compensation for their dispossession, the only appropriate contribution which white Australians could and should undertake in order to make up for past injustices. The logic of ‘assimilation’ which governed the child removal policy, seen in its most developed form in the writing of Sir Paul Hasluck, was at the same time a theory of citizenship, and it is only possible to understand properly contemporary debates on this topic through an analysis of the internal logic of assimilationist policies and practices.

3. The policy of child removal was exactly that: a policy pursued by governments hoping to govern their populations more effectively, in order to achieve particular effects. It is important, then, to analyse changing policies and practices of Aboriginal child removal, and the current critiques of those policies and practices, as part of a changing logic of governance. The question to be addressed here is whether the relationship between governments and citizens should be seen in terms of an opposition between dominance and control on the one hand, and freedom and autonomy on the other. The history of state intervention into family life, in relation to non-indigenous children as well as indigenous children, is a useful lens through which to examine this issue.

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

The research itself will be based on an investigation of the relevant State and Commonwealth parliamentary papers and debates, the Commonwealth Government archival holdings in the Australian Archives, contemporary newspapers and periodicals, magazines, relevant commissions of inquiry, as well as autobiographical and biographical writings. Two journal articles are currently forthcoming from the project, ‘The barbarism of civilisation: cultural genocide and the “stolen generations”’. British Journal of Sociology 50 (2) 1999: 289-313, and ‘The “stolen generations”: on the removal of Aboriginal indigenous children from their families and its implications for the sociology of childhood’. Childhood, 6 (3) 1999, and the project’s web site is: www.usyd.edu.au/social/robertzc/arcфон/itc.html. An additional aim of the project is to promote international research links by forming the foundation of a comparative analysis, possibly with Canada, Russia, South Africa, USA, New Zealand. There is also the potential for a comparison between the Australian and German cases. If any readers can see a connection between this project and their own research interests, I would be pleased to explore the possibility of collaboration.

Robert van Krieken
University of Sydney

Civilisation and Punishment

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

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

Historical research shows this pattern establishing itself right across modern society. Indeed, it became a yardstick against which a society’s claim to belong to the civilised world could be judged. These elements of modern society, such as the southern United States which did not conform to these standards by, for example, making use of the highly visible and highly stigmatising chain gangs which lasted until well into the 1950s, were thus seen as different from, lagging behind the rest of the civilised world. Certainly, by the 1930s, it was clear that modern penal policy was closely aligned with the broader cultural patterns denoted by Norbert Elias in his work on the civilising process.

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

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

The New Zealand Marsden Fund has funded the project for three years. The principal researcher is myself (Reader in Criminology, Victoria University, PO Box 690, Wellington, New Zealand, john.pratt@vuw.ac.nz). Two PhD students are involved in the project. Ms Sarah Anderson’s thesis is titled ‘The Imaginary Prison’ and it explores the role played by nineteenth-century literary knowledges in contributing to the development of a penal culture that thereby circumnavigated the description of British policy at this time. Ms Anna McKee’s thesis is titled ‘The History of Women’s Imprisonment in New Zealand’ and explores this subject through an Eliassian theoretical framework. The research would be pleased to hear from scholars with similar interests or suggestions. The following early papers have so far been published or accepted for publication relating to this project:


Pratt, J. (in press), ‘The Return of the White/Burrow Men; or, the Arrival of the Postmodern Penality’, British Journal of Criminology


John Pratt
Victoria University of Wellington
New Zealand

The Civilising of the Ultimate Fighting Challenge

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

However, the civilising processes that have pacified our once-armed combat sports to their present level were in effect even when it came to where to stage the event. The first UCF was held in Denver, as the state of Colorado had recently repealed all but one of the state statutes sanctioning and governing boxing and wrestling matches. From the very beginning, the media ‘big gun’ such as CNN and The New York Times began running features that highlighted the violence allowed within the UCF. A growing ‘figuration of disagreement’, set in motion due to current levels of internal pacification, soon gained a political voice when Arizona Senator John McCain actively tried to ban the events he labelled ‘barbaric’. The American Medical Association also added its weight when it stated that it supported efforts to ban these competitions. Throughout 1996 and 1997, many cable companies, under increasing pressure from viewers, religious groups, and politicians, dropped NHB competitions from their programmes. Further, during this period politicians introduced legislation that either banned NHB competitions, or increased the powers of existing legislation. Many cities and states introduced their own series of guidelines for the hosting of combat sports, with rules that were far removed from the origi-
and seeks contributions principally from:
1. A German-language scholar with special knowledge of Breslau-Heidel-
   pberg-Frankfurt, etc., Agrarian and lega-
   cies (e.g., the work of Höhn, Schick, 
   Curtius, the brothers Weber, Mannheim, 
   Jaspers) and with competence to assess 
   Elian's impact on modern German sociol-
   ogy and society – involving analysis of the 
   reception of Elian's principal writing – es-
   pecially Studien über die Deutschen, TV 
   broadcasts, newspaper articles, reviews, 
   and the attention that journalies paid to 
   Elian in his later years.

