

Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

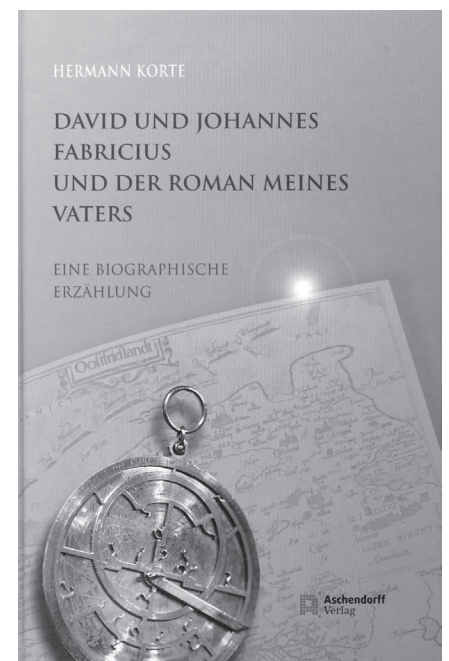
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■ PEOPLE

Hermann Korte, besides being a member of the Board of the Norbert Elias Foundation and having recently completed a double term as Treasurer of the German branch of the PEN Club, has just published his first novel. The title is *David und Johannes Fabricius und der Roman meines Vaters* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2011). In English, the publisher's blurb reads:

Although by comparison with Kepler, Galileo and other astronomers of the early modern period he is almost forgotten, it was the student Johannes Fabricius who – 400 years ago, in March 1611 in the East Frisian islands



– discovered sunspots and published a report about them. His father, David Fabricius, a Lutheran pastor and renowned astronomer, had instructed him thoroughly and made it possible for him to study in Wittenberg. He could not approve of the discovery of sunspots, since he watched the stars in order to prove the existence of God. The son, however, was in search of scientific knowledge. Inspired by an unpublished novel manuscript that he found among his own father's papers, Hermann Korte tells the exciting story of Fabricius father and son against the backdrop of religious unrest on the eve of Thirty Years War.

Lars-Bo Kaspersen has moved from the Copenhagen Business School to become head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen.

Congratulations (again – see *Figurations* 34) to *Robert van Krieken* on his promotion to full Professor at the University of Sydney.



■ FROM THE NORBERT ELIAS FOUNDATION

Personal websites of figurationists

In *Figurations* 34 we listed personal websites of some figurational sociologists (and fellow travellers.)

But we forgot to make the most important point: it would be useful if in our own websites we inserted hyperlinks to the others.

So we reprint the list below, with the addition of John Lever's new website.

Maarten van Bottenburg -
<http://www.vanbottenburg.nl/>

Christien Brinkgreve -
<http://www.christienbrinkgreve.nl/>

Peter Emmerson's sociology and politics blog -
<http://www.peter-emmerson.co.uk/>

Robert van Krieken -
<http://robertvankrieken.net/>

John Lever -
www.jblresearch.org

Bruce Mazlish -
<http://www.bmazlish.blog.com/>

Stephen Mennell -
<http://www.stephenmennell.eu>

Helga Nowotny -
<http://helga-nowotny.eu/>

Abram de Swaan -
<http://www.deswaan.com>

We shall continue to expand the list – please notify the editors of others who should be added.



La Vieille Charité, Marseilles

Centre Norbert Elias

The Centre Norbert Elias is devoted to multidisciplinary work in anthropology, history, sociology and communications, in recognition of epistemological and methodological convergence between these disciplines in the production and the interpretation of empirical data about the social world.

The research centre in fact dates back to the 1980s, but adopted the name of Norbert Elias –by unanimous choice of its members, one gathers – only a couple of years ago. It is based at four locations in southern France: in Marseille (the regional centre of the EHESS in the Vieille Charité), Aix-en-Provence (Université Paul Cézanne), Avignon (University of Avignon and Pays de Vaucluse) and Lyon (École Normale Supérieure, Lyon)

The Director of the Centre Norbert Elias is Professor Jean Boutier. For further information about the work of the Centre, see the website:
<http://centre-norbert-elias.ehess.fr/>

Publication of the Consolidated Index to the Elias *Gesammelte Schriften*

Norbert Elias, *Gesamtregister* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2010). 324 pp. ISBN: 978-3-51858525-2.

Not, of course, designed for easy bedtime reading, the nineteenth and final volume of the Norbert Elias *Gesammelte Schriften* is nevertheless an invaluable research tool. It contains the consolidated index, both for people and subjects, of the entire works of

Elias in German. This mammoth task was undertaken by Jan-Peter Kunze.

Human Figurations Journal

As we have already mentioned in the last issue of *Figurations*, a new online journal, *Human Figurations*, will officially kick off in January 2012. The journal will initially be published twice a year, with Katie Liston as the Editor. The basic idea behind *Human Figurations* is to present essays and articles that will not only be representative of Eliasian spirit in general and help expanding of international figurational sociology network, but also help to build up a more refreshing and critical perspective on the theory of Norbert Elias. We aim for the first issue to contain essays representative of disciplines such as sociology, history, criminology, anthropology and international relations. So if you are thinking about contributing to *Human Figurations* now, please contact Katie Liston (editorhumanfigurations@gmail.com) for any further information.

■ IN THE MEDIA

University of Arizona sets up Civility Institute

After the January shooting of Representative Gabrielle Giffords in Tucson, the University of Arizona announced the establishment of a National Institute for Civil Discourse, to promote compromise among opposing political parties and views. The *New York Times* reported on 21 February that Presidents Bill Clinton and George H. W. Bush would act as honorary chairman of the Institute.

Among politicians and pundits, reported the *NYT*, the shooting raised questions and criticisms about American national political discourse, with many calling for calmer rhetoric while pointing out commentary they considered incendiary.

Readers of *Figurations* may hope that the Institute progresses beyond pious hopes to serious research on the drift towards extremism in American life. In a way, the new institute's title is not

very promising: the static use of the concept of 'civility' – with an anodyne meaning roughly of 'politeness' – has entered into American sociology divorced from any widespread understanding of long-term *processes* of civilisation. Still, the institute is a step in the right direction, and perhaps it will be alert to the relevance of Elias's writings.

■ AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN NORBERT ELIAS AND RAYMOND ARON, 1939

The context of this exchange of letters between Elias and Aron in July 1939 was Aron's review of the first volume of *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation*. The philosopher of science Alexandre Koyré had acted as intermediary between Elias and Aron. Elias's letter appears to have been written quickly, because there are missing verbs and the punctuation is sometimes questionable. But this letter is important because it bears witness to how in 1939 Elias conceived his intellectual project – reorientating the traditional tools of 'causalist' thought, and laying the common foundations of an historical psychology and a processual sociology – a project to which he remained faithful all his life. – Marc Joly

Letter from Raymond Aron to Norbert Elias (Paris, 10 July 1939)

I have in fact bought a copy of your book for the *Centre de documentation sociale*. I have written a short review, which will appear in the forthcoming issue of the *Annales sociologiques* and which you will find enclosed. I propose also to examine your work at greater length when both the volumes that you have announced have appeared.¹ The work in fact interests me a great deal, and both its content and its methods raises interesting problems.

It is difficult for me to make any criticisms as yet, because the following volumes [*sic*] will very likely answer the many questions that one might be tempted to ask you today. I will confine myself to one comment: perhaps you could further clarify the direction and

meaning of evolution that you describe. Maybe is there not only repression and refinement; perhaps there are, in compensation, some expressions that become permissible. But this is more a question than a reproach; I would like you to describe in greater detail the psychological state of civilised people.

If you in your turn have any criticisms or any suggestions to make to me about the review, please do so and I will take into account as far as possible before printing.

I look forward to meeting you, either in Paris or in London,
with best wishes
Raymond Aron

Letter from Norbert Elias to Raymond Aron (London, 22 July 1939)

Dear M. Aron

Thank you very much for your letter of 10 July and the copy of your review, which I read with pleasure. I am glad that you are interested in some of the ideas in my book, and I fully understand that it is difficult to get a clearer picture of the method and basic ideas for my work as long as you do not know the second volume. I hope I do not have to wait too long before I send it you. It has been ready for a long time, but unfortunately the difficulties now faced by a book in the German language have delayed its publication. A little theoretical work on 'The society of individuals', also completed several months ago, is expected to appear in the autumn if all goes well. Currently I am working, following the same approach, on an investigation of the changes in the family and in relations between men and women in general that have taken place in the course of European history. You have rightly pointed out that the chapter on this aspect of the civilizing process, in the first volume of my book, is tentative. I intentionally put aside the many materials on the subject that I had collected (materials mainly concerning French history) to the extent that they became too large and required more thorough treatment.

Meanwhile, I have asked my publisher to send you a copy of the first volume for your personal use, as I understand from your letter that the copy you have purchased is for the Centre de Documentation Social.

Thank you especially for your review allowing me to guess what are your objections and doubts. You say in your letter that the process of civilization is perhaps not characterized solely by increasing 'repression and refinement'. I am quite of your opinion, and I think it would be theoretically insufficient to define the process into which I tried to give some insight in the first volume by these two concepts alone. An American observer, Charles H. Judd, who has perceived the problem without being able to overcome or resolve it satisfactorily, wrote: 'This chapter will aim to prove that the types of personal emotions which are known to civilised men are products of an evolution in which emotions have taken a new direction ... The effort of individuals to adapt themselves to institutional demands results in what may be properly described as a wholly new group of pleasures and displeasures.' (*The Psychology of Social Institutions*, you will find the quotation in the second volume of my book, p. 276).² On the whole, I agree with this formulation. To be more precise, repressions – for example in the form of taboos – are often much stronger in primitive societies than in our own society. But they are, if I may say so – the second volume shows this unambiguously – more one-sided or more partial and, at the same time, more diffuse than the direction of the process that I seek to present the first volume, about which I might say that it is a trend towards a more all-round and more even regulation of behaviour around a more middle line, a trend towards a more comprehensive and more stable muting of impulses such as fear.

The difficulty lies in, among other things, the fact that in all this we are making the first tentative steps into an area where there is as yet no science, no method, no tools of thought: the field of historical psychology, which – as you have noted in your review – is of course inseparable from a processual way of

thinking, an historical sociology. And when, for example, Lévy-Bruhl,³ for whom I have great esteem despite many disagreements, talked of 'pre-logical mentality', he formulated something that he had in part quite correctly observed, although in a somewhat clumsy and misleading way because at this stage of research he and all of us lack documentary material and also of course appropriate methods of thought to highlight the process through which forms of life and primitive modes of thought and primitive forms of behaviour (at different places of the earth) are constantly changing until over millennia we ourselves eventually appear. Today, we usually think statically in terms of jumps from point to point (Eleatically, if you like), and we too easily lose sight of the continuity of humanity.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty of all the investigations that I have in mind is that they require, in many respects, a revision of the dominant patterns of thought and, above all, certain traditional representations of causation (including value judgments implicit in them). That is a wider set of questions, and I sincerely hope that we will find both the time and opportunity to discuss them. Maybe for the moment I can simply take an example from your review. You say at the end: 'The opposition of civilization and culture thus set up [*remontait*] a social opposition'. It is certainly possible to express the state of things I try to describe in that way. But – given the current habits of thought – if it is put that way, misunderstandings can easily arise. It may suggest that I wanted to say that social opposition on which I base the conceptual antithesis of civilization and culture in Germany – the greater isolation of the bourgeoisie and the nobility, compared with France – is the *cause* of (and because of current values also the *most important* point about) 'the national opposition of civilization and culture'. The word *remontait* can easily lead to the misconception that I want to retain the concept of cause which, in fact, largely predominates today in the historical sciences. So, for example, it may be believed that the songs of courtly love⁴ can be 'explained' by saying that they stem