2. A Dutch scholar with broad interests is 
   tackling Elian’s Armentum involvements 
   – personal, teaching, professional-collage, 
   broadcasting, newspaper coverage, re-
   views – and able to assess Elian’s impact on 
   Dutch history, psychologists, political 
   scientists, and sociologists.

3. Anglophone and Francophone specialists: 
   emphasis on historical context, matter, sociol-
   ogy of knowledge, sociology of science, sociol-
   ogy of the body: emotions, dynamic psy-
   chology, the sociology of mimetic expres-
   sion. And Elian’s approach to teaching, 
   his working relations with other profession-
   als, his extremely varied social contacts, ex-
   perience in Ghana. And a one-day application 
   of his ideas elsewhere in the world. Scholars 
   should indicate areas of interest.

Anyone taking part would be invited to 
conferences in Munich as the project ma-
terials. Participants to raise grants to cover in-
ternational travel and draft production ex-
enses. Colleagues must be willing to write 
at deadlines. Negotiation of contract will 
agree to safeguards approved internation-
ally by The Society of Authors. 

Suggestions are very welcome. All who are 
interested are asked to contact:
Dr Paul J. Nixon 
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences 
Cambridge CB2 8QG 
Tel: +44 (0)1223 369361 
Fax: +44 (0)1223 740299 
E-mail: pj203@cam.ac.uk
Like Mozart, Watteau was a bourgeois artist in a court society, but was luckier than Mozart in securing the aristocratic patronage necessary for a secure and successful career in society. Even so, he shared the low social status of the artists in that milieu and there is a suggestion that his experience may have strengthened a personal disposition in Watteau towards melancholy.

Eliass goes on to deal with the changed re-
ception of the painting from the French Revolution and into the nineteenth century. The art of the ancient regime was now viewed in the light of political changes, in- cluding the dominant wishes and dreams. Watteau, now described pejoratively as 'no- one', fell into disfavour. But power bal-
ances among art consumers and art pro-
ducers changed slowly in favour of the producers. This part of the argument echoes Eliass's early essay on "Kitschstil und Kitschtheorie"; he contends that under the ancient regime there were second- and third-rank artists but nothing that could be called lachon. In a society dominated by a professional-bourgeois public, however, the absence of any "official" style meant that it became more a matter of choice in the market-place whether an artist's own particular style — perhaps the expression of his/her own upbringing and life experience — became popular or not.

During the nineteenth century, the role of Artlgeous outside groups in the production of art be-
came stronger and a tension between their taste and that of the wider society gradually became the rule. Watteau's work became a cult object in generational struggles — youn-
ger groups rebelling against the taste of their elders. Under Louis-Philippe, the swing of the pendulum found expression in Germain de Nerval's essay on this painting of Watteau's. This in turn fed into the late stream of bodkemianism from Baudelaire to Goncourt, who took up once again the ri-
mantic, melancholy, escapist utopia. This has persisted as one strand of taste into the twentieth century. Thus, Eliass shows, one painting can be used as a key to showing the structure of figural changes, especially the connec-
tions between changes in social power-balances and changes in taste.

Hermann Korte's essay, "Utopia: the King-
dom of Heaven on Earth?" is an appropriate companion to Eliass's essay on a utopian work of art. Korte argues by describing how, in 1536 in his home town of Münster, three Anabaptist preachers were put to death with red-hot pliers and their bodies exhibited in iron gibbons. That was their fate for their utopian religious vision. Korte sur-
veys other utopias, from Thomas More and 
Thomas Campanella, through to modern dystopias such as those of Aldous Huxley and George Orwell, and the collapse of the "real existing socialist utopias" in 1989. He concludes by noting Eliass's theory of civil-
ising processes in the context of utopian thought. Although the theory makes no pre-
dictions of development towards a precise goal, Eliass himself — in the last paragraph of The Civilising Process — clearly stated his own hopes for the future. He assumes a sit-
uation in which there is a lasting balance between (on the one hand) a person's social tasks, between totality of the demands made upon a person by his/her social exis-
tence, and (on the other) his/her personal in-
clinations and needs.