from Marian poetry⁵ (or possibly also from contact with Arab culture). But we do not speculate on the reasons for the process by which Marian poetry (or whatever it may be) is transformed into courtly lyrics. And so we perhaps risk misunderstanding my argument that some aspects of the code of conduct of the civilised West were first developed in the circles of the court nobility and were then incorporated, assimilated and reworked by bourgeois circles – especially in France – leading to the impression that I believe the court nobility is the *cause* or *initiator* of the wave of bourgeois civilisation that has followed. Quite apart from the fact that this whole scheme is too simple, I have hinted at what I mean in the first volume (p. 156): 'The process that emerges resembles in form ... those chemical processes in which a liquid, the whole of which is subjected to conditions of chemical change (e.g., crystallisation), first takes on crystalline form at a small nucleus, while the rest then gradually crystallises around this core. Nothing would be more erroneous than to take the core of the crystallisation for the cause of the transformation.'⁶

But I fear that I have wasted too much of your time with my letter. I hope we keep in touch, and that if you come to London – as you indicate in your letters – you will not fail to let me know. However, I hope soon to go to the United States. I recently learned that there were few contacts between American sociology and French sociology (one can hardly speak at present of a specifically English sociology). However, in this context, permit me to recommend to your attention a good friend of mine, Dr. Weintraub of Cornell University, Ithaca, who will spend some time in Paris while on holiday. Since he is particularly interested in the problem of 'stratification', I advised him in passing to read one of the most recent publication of the Centre.

Again my warmest thanks and begging you to forgive me for this too detailed letter,
with my best wishes,
Norbert Elias

Notes

The letters were translated from the French and German by Stephen Mennell. The original letters are in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv (DLA), Marbach am Neckar, Elias, I. 32, Brief N. Elias zu R. Aron, 22 July 1939. They have been published in French translation in *Vingtième Siècle* 106 (2010), pp. 97–102, for which Marc Joly wrote the introductory paragraph above.

1 See Aron's review in *Annales sociologiques*, Series A, Fascicule 4 (1941), pp 54–6.

2 Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation*, 2 vols (Basel: Haus zum Falken, 1939), II; the quotation is actually in a note on p. 490. See *The Civilizing Process*, rev. edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000 [*On the Process of Civilisation*, Collected Works, vol. 3, UCD Press forthcoming 2012]), p. 550.

3 Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857–1939), French anthropologist who had died four months earlier; Elias cites two of his best-known books, *How Natives Think* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1926) and *Primitive Mentality* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1923) in *Involvement and Detachment* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2007 [Collected Works, vol. 8]), p. 166, but had clearly read them before the Second World War, probably in the original French editions which were first published in 1910 and 1922 respectively. There are extensive unpublished discussions of Lévy-Bruhl among Elias's papers in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach.

4 See Elias's discussion of 'the socio-genesis of *Minnesang* and courtly forms of conduct', in *The Civilizing Process*, rev. edn. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000 [*On the Process of Civilisation*]), pp. 236–56.

5 Medieval devotional poetry in honour of the Virgin Mary.

6 *The Civilizing Process*, p. 99.

■ GOBBLEDEGOOK

We decided that we should emulate *Private Eye*'s famous 'Pseud's Corner' column, and institute a periodic column in the newsletter giving examples of pretentious, vacuous and/or nonsensical writing by social scientists. In some cases, it seemed best not to identify the

author, but George Ritzer is a big boy, well able to defend himself.

Readers are invited to submit samples of gobbledegook for future issues of *Figurations*.

From George Ritzer, 'Rethinking Globalization: Glocalization/Globalization and Something/Nothing', *Sociological Theory* 21: 3 (2003), pp. 193–209.

Abstract: The concept of 'globalization' is proposed to complement the popular idea of 'glocalization.' In addition, a sociologically relevant concept of 'nothing' is defined and juxtaposed with 'something'. Two continua are created – globalization–glocalization and nothing–something – and their intersection creates four quadrants: the globalization of nothing, glocalization of nothing, globalization of something, and glocalization of something. Of greatest importance are the globalization of nothing and the glocalization of something, as well as the conflict between them. The globalization of nothing threatens to overwhelm the latter and everything else. Other issues discussed include the loss of something in a world increasingly dominated by nothing, the disappearance of the local, and the relationship of the triumph of nothing to political economy, especially social class. I conclude that no social class is immune to this process and that the poor and lower classes may be 'doomed' to something.

From a personal website:

Air: Continuing the work of the above, I have just started a book project for Reaktion's new 'earth' series which will develop and advance Peter Sloterdijk's writings on air and its quality of 'explication': an utter dependence of biological, technological and political life upon the environment it must breathe. *Air* will develop a cultural and political history of how the air has been harnessed in order to manage, improve, alter and sometimes kill human life. Examples will range from the origins of gas warfare and prosthetics of protection to defoliation in Indochina; from Haldane's pioneering work on respiration to the politics of comfort in the air conditioned environments of

Dubai and the splintered spaces of the megacity.

From glossary prepared by the teacher of a course called 'Being' currently taught in the Philosophy Department at Leeds:

Bundle theory: A theory according to which a concrete individual or substance is constituted by either a collection of universal attributes (universalist bundle theory) or a collection of tropes (particularist bundle theory), without the need of a substratum. Universalist bundle theory tends to run foul of the problem of indiscernibles, particularist bundle theory may run into infinite regresses or have difficulty explaining why only one trope of each kind occurs in a bundle.

From Nicky Gregson, Helen Watkins and Melania Calestani, 'Inextinguishable fibres: demolition and the vital materialisms of asbestos', *Environment and Planning A*, vol. 42 (2010), pp. 1065–83.

Abstract. This paper forwards a performative reading of asbestos in economies of disposal. It argues that materials need to be thought through transformative states, not just stable states, and that materials' performativity varies according to material states. As a radical intervention in form, demolition is one such transformative state, which disturbs and animates materials. Relatively unconsidered in the academic literature, demolition is argued to be the means to an endless source of surprise in the built environment as well as a singular and multiple practice entailing the dissolution of form, the purposeful reduction and dismantling of large-scale objects, salvage and remediation work, and a host of micropractices, including cutting, tearing, sorting, and separating. The paper illustrates asbestos' interventions in demolition activities, using as its exemplar the case of ship breaking in the EU. More broadly, the paper works with asbestos to show that material properties are not fixed but processual, relational, and distributed. The paper also flags some key questions for the emergent debate on vital materialisms, highlighting the

difficulties materials like asbestos's pose for thinking through enchantment and generosity; the importance of thinking a vital materialism through remediation as well as salvage; and the need to extend an ethics founded on generosity to encompass respect, humility, responsibility, and surprise towards those materials that most threaten human life.

■ WHY AMERICANS DON'T TAKE TO ELIAS: THE WIT OF ALAN SICA

Some time ago, Alan Sica (Pennsylvania State University) explained in an email to Chris Rojek why the work of Norbert Elias has not caught on widely among American sociologists. It is too witty not to be shared, and we are grateful to Alan for agreeing to its publication. He said:

'The reason Americans don't take to Elias is that he writes about European historical and cultural change and American sociologists don't feel comfortable with that sort of thing, except for [Jack] Goldstone and that small lot; and because he is theoretically very adventurous and synthetic, and they don't go for that; and because he trashed Parsons, who many of them liked back in the day; and because he could be mistaken for a closet Freudian, which they don't like; and because he brings up really obnoxious qualities of humankind, which they particularly don't like; and because he wrote a helluva lot of stuff, which takes a long time to read, they don't have time; and because 'figuration' is a word that has a distinctly effete connotations in this country, and sounds like art history ...'



■ RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Andrew Linklater and Stephen Mennell, 'Retrospective: Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations* – An Overview and Assessment', *History and Theory* 49: 3 (2010), pp. 384–411.

Abstract: Norbert Elias's *The Civilizing Process*, which was published in German in 1939 and first translated into English in two volumes in 1978 and 1982, is now widely regarded as one of the great works of twentieth-century sociology. This work attempted to explain how Europeans came to think of themselves as more 'civilized' than their forebears and neighbouring societies. By analysing books about manners that had been published between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries, Elias observed changing conceptions of shame and embarrassment with respect to, among other things, bodily propriety and violence. To explain those developments, Elias examined the interplay among the rise of state monopolies of power, increasing levels of economic interconnectedness among people, and pressures to become attuned to others over greater distances that led to advances in identifying with others in

the same society irrespective of social origins. Elias's analysis of the civilizing process was not confined, however, to explaining changing social bonds within separate societies. The investigation also focused on the division of Europe into sovereign states that were embroiled in struggles for power and security.

This article provides an overview and analysis of Elias's principal claims in the light of growing interest in this seminal work in sociology. The analysis shows how Elias defended higher levels of synthesis in the social sciences to explain relations between 'domestic' and 'international' developments, and changes in social structure and in the emotional lives of modern people. Elias's investigation, which explained long-term processes of development over several centuries, pointed to the limitations of inquiries that concentrate on short-term intervals. Only by placing short-term trends in long-term perspective could sociologists understand contemporary developments.

This article maintains that Elias's analysis of the civilizing process remains an exemplary study of

long-term developments in Western societies over the last five centuries.

Hugh P. Whitt, 'The civilizing process and its discontents: suicide and crimes against persons in France, 1825–1830', *American Journal of Sociology*, 116: 1 (2010), pp. 130–86.

A spatial analysis of data for French *départements* assembled in the 1830s by André-Michel Guerry and Adolphe d'Angeville examines the impacts of modernisation and resistance to governmental 'Frenchification' policies on measures of violence and its direction. In the context of Unnithan *et al.*'s integrated model of suicide and homicide, high suicide rates in the northern core and a predilection for violence against others in the southern periphery may be consistently interpreted in terms of theories of the civilizing process and internal colonialism. Alternative explanation of southern violence in nineteenth-century France are explored and rejected, and additional theoretical applications are suggested.

Marc Joly, 'Devenir Norbert Elias: Contribution à l'analyse d'un processus transnational de reconnaissance scientifique: la réception française'. Unpublished doctoral thesis, École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris, 2010.

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of the process through which the work of Norbert Elias gained international recognition. How was it that this sociologist, forced into exile and long treated as negligible in Britain, came eventually to be integrated into the fundamental canon of European sociology? How was it that 'this great outcast from all the European university systems of the twentieth century' (in the words of Christophe Charle) has become a classic of social science? Such is the problem that that it is attempted to solve.

The first chapter presents a provisional synthesis of many 'theoretical' problems raised by the research topic. It principally shows how far confronting the 'case' of Norbert Elias led to

making explicit two dimensions that are fully part of the field of sociology, but which sometimes seemingly hidden behind the principle of a strict correspondence between the stance taken in a work and the context in which it is produced: (1) the 'psychological' dimension in scientific creation; and (2) the static polarities (individual–society, nature–culture, *événement–structure*, and so on) that both determine and permit the objective evaluation of intellectual work in the field of the humanities and social sciences. The problem to be solved is that of the link between the evidently unfailing confidence of the 'creator', the objective value of the 'great works', and social conditions for their recognition.

The second chapter aims to chart the path taken by Norbert Elias between his departure from Germany in 1933 and the early 1970s. By locating the exiled sociologist in the field of the social sciences and humanities in Britain, and by analysing the consequences of the brutal interruption of the dynamics of a specific field during the Second World War, understanding is sought of the social sources of Elias's non-recognition; but at the same time an attempt is also made to reconstruct the networks of relationships that allowed Elias to remain faithful to the broad outlines of his intellectual project, without which no subsequent recognition, thanks to a change in the global context, would have been possible.