The real misfortune of all earlier utopias was their overspecificity of their rules, and that in the greatest barrier to achieving about and formulating utopian ideas again. But the utopia Eliass had in mind — that was re-
ally something. Writer Korte. It was to be-
gin, at least, with rules and constraints, but in-
stead of increasing them, finally to reduce them. Eliass's vision was of a form of living in which a highly complex global society is integrated through a minimum of con-
straints by others and self-restraints. It is a utopia in which well-being and peace rule, a world in which humans make life good for each other with a minimum of con-
straints.

SJM

02584-5 (pbk).

In this long-awaited book — a meticulously refined and revised descendant of his 1989 PhD thesis — Jorge Ariditi makes a major contribution in the very heartland from which Eliass's theory of civilising processes emanated: the transformation of manners and habits in late medieval and early mod-
er western Europe. In a comment printed on the jacket, Paul DiMaio rightly summarises the thrust of the book: "Ariditi tracks the changing forms of interpersonal behaviour through several stages — courteous, civility, and etiquette — arguing that each encoded the cultural representation of relationships consistent with a different social infrastructure. Ariditi revises Eliass by way of Foucault, and equally important, material-
ises Foucault's grounding power in social re-
lations in a way that preserves the value of Eliass's argument while eliminating its more metaphysical aspects."

The book starts in very much the same mode as Does The Civilising Process, since the first section offers reflections on the ad-
vent of the word etiquette just as Eliass re-
flated in the first six of the same points, civility, fornication, and obliv. Ariditi places "eti-
quette" especially in eighteenth-century Eng-
land. "My general argument," writes Ariditi (p. 3), "does not differ much from Eliass's." Just as Eliass contended that the transition from the use of counterpoint to that of "etiquette" was not merely a change in the concept used to denote somewhat similar things at different times, but was rather a symptom of much more profound changes in social structure and the environment, so too ac-
cording to Ariditi does the rise of the notion of etiquette. Specifically, Ariditi argues that the practices associated with etiquette de-
veloped as part of the shift from a highly cen-
tralised system of power-practices that supported the absolutist tendencies of the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, to the aristocracy as a group. (I found that added to my own understanding of differ-
ences in emphasis between France and Eng-
land in the eighteenth century which I studied several years ago through a culinary prism.)

More importantly, though, Ariditi argues that the advent of the concept of "etiquette" in the eighteenth century involves a discon-
nection of propriety from ethics, and that the "full embeddedness of manners in eth-
ics before then finds no expression in Eliass's work. As a result, in saving about the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ariditi makes central to his book widely influential at the time — most nota-
ably Castiglione's Book of the Courtier — to which Eliass paid puzzlingly little attention. Furthermore, the disjunction of manners and ethics points to the beginning of a new chapter in the history of social detachment
in the West, a chapter in which processes of physical and moral separation, whose be-
ingnings Elias traced to the early sixteenth century, appear to have attained a new di-
mension, the conceptual (p. 5). Arditii follows and insightfully elaborates on the
themes of thought which led Elias from *The Civilizing Process* to Involvement and De-
structiveness.

Both Elias and Foucault were concerned with the constitution of the self through
history and its relation to structures of power and that is Arditii's concern too. I
have the impression that in earlier drafts the intellectual influences on the author
started at about 30 per cent Elias and 80 per cent Foucault, but that the balance
gradually tilted. A central thesis is (as DiMaggio put it) to eliminate the more
mysterious physical elements to be found espe-
cially in Foucault's earlier work. He
rightly says that he departs from Foucault
in that Foucault is anti-foundationalist:
that is to say, Foucault always retained ex-
plaining a particular discourse in relation
to particular social structures, or the tran-
sition from one episteme to another as a
result of changes in social structures.
(Foucault always seemed to me to be pro-
foundly anti-sociological) - although
Arpid Srzokacsi is beginning to con-
vince me that this is less true of his last
works - so I have always been slightly
bemused by his immense prestige among
sociologists). Arditii is foundationalist
(and sociological), in that he consistently
tries to relate discourse in each of the pe-
riods he studies to what he calls an "infra-
structure of social relations".

SIM

Maarten van Rottenburen, Vertogen competitive. Over de uiteenlopende
populariteit van sporten (Haltern competitie.
On the differential popularity of sports)
and:
Allen Gottmann: Games and Empires:
Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism,
New York: Columbia University Press

Vertogen Competitie begins by demonstrat-
ing the existence of a world sport com-
petition of a number of sports that are
practiced almost worldwide according to
standardised rules. Children in villages all
over the world practice these sports and fol-
low the same rules as do famous profes-
sionals in championships broadcast
world-wide. The central problem for Van
Rottenburen is the variation within this
international sport constellation. Why is
the popularity of different branches of sport
changing over time? How does one explain
differences in popularity of branches of
sport between countries and changes in
popularity of branches of sport within
countries?

He measures popularity in terms of active
participation and leaves aside the question
of popularity in terms of number of specia-
londs. He demonstrates that we are dealing
with two related but different problems.
Rank-orders of popularity according to the
twenty measures do not correlate very much.
In a brilliant chapter Van Rottenburen ar-
gues in Durkheimian fashion that all kinds
of explanations of a non-social nature fail
to explain the existing variations and changes.
Inherent characteristics of sports or of na-
tions or classes, climatological and geo-
graphical factors, religions, economic or
media explanations are falsified with the
help of simple comparisons between na-
tions and between different periods within
nations. His own model implies that peo-
ple's sport preferences differ and change
dependent on the social-cultural meanings
different branches of sports have for them.
And those meanings arise and change as
unintended consequences of changes in the
interdependencies between groups, espe-
cially between races and social classes. In
his empirical chapters Van Rottenburen
shows how, since the middle of the nine-
teenth century the world sport constellation
has been based on sports that originated
from countries with dominant power posi-
tions, especially England, Germany, the
United States and Japan. It depended on the
nature of the relations of other countries
with these dominant nations which sports
became most popular in those countries. To
understand completely the distribution of
sports that resulted, it is also necessary to
include the class-position, organisations and
mutuality of the participants of different
sports in the dominant nations. Some sports
became more open to participants of differ-
ent classes than others. After being adapted
in other countries by the national elite, these
elites-modified in their exclusiveness en-
toward pristional participants from the lower
classes. The term 'hidden competition' is
used to explain how changes in

class-structures express themselves in the
nature of sport participation. When sports
like cycling, soccer and tennis became
less exclusive, the elite participants lost
those sports and joined more exclusive and
less well-known sports. Sport participation
is a result of status competition between
and within nations.

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

Rauf Stekler
University of Amsterdam

Stephan Messell and Johan Gouwblom, Civilizing Processes - Myth or Reality?" Review article on Hans-Ulter Euer, Der Mythos vom Zivilisations-
Previously overlooked - not least by its authors, who wrote it as far back as 1965 - this short essay was intended for a planned review symposium on Duerr's work, but eventually appeared in splintered isolation. The essay was written before the appearance of Duerr's fourth volume (see *Figurations*), but that would have in no way affected Mennell and Goudelbsen's arguments. They show that Duerr, while being hyper-critical of all details of Elias's empirical evidence, accepts all sorts of ethnographic holowness quite uncritically if it appears to support his own case. The huge mass of ill-assorted evidence of diverse provenance that Duerr deploys amounts to little more than what Sir Edmund Leach called anthropological "butterfly collectting." Above all, Duerr completely fails to grasp the processual character of Elias's theory - it is to do with changes over time, and nothing to do with concomitant of European "civilisation" as "more advanced" than other cultures. Ultimately, argue Mennell and Goudelbsen, Duerr's work is fundamentally a reassertion of the old conception of "Civilisation" versus 'Culture' found in Alfred Weber and Robert Maccr - he distinguishes between the 'technical' and the 'psychological,' and while recognizing that there is structure in processes of technical change over time believes that psychological changes are entirely random and lacking in structure.