Finally, the third and fourth chapters aim to clarify why the first translation of *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* appeared in France, before enjoying real public recognition there – also for the first time, thanks to the *Annales* historians. In this sense, the French reception in the early 1970s constituted a turning point in the transnational process of recognition of the Elias œuvre: we tried to identify its bases and developmental dynamics.

Friederike Günther, Angela Holzer and Enrico Müller (eds), *Zur Genealogie des Zivilisationsprozesses: Friedrich Nietzsche und Norbert Elias* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010). 323 pp. ISBN: 978-3-11-022070-4 (hb); 978-3-11-022071-1 (e-book).

This book contains the papers from the conference with the same title that was held at the Humboldt University, Berlin, in September 2008 (see *Figurations* 30). The contents are:

Enrico Müller: Zur Genealogie des Zivilisationsprozesses: Friedrich Nietzsche und Norbert Elias: Einführung

Angela Holzer: Philosoph der Kultur und des Krieges: Zur Nietzsche-Rezeption von Norbert Elias

Renate Reschke: Höfische Kultur: Der kulturkritische und soziologische Blick: Zur Differenz von Norbert Elias und Friedrich Nietzsche

Stephen Menzell: A smouldering ember: Nietzsche and Elias on aristocratic and warrior ethics in the light of the American civilizing process

Christian J. Emden: Anthropologien der Gewalt bei Norbert Elias und Friedrich Nietzsche

David Wachter: Dionysische Zivilisation? Kulturtechniken der Enthemmung bei Nietzsche und Elias

Andreas Urs Sommer: Das Sterben denken: Zur Möglichkeit einer ars moriendi nach Nietzsche und Elias

Friederike Felicitas Günther: Die kopernikanische Wende als anthropologische Denkfigur bei Nietzsche und Elias

Chiara Piazzesi: Die soziale Verinnerlichung von Machtverhältnissen: Über die produktiven Aspekte der Selbstdisziplinierung und der Affektkontrolle bei Nietzsche und Elias

Annette Hilt: Rollen des Kritikers: Kritik als Gedächtnis und Erzählung im Prozess der Zivilisation

Enrico Müller: Kulturlen im Wandel denken: Zu den Voraussetzungen genealogischer und genetischer Reflexion

Leander Scholz: Die ungeahnten Möglichkeiten des 'demokratischen Nivellierungs-systems': Nietzsche und die Theoretiker der Weltgesellschaft

Werner Stegmaier: Nietzsches Mitteilungszeichen, Elias's Symboltheorie und die Spielräume der Orientierung

Johan Goudsblom: Nietzsche and Elias as educators. Their role in the writing of *Nihilism and Culture*

Michèle Lhopiteau-Dorfeuille, *Wolfgang Amadeo Mozart, 'rêver avec les sons'* (Lormont: Le Bord de l'eau, 2011). 242 pp. ISBN: 978-2-35687-104-6.

The following is an English translation of parts of the publisher's blurb:

Why yet another book on Mozart?

On no artist has so much ink been spilled as on Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – mainly in Germany since the nineteenth century – and one might think that everything has been said about the man who was undoubtedly the pre-eminent composer of the second half of the eighteenth century.

But musicology is a science that is progressing every day, and many documents have been unearthed since the publication of reference books on the subject in the last century – such as the indispensable *Mozart* in French by Jean and Brigitte Massin (Fayard), which was first issued in 1958 and last updated in 1990. One of the most reliable texts, the remarkable and very technical *Mozart* by Philip A. Autexier (published by Champion), dates back to 1987 ...

As for the luminous work by Norbert Elias, *Mozart: the Sociology of a Genius*, it was unfortunately interrupted by the death of its author in 1990 and deals (brilliantly) with the composer's early years. ...

Michèle Lhopiteau-Dorfeuille, musicologist and conductor Mozart's music ... has decided to disregard both the film *Amadeus* and everything she has read during and since her studies at the Conservatory of Bordeaux, instead making a healthy return to basics by immersing herself in the complete correspondence of the Mozart family – correspondence collected and classified chronologically into seven volumes of 500 pages, annotated by Wilhelm Bauer Otto Deutsch and Joseph Heinz Eibl. In these pages she found a much more mature composer, much funnier, much more 'modern', in fact, than the image of the rather silly 'eternal child' as he is too often portrayed. Citing numerous and extensive excerpts from these letters, she wanted to put the reader in tune with the characters – trying to minimise the barrier between them and him.

Through her profoundly human and empathetic reading of the relationship between Mozart and his family, Michèle Lhopiteau-Dorfeuille makes us forget her long and meticulous research and synthesis, giving us all the keys to understanding and loving the character she we present in various lighting conditions: his condition as a musician under the *ancien régime*, as a 'child prodigy', his relations with women, his attitude to death.

The book is accompanied by 120-minute CD of recordings of Mozart's music from the Naxos catalogue.

Note: A new English edition of Elias's *Mozart: the Sociology of a Genius* was published by UCD Press in 2010 as volume 12 of the Collected Works – see www.ucdpress.ie.

Pieter Spierenburg, 'The green, green grass of home: capital punishment and the penal system from a long-term perspective', in Austin Sarat and Jürgen Martschukat (eds), *Is the Death Penalty Dying?: European and American Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 17–46.

The concluding paragraphs of this essay read: In all societies and throughout

history, the criminally condemned have in common that they feel the state's monopoly of force striking at their person in one way or another. Hence, every change in the treatment of the condemned is also a change in the way in which the monopoly of force is used. When successful demands are made on state agents for moderating the uses of their monopoly, the power of the condemned increases. This is a manifestation of the overall diminution of power differences that Norbert Elias views as one of the principal aspects of long-term change. In Europe, the sacralisation of executions, involving a slight rise in the status and power of capital convicts, constitutes an early example of the moderation process. Subsequently, the ritual of religiously tainted executions was exported to Colonial America, which is one indication for this continent's more compressed long-term development. Crucial in this compressed development was the 'too early' advent of democracy, which led Americans to remain particularly distrustful of a state monopoly of force and, paradoxically, inclined to make fewer demands for moderation in its uses.¹ Nevertheless, some examples of moderation, in particular a phase of emancipation of prisoners, also took place in the United States.