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Note the question mark behind the main title. It indicates that the author, rather than making sweeping statements, is concerned with nuances and process. The book deals with two related modern trends which pose challenge to any theory of social change. First, interpersonal violence, as indicated by homicide rates, has increased in the Western world over the last thirty years: a reversal of a long-term downward trend since the Middle Ages. Second, violence is now concentrated in urban centres, whereas for some two hundred years, the country-side usually witnessed higher levels of violence than cities. These modern trends are international, but a national case study can help us understand them better. Manuel Eisner's book, dealing with the Swiss case, is one of the best studies I know of which tackles the question in question. His empirical evidence consists of cases of death, judicial and police statistics, and an in-depth analysis of violent incidents reported to the police. These quantititative data cover a period from the 1960s to the mid-eighties. In turn, the quantitative analysis is informed by a theoretical perspective which, next to criminological theories, is heavily indebted to the work of Elias. Thus, Eisner insists on the interdependence of social structure: on the one hand and the level and character of Selbststeuerung (self-regulation) on the other. The behaviour of individual people is a function of the level and kind of self-regulation expected in specific situations, and the availability of cultural, social and economic resources which foster self-regulation (see the scheme on p.78). This leads Eisner to a two-fold explanation for "Impersonation" of the increase in violence since the 1960s. He sees this as a finger against the background of processes of individualisation and economic changes. The emergence of a new precarious ideal, which self-regulation and personal autonomy are important values, has brought with it a heightened risk of failing to live up to the ideal. Simultaneously, de-industrialisation has led to a process of marginalisation in which certain groups lack the opportunities to build up a stable self-regulation attuned to a modern way of life. Moreover, these developments are especially marked in big cities, which goes a long way to explain the concentration of violence in urban centres. There, however, also a methodological problem here. The big cities are centres of the amusement trade, which attract people from outside at precisely those moments when the chances for violent confrontations are high. Consequently, the automatic coupling of absolute numbers of violence in a city to its population figure becomes increasingly problematic. Other contextual factors analysed by Eisner are the ethnic dimension, the drug market and street traffic as a source of conflict.

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

Pieter Sierens
Eremitus Universiteit Rotterdam

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

According to Klimkin the emergence of sociology in the late eighteenth century constituted a revolution in knowledge in which ontological, epistemological and ethical concerns which had previously been sole within the purview of philosophy, became adopted and transformed within a sociological idiom. Thus in the early nine- teenth century the theories of, inter alia, de Bonald, Comte, Spencer and Marx not only focused on society as an emerging reality sui generis which could be studied scientific- ally or empirically, but simultaneously took account of important moral and politi cal considerations in the social world. This approach constituted a sociological revolu tion. The response of philosophers to this intellectual encroachment, which was result ing in a decontextualisation of their sci entific group, was to create new areas of specialisation and competence to which they could singularly lay claim as experts. Thus areas including "pure reasoning" and "logic," the search for timeless "transcendental truths" and non-empirical methods of inquiry all came to characterise the new philosophical approach. However, one major consequence of this shift of terrain was that many philosophical arguments no longer possessed any empirically checkable forms of evidence, but instead remained credible only as a result of the established prestige that philosophers had acquired as a social group. This social prestige and high rank also led to many contemporary sociologists, whose group possessed a lower aca demic rank in comparison, to adopt a number of philosophical tenets and modes of thinking. Thus during the 1960s sociologi cal schools such as phenomenology, ethno-methodology, structuralism and criti cal theory all found themselves adopting
philosophical concepts from writers such as Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Husserl. However, having acquired a firmer institutional position, contemporary sociologies are not on a position to move away from philosophy's abstract and timeless theorising back to an empirically oriented approach which was initially but only temporarily established by the sociological revolution.

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

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

In the second section of the book Klinsmann goes on to look at the limits of transcendental philosophy, in which he broadly includes the work of Kant, Hegel, Durkheim, Simmel, Weber and Giddens, as well as sociological schools such as phenomenology, ethnomethodology, critical theory and structuration. By comparing the work of Parsons, structuration and Giddens with the 'developmental-figurational' approach of Elias, Klinsmann is able to show the difficulties of such forms of sociology and how it still remains possible to transcend them. Parsons, he argues, reflects his concepts, besides providing its overly conventional view of the world, in parallel maximization again drawn too heavily from the philosophical idiom by seeking to unveil the moralistic patterns embedded in all social and cultural activities—which, for example, is demonstrated in Levi-Strauss's Kairiian preoccupation with the universal lad of human activity. This also holds true with Foucault, whose problematic Nietzschean conception of power is subverted within a Kantian transcendental method which seeks the conditions of possibility for social and cultural forms, however, following Rose, Klinsmann contends that all transcendental analysis fails under certain conditions. The condition of the possibility of experience (meaning) is likewise the condition of the object of experience (meaning) that the condition in life, social situation, culture or history (or discourse or episteme). The analysis revolved within a hermeneutic or transcendental circle, that is a circle without result (p. 287).

In sum, Giddens' theory of structuration is seen as a world-view in which there are concepts and arguments whose inclusion cannot be accounted for solely in terms of moral or intellectual criteria, but which arise from extra-theoretical factors. These factors include the incorporation of liberal, conservative and socialist political views within Giddens' synthesis. Here, the liberal component with its belief in the freedom and self-actualisation of the individual is in a sovereign and ascriptive power of domination, thus it is merged with a conservative mistrustful view of human relations with nature and, with a socialist economic economy. Moreover, not only does this position explicitly embrace a philosophical, non-empirical form of inquiry and remain limited to the study of modernity, it also fails to question how the sociological dualisms, with which it is concerned, are historical in the first place. In contrast to all these theories, Klinsmann argues that Elias' figurational sociology, through its sociogenetic method, provides an historically broader developmental form of sociology which can account for social continuity through intergenerational, the multi-perspectival positions of actions and an analysis of the changing regulation of affects which grounds rationality.

Klinsmann also looks to the concept of globalisation and, by drawing on Elias's work in The German and Western's elaboration of Elias's concept of 'figurational processes', attempts to transcend the static materialities of Wallerstein and the reductionist culturalism of Robertson by arguing for the global world as a figurational reality set grow.

In the final chapter of the book, Klinsmann provides a three-phase model which attempts to tie together theoretical developments in sociology since 1945 with the extra-theoretical factors, figures, and functional demarcation and prioritisation. The first stage in the development of Western sociology, during the period 1945-65, took place in a society characterised by relatively stable power differentials and can be termed a 'monitor stage'. Here sociology secured its position in the academy by providing a monopoly of interpretation, in this case characterised by a structural-functionalism framework. However, following a period of formalisation and prioritisation which radically altered group structures and social consciousness, this monopoly stage became replaced by a 'competitive stage' lasting from 1965-80 in which a number of theoretical groups such as Marxism, ethnomet hodology and symbolic interactionism all competed to gain a leading theoretical voice. This phase then provided the conditions for a new phase of synthesis, a 'concentration stage' which has rejected from 1980 on and including the present, is reflected in an equalising change in power ratios, in which mutual identification through prioritisation has allowed groups to merge and form alliances and a mutual conceding and changing of concepts. In this context of synthesis, in which sociology is becoming relationally more firmly established and moving closer to scientific forms of detailed analysis that sociologists now find themselves. Klinsmann, however, far from seeing in his assessment of sociology's present situation, is that he believes is still far from reaching its full potential. Before examining the strengths of Klinsmann's work, I want to look at some problems. The first concerns his analysis of Marxism. Although Klinsmann argues that Marx made significant developments in sociology, particularly through his notion of practice, he adds that Marx subequently slipped back into dualistic metaphysical and economically reductionist thinking. However, Marx's assertion that social being determines consciousness was not an attempt to prioritise the material over the ideal but was written in a context which questioned or denied the very possibility of distinguishing the material from the ideal. Consciousness for Marx was a facet of social activity or social being and its separation from the latter is the individuals [who] are its basis and... their actual condition...
was for Marx a form of inadmissible ideol-
ogy. The same argument has been convinc-
ingly extended by Derek Sayer in "The Vi-
orama of Abstraction" (1987) in relation to
the new departure metaphor (though E.P.
Thompson and MacIntryre have made the
same point before).

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

Finally, although Kilmister draws on
Mannheim as well as Elias, he does some-
times tend to underplay or not discuss at all
the relation between the political dimension
of social analysis and the changing relations
of institutional and functional democra-
tisation. For example although Kilmister
does make reference to the political domi-
nance of the right as well as functional de-
mocratisation in accounting for the decline
of Marxism within the sociological acad-
emy, it seems hardly possible to understand
the decline of Marxism in sociological r-
nitations without making explicit reference
to the fall of state socialism. Again when
Kilmister rightly discusses the political
underpinnings of Giddens' thought, for
example, he does not make clear how this
relates to the institutional dimension of so-
 ciology or to the functional democratisation
of society.

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

Steven Loyal
University College Dublin

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

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

Inglis begins by examining the Catholic
Church's traditional views regarding sex
education. It is true that in order to under-
stand the present and look positively to-
wards the future, we must be able to under-
stand the past - such as how the church's
mechanisms of sexual control were linked
both with morality and structural factors.
He shows how in the nineteenth century the
control of sex and the protection of the fam-
ily were linked to the modernisation of Irish
agriculture and how morality and chastity
were considered great virtues which were
internalised in children and became part of
Irish people's habits - automatic and cen-
tral elements of behaviour which take many
years - or generations - to rid oneself of.