In the last three decades or so, the power of the criminally condemned appears to have somewhat diminished again, but further research is needed to determine its extent with greater precision. For one thing, average prison terms have increased and the supermax regime has spread. The extent of ordinary inmates' privileges and rights, on the other hand, has certainly not been reduced to the nineteenth-century level. Moreover, these recent developments are coupled with a partially civilising trend of increasing compassion with crime victims that balances vindictiveness and solidarity. Taken together, these developments are, to a large extent, common to Europe and America. In European countries, however, where the determination of the political elites to reject the death penalty met with no serious opposition, this punishment remains out of the picture. In the United States,

next to prisoners being even worse off than their European counterparts, the popularity of the death penalty has markedly increased. Thus, the modern return to punitiveness is a trend common to most Western nations, but in the United States it is exacerbated by the lesser inclination of its citizens to make demands of moderation on the use of the monopoly of force.

The principal conclusion of this thesis for Elias's theory runs like this: In the long run, civilising processes and the decrease of power differentials between social groups go together and reinforce each other. In the short run, however, they sometimes proceed in opposite directions. The history of violence offers another example. In recent decades, respect for authority figures such as teachers or public transport officials has decreased, which led to an increase in aggression directed at them. Recent developments in punishment and control are even more complex. They involve a less moderate use of the monopoly of force and a concomitant decrease in the power of the criminally condemned, but also a civilising trend toward compassion with crime victims. An analysis of these partially contradictory developments helps us in better understanding present-day society, but it cannot tell us how things will continue.

¹ See Pieter Spierenburg 'Democracy came too early: a tentative explanation for the problem of American homicide', *American Historical Review*, 111: 1 (2006), pp. 104–14.

Ali de Regt, 'Burgerschapvorming op de basisschool: over de veranderingen in de morele opvoeding van kinderen' [Citizenship education in primary schools: on changes in the moral education of children], *Sociologie* 4: 6 (2010), pp. 27–50.

This article deals with the relation between social structure and social change on the one hand and the school curriculum on the other. The research focuses on the introduction of a new subject in primary schools as a response to public concern about moral decline. In the course of the twentieth century, teaching methods in primary schools

developed towards self-development, independence, responsibility and autonomy of pupils, fitting the requirements of post-industrial society. At the end of the century worries about moral decline, resulting from ongoing social processes like individualisation, informalisation, trends to egalitarianism, and the influx of ethnic minorities stimulated various actors in the educational field to redefine moral education in schools. It was political actors who reformulated the public concern about loss of norms and values into citizenship education, and introduced this as an obligatory part of the curriculum. Primary schools, which had already responded by the introduction of stricter rules and more discipline, used this new subject for intensification of the teaching of social and emotional skills needed in a multicultural society. Parents welcomed this attention to discipline, though they approved of the existing child-centred interactions in the schools. The study shows that macro-social developments are not automatically reflected in the school curriculum, but are mediated and reformulated by parties with different interests and opinions

Susanne Janssen, Marc Verboord and Giseline Kuipers, 'Classificaties in de kunstjournalistiek: Hoge en populaire cultuur in Europese en Amerikaanse elitekranten, 1955–2005', [Classification in art journalism: High and popular art in European and American elite newspapers 1955–2005] *Sociologie* 4: 6 (2010), pp. 51–77.

This article seeks to elucidate changes over time and cross-national variations in the status of art forms through a comprehensive content analysis of the coverage given to arts and culture in elite newspapers of four different countries – France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States – in the period 1955–2005. The authors explore how cultural hierarchy is affected by specific features of these societies and their respective journalistic and cultural production fields. The four countries show significant differences in journalistic attention to high and popular art forms. Throughout the period of study, the American newspapers and to a slightly lesser

extent, French elite newspapers generally devote more attention to popular art forms than their Dutch and German counterparts. In accounting for cross-national differences in the coverage given to popular culture, field-level factors like market structure and the position and size of local cultural industries seem more important than more remote factors such as national cultural repertoires and the level of social mobility.

Allison Moore, 'I' and 'We' Identities – an Eliasian perspective on lesbian and gay identities', *Sociological Research Online*, 15 (4) 10

Abstract: Lesbian and gay sociology has witnessed a reflexive turn in recent years, which emphasises choice, self-creation and self-determination in the formation of sexual identities. Individuals are involved in, what Giddens (1991) called, a 'project of self' or a 'reflexive biography', which allows them to engage in a dynamic and constantly evolving process of defining and re-defining their self-identity. Identity becomes fluid, fragmented and plastic. In a recent issue of this journal, Brian Heaphy argued that such accounts of lesbian and gay reflexivity are partial and fail to take account of the ways in which structural factors continue to limit one's choice narrative and he proposed a move towards a reflexive sociology, rather than a sociology of reflexivity. This article seeks to develop Heaphy's argument further and suggests that the limitation of theories of reflexivity lies in their inability to adequately account for the continued significance of collectivity, interdependency and human relations in shaping an individual's identity. Drawing on Norbert Elias's figurational sociology, it will be argued that against a reflexive model of identity that privileges individualism, choice and creativity over collectivity and material constraints, there is a pressing need to revisit and re-establish our interdependent relationships with one another.

Edward Rubin, 'The regulatising process and the boundaries of new public governance', *Wisconsin Law Review* 2010, pp. 535–89.