Along with this Inglis sees secrecy, guilt
and shame about sexual activity as learnt
dispositions also, which take many years to
overturn.

Inglis focuses on the Relationships and
Sexuality Education (RSE) programme
which was introduced into Irish schools by
the state in 1998 as being vital in teaching
young children not only about sex and sexu-
ality but also about themselves, their rela-
tionships and how to become 'self-aware, self-
confident, self-assured and critically re-
flexive about themselves, their family and
the community and society in which they live' (p371-72). This liberalisation has been met with opposition particularly
within the field of education over which the
church had and still has considerable power.
Inglis approves of the programme but admits
that sex and sex education are causing one
of the most serious challenges to the Catholic Church's 150-year monop-
oly over morality.

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

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

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

Aisle Rickard
University College Dublin


Author's Abstract: Medical sociology, mainly an Anglo-Saxon invention, was developed almost without any theoretical reference to Norbert Elias's work. One of the consequences of this ignorance was that a very challenging idea has been lost. This idea addressed the sociological problems associated with the historical changes that in turn affected the role played by hypnosis in the normalisation of human behaviour. According to Elias's theory of civilizing processes, the progressive changes in human behaviour were part of global dynamics involving the transformation of both social structures and individuals' habits. In the construction of the 'civilised behaviour' characteristic of the dominant group, hygienic preoccupation played a role. The medical discourses of the eighteenth century about the infectious diseases gave a posteriour an addition of legitimacy to this civilised behaviour. Adopting Elias's perspective, I try to answer a question left unexplored in his work, i.e. the place of contemporary medical knowledge and practices within the ongoing civilising process. This question leads me to analyse: 1. the role played by 'Pestorian hygienic in the policy of civilisation' of the lower classes in France; 2. the tendency towards the medicalisation of self-control behaviour and the emergence of the patient as medical authority in divided in the division of medical works.


This is a brilliantly organised book. Key Sociological Thinkers introduces 21 of the most influential sociological thinkers from Marx, Durkheim and Weber to Foucault and Giddens and of course contains a chapter on Norbert Elias by Jason Hughes. Each chapter has a common format - containing a section called driving impulses, key issues, seeing things differently, legacies and unfinished business. What impressed me most about this concise book was the section called 'seeing things differently'. Here the authors relate how the perspective of their key thinker has made them see the social world in a new and illuminating way, drawing their attention to aspects of the world that otherwise would have passed them by. In this section, they do not draw directly on examples given in the work of their thinker, but use examples from everyday life, literature and film.

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

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

Aisie Rickard
University College Dublin


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

It was only in his last four years that Foucault saw clearly what his life-work was about. The key to Foucault's life work, Szakolczai argues, is a lecture on 'Subjectivity and Truth' given in California in October, 1981. In this he explores the link between truth and the telling of truth, that is between telling the truth and forms of relating to the self. Through this and playing with the games of truth, individuals can critically reflect about themselves. His whole archaeological analysis of discourse and his genealogical analyses of power were a preparation for this final preoccupation of his life-work. (91) In those studies he had sought to discover the way power is exercised over souls and bodies, and how people come to live regular, methodical lives. This led him to focus on sexual ethics and ancient philosophy. These were the keys to understanding the links between power, knowledge, rationality and modernity and how we came to be the way we are.

Szakolczai argues that Weber was also a parthenial. He compares the last ten years of Weber's life with the last four of Foucault's. In a letter written in 1909, Weber announced his decisive historic need for 'intellectual righteousness', to say what
is. (85) Weber had begun to lecture again; a significant achievement for someone who could not speak in front of an audience for years. He began to take risks in what he wrote, and to seek a wider audience. For Szarkowski, the key to this period is his lecture on "Taste and Life Orders"—which ended up published as "Science as a Vocation"—and his essay on "Value Freedom".