Abstract: This article attempts to trace the boundaries of new public governance's cooperative approach to regulation and its rejection of the more traditional command-and-control model. Relying on Norbert Elias's social theory, which he calls the 'civilising process,' it claims that the response of private firms to regulation is not a static process but one that is likely to change over time. Specifically, firms tend to be resistant when regulation is first imposed, but more tractable over time as they, and their employees, become acclimated to the regulatory regime. Following Elias, this evolution is referred to as the 'regulating process.' The consequence of the regulating process is that new public governance's cooperative approach will generally be more effective once regulation has been in place for some period of time. This explanation is then contrasted with the public choice theory that firms are inevitably opposed to regulation, and that their apparent tractability in certain circumstances occurs only because they can extract rents from the regulatory regime. The article links the regulating process, which operates at the macro to another boundary of new public governance – the difference between tractable firms and recalcitrant ones that has been previously explored. This second boundary, which is a static one and operates at the micro level, works in conjunction with the dynamic boundary created by the regulating process to define the area where the new public governance approach will be most effective in securing compliance with the goals of the regulatory program. As an illustration, the Article then applies its theory to the regulation of the commercial airline industry.

Ad van Ijzerman, 'Physical proximity, distance, and control: civilising processes in organisations.' Paper presented in the session on Culture and Consumption at the 60th anniversary conference of the British Sociological Association, London School of Economics, Friday 8 April 2011.

Assuming that physical proximity at work is less and less warranted due to teleworking, geographical spread of

firms, and inter-organisational collaboration, this paper explores how the liquefying of place, time, and organisational boundaries will affect social control and workers' self-regulation. We address Norbert Elias's civilising process theory (Elias 2000), and some of the critique it has evoked, to explore the effects of physical proximity/distance on control and behaviour on the work floor.

This paper represents a continuation of the following published article:

Ad van Ijzerman, 'Norbert Elias's impact on organisation theory', in Paul S. Adler (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Sociology and Organization Studies: Classical Foundations* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009), pp. 327–50.

Debbie V.S. Kasper, 'Ecological Habitus: Toward a Better Understanding of Socioecological Relations', *Organization & Environment* 22:3 (2009), pp. 311–326.

Abstract: There is a clear need to better understand the interdependent relationships between people and the biophysical world. Social science research is essential to such efforts, but is not yet widely viewed as relevant to ecological research. Impeding its advancement in this direction are the characteristics of a modern western worldview exhibited by and problematic for much of social scientific research, especially emphases on mechanism, dualism, and prediction. I offer environmental behavior research as an area in which these are apparent. I discuss the need to better account for the relations and processes that characterize human social life and suggest an alternative approach for doing so. Drawing on complementary works in sociological theory, I develop the notion of *ecological habitus* and propose it as a practical tool for more adequately thinking about and studying socioecological phenomena. I conclude with brief speculation about the possible empirical uses of the ecological habitus concept.

Debbie V. S. Kasper, 'Finding Coherence in Sociology: (Finally!) A Foundational Theory', in Ieva

Zake and Michael DeCesare (eds), *New Directions in Sociology: Essays on Theory and Methodology in the Twenty-First Century* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011).

Abstract: Decades of assessments agree that incoherence, particularly in sociological theory, threatens the possibility of a more relevant and useful sociology. Despite efforts to confront sociology's problems, there is an overwhelming sense of denial and complacency in the books, courses, and other means of representing the discipline. The failure to acknowledge and effectively deal with this incoherence has impeded sociology's advancement in many ways. Here, I discuss manifestations of this incoherence in the ways that sociology is portrayed to students and the roles that modern dualistic thought and the discipline's isolation from science have played in creating and exacerbating it. In the context of debates over sociology's relationship with science, the practice of emphasizing differences rather than similarities, and the tendency toward unbridled pluralism, most sociologists seem unwilling or unable to imagine another way.

I argue here that sociology *already* has the makings of a coherent foundational theory, but that its development and use have been stifled by the above problems. Though not widely recognized as such, there *is* a salient category of efforts to overcome these problems and advance the discipline in necessary ways. Of them, the works of Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu are particularly valuable. In synthesizing some of their most important contributions, I derive a foundational theory for sociology. I discuss its core concepts – habitus and figuration – and propose a model to help visualize and convey it. I conclude with some suggestions for practical ways to use it for understanding and empirically studying social phenomena.

Jorge Ventura de Moraes and Túlio Velho Barreto, 'Figurations, tension-balance and the flexibility of football rules', *Soccer & Society*, 12: 2 (2011), pp. 212–27.

The aim of this article is to investigate the applicability of the concept of figurations developed by Norbert Elias (and Eric Dunning), which states that the norms/rules of both sport and society are at the same time rigid and flexible. This will be accomplished through a discussion of Elias's conception of society and the relation of this notion to the sociological analysis of sport developed by the present author of its rules. The article also involves an empirical illustration of Elias's thought about the relevance of the sociological study of sports rules, with an emphasis, for present purposes, on the association football ('soccer') offside rule.

Christophe Traïni, *La cause animale: Essai de sociologie historique (1820–1980)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2011), 240 pp.

Often subject to reductionist stereotypes, the protection of animals is one of the oldest and most complex militant causes. From the early nineteenth century until today, many moral entrepreneurs have vented their indignation on the treatment that human beings reserve for animals, and have mobilised to address the brutality of their contemporaries. Initially concerned about cruelty to livestock, it is only after many ups and downs that animal protection has extended to pets and, much later still, to wildlife and their natural environments.

Based on a comparison between France and Britain, this book traces the successive twists and turns in the origin of many facets that still characterise animal protection today. Interrelated developments in philanthropy, although prior to the onset of the slogans of ecology, community mobilisation for the plight of animals illuminate several critical processes in our political history: the evolution of socially valued sensitivities and emotions; the definition of legitimate violence; the establishment of standards aimed at reforming manners; rival elites claiming various forms of authority; the influence of religious on the emotional involvement of activists; and the effects of gender discrimination.

Ayshe Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011). 312 pp. ISBN: 9780521145565 (pb).

Blurb: Not being of the West; being behind the West; not being modern enough; not being developed or industrialized, secular, civilized, Christian, transparent, or democratic - these descriptions have all served to stigmatise certain states through history. Drawing on constructivism as well as the insights of social theorists and philosophers, *After Defeat* demonstrates that stigmatisation in international relations can lead to a sense of national shame, as well as auto-Orientalism and inferior status. Ayşe Zarakol argues that stigmatised states become extra-sensitive to concerns about status, and shape their foreign policy accordingly. The theoretical argument is supported by a detailed historical overview of central examples of the established/outsider dichotomy throughout the evolution of the modern states system, and in-depth studies of Turkey after the First World War, Japan after the Second World War, and Russia after the Cold War. [It is intended that this book be reviewed at greater length in the journal *Human Figurations*.]