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

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

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

Tom Angley
University College Dublin


Author's Abstract: This paper attempts to reassess the standard sociological canon and sketch the outlines of a new approach by bringing together a series of thinkers whose works so far have remained disconnected. Introducing a distinction between classical and background figures who were crucial sources of inspiration, it shifts emphasis on the late, reflexive works of the two sociologists and these are relevant for two types of reflexive sociology: historical and anthropological. The main background figures of reflexive historical sociology are Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche in general, while in his progenitors include Foucault, Elias, Veblen, Borkenau, Mandelbarg,Areas and Koszick. A short introduction is given to the four main fields of interest within the approach: the reconstructive histories of subjectivity, of forms of thought, of forms of knowledge, and of closed space and regulated time.


This book takes an unusual form. It centres on the 25-page essay on "The Disruption of Traditional Forms of Nature" by the great American historian William McNeill. Among whose most celebrated cartographic books are The Rise of the West, Plagues and Peoples, and Keeping Together in Time (see Figures). The rest of the book consists of an edited transcript of the conference called to discuss McNeill's essay at the American Institute for European and International Studies on 12-13 July 1996. McNeill characteristically takes a very long-term view of human society and its modes of bringing up new generations. He sets out the case in which all human communities were hunters and gatherers of some type; together with the subsequent period in which the vast majority of people in agrarian societies lived in relatively autonomous village communities, accounts for perhaps 90% of the time that Homo sapiens has existed as a species. During that whole period, he sees co-operative families as the basic units of production and consumption, embedded in village communities. In that context, the relation between generations was, he contends, closed and harmonious. Thus the disruption of traditional modes of nature, which McNeill associates mainly with rapid urbanisation principally in this century, is something new and recent. McNeill exaggerates the youth gangs and violence of many modern cities with traditional bandity. The kernel of his thesis is that the modern institutional form of social continuity has lain (p176), and now it is altering.

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

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

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


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

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

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


A letter dated 12 June 1938 from Walter Benjamin to an unknown correspondent has long been famous among Benjamin scholars because, when it was published in 1967, it sparked off a dispute concerning Benjamin's relation to the Freiburg school and whether Adorno had 'crossed' the Marxist-erudite side of Benjamin's thought. It is now known that this letter was part of a series of letters between Benjamin and Norbert Elias and, before it was published in 1967, received a first volume of Georg Buchwald's *Zur Entstehung des Zivilisationsprozesses* to Benjamin and enabled him to review it Benjamin declared on grounds of family Marxist disagreement with what he perceived to be Elias's theory. The letters of Elias and Benjamin are reproduced in the end of the article.


Abstract: The basis for the popularity (at least in Europe) of the sociology of Norbert Elias is above all his theory of civilizing...
processes. Critical discussion is now revealing major problems with this work. In particular, there is the question of Elias’s account of “civilized people” being ever more restrained through super ego constraints and feelings of shame and embarrassment as valid in the light of developments in the twentieth century. The recurrence of violence and also the processes of pluralization and the relocation of rigid norms seem to argue against it. It can be argued that Elias bases his analysis of civilizing processes on four mechanisms, which he saw as acting in the same direction of social integration and individual restriction (“discipline”). Other conceptualizations of these mechanisms, are however possible, and are to be found in his work (“distinction”), so the one-sidedness of Elias’s interpretation should not necessarily continue to be accepted.

ELIAS FOUNDATION WEBSITE

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

ELIAS-I: THE ELECTRONIC DISCUSSION LIST

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

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

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

with this text in the BODY of the message (not in the subject heading space):

subscribe ELIAS-I your full name.

LISTSERV is a computer program, so please mail the list-owner for help with subscribing, unsubscribing or any other problem with the list.

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

OBITUARY

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


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

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

Paul Nurse
University of Cambridge

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

4th European Conference of Sociology - Wil Europe Work?
Amsterdam, 18-21 August.
Special Session on Figurational Sociology. The programme of the sessions, with abstracts of the papers, is available at the address: http://www.wroko.org/iw/ nicewbhr/figuris/fcasacs.html

Norbert Elias in Wroclaw/Breslau
24-25 September 1999
Wroclaw University – Collegium Antropologieum, Kuweza 25, Wroclaw, Poland

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

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Editor: Stephen Mennell
Assistant Editor: Aucult Richard
Editorial Address: Department of Sociology, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland.
Tel.: +353-1-706 8506; Fax: +353-1-706 1125.
Email: Stephen.Mennell@ucd.ie

Contributions should preferably be e-mailed to the Editors, or sent on a disk (formatted for PC-DOS, not Apple MacIntosh, WordPerfect or 5.1.)
Microsoft Word (up to 7) and plain text files can all be handled. Do not use embedded footnotes. Hard copy is accepted reluctantly.

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