Beatrix Müller-Kampel and Helmut Kuzmics (eds), *Habitus I, II and III, LiTheS: Zeitschrift für Literatur- und Theatersoziologie* 3, 4, and 5 (2010).

The proceedings of the workshop on the concept of habitus held in Graz on 21–23 May 2009 (see *Figurations* 32) have been published (with some additions) in three successive issues of the journal *LiTheS*. The contents are:

Habitus I:
Die Habitus-Theorie von Pierre Bourdieu (Joseph Jurt)

Ruth Sonderegger: Wie emanzipatorisch ist Habitus-Forschung? Zu Rancières Kritik an Bourdieus Theorie des Habitus

Maja Suderland: Wie kommt der Habitus in die Literatur? Theoretische Fundierung – methodologische Überlegungen – empirische Beispiele

Stephen Menzell: The problem of American habitus

Helmut Kuzmics: Emotionen und Habitus von Offizieren im Spiegelbild schöner Literatur: Am Beispiel der habsburgischen Armee von 1848 bis 1918

Dieter Reicher: Habitus und Stimmung Können Soziologen von Schriftstellern lernen? Eine devianzsoziologische Studie über Ludwig Thomas Lausbubengeschichten

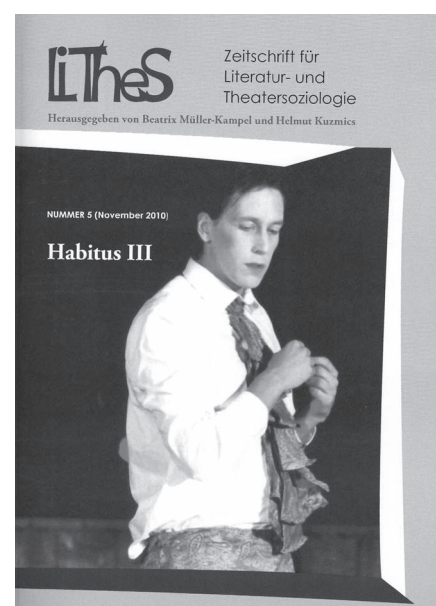
Habitus II:
Loïc Wacquant: Habitus als Thema und Analysewerkzeug: Betrachtungen zum Werdegang eines Berufsboxers

Norbert Christian Wolf: Ein trojanisches Pferd des Militärs: General Stumm von Bordwehr als Exponent, struktureller Herrschaft' in Musils *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*

Evelyn Zechner: Vom wachsamem Michel, der dicken Berta und dem wehrhaften Kasper: Der nationale Habitus in Puppenspielen aus der Zeit des Ersten Weltkriegs

Habitus III:
Birgit Lang: Die Erotik in der Photographie: Zum Habitus von Sexualwissenschaftlern

Gerald Mozetič: Habitus und Hermeneutik, Konnotation und Implikation: Einige analytische



Vorschläge, entwickelt an einem literarischen und einem politischen Beispiel
 Sabine A. Haring: Die Konstruktion eines "Neuen Menschen" im Sowjetkommunismus: Vom zaristischen zum stalinischen Habitus in Design und Wirklichkeit

Norbert Bachletner: Die Theaterzensur in der Habsburgermonarchie im 19. Jahrhundert

■ BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RETROSPECT

Gesa Stedman, *Stemming the Torrent: Expression and Control in the Victorian Discourse on Emotions, 1830–1872* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2002). vii + 275 pp. ISBN: 0 7546 0643 0.

Stedman provides a fascinating and informed read on the topic of 'emotionology' in Victorian writing, which examines broadly ranging discourses in both fictional and non-fictional texts from this particular dramatically changing era. She juxtaposes material such as Dickens's *Hard Times* or Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* with non-fictional texts such as Darwin's *The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals*. As a result the author offers a thorough inspection of Victorian morality and its attempts to navigate and dominate emotional expression in the written works of those turbulent times. In her analysis, she offers a set of key words that seemed to have governed literary works, but also highlights the visible tensions between the passions and the attempted restraints on them. This book is a valuable element to the expanding general interest within sociology of emotions and gender or psychology, since the author provides us with the analysis of emotions applying to both men and women.

The chapter titles of Stedman's book are: 1. My leaves cannot contain in them the large discourse: Introduction; 2. Emotion vocabularies: the history and usage of key emotion words; 3. I could not speak the feeling: emotions and the body; 4. The local moral order: emotions and the development of a middle class habitus; 5. Plot and

passion: narrating the heart; 6. Modern passion?: concluding remarks.

Barbara Górnicka

■ BOOKS TO NOTE

In future, we plan to review books in the *Human Figurations* journal, but we shall continue simply to list books of interest here in the *Figurations* newsletter. Here is a first list of books that have been passed over to Paddy Dolan as Reviews Editor of *Human Figurations*. Paddy will be glad to hear from readers who are willing to review books for the journal: contact him at paddy.dolan@dit.ie.

Annette Treibel, *Die Soziologie von Norbert Elias. Eine Einführung in ihre Geschichte, Systematik und Perspektiven* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008), 113 pp. ISBN: 978-3-531-16081-8.

Brett Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009) 320 pp. ISBN: 9780226068145.

Elsbeth Kallf, *Logement insalubre et l'hygiénisation de la vie quotidienne*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009.

Hermann Korte, *Eine Gesellschaft im Aufbruch: Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland in den sechziger Jahren*, 2nd edn (Wiesbaden: VS – Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009). 126 pp. ISBN: 978-3-531-16767-1.

David Garland, *Peculiar Institution: America's Death Penalty in an Age of Abolition*. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010).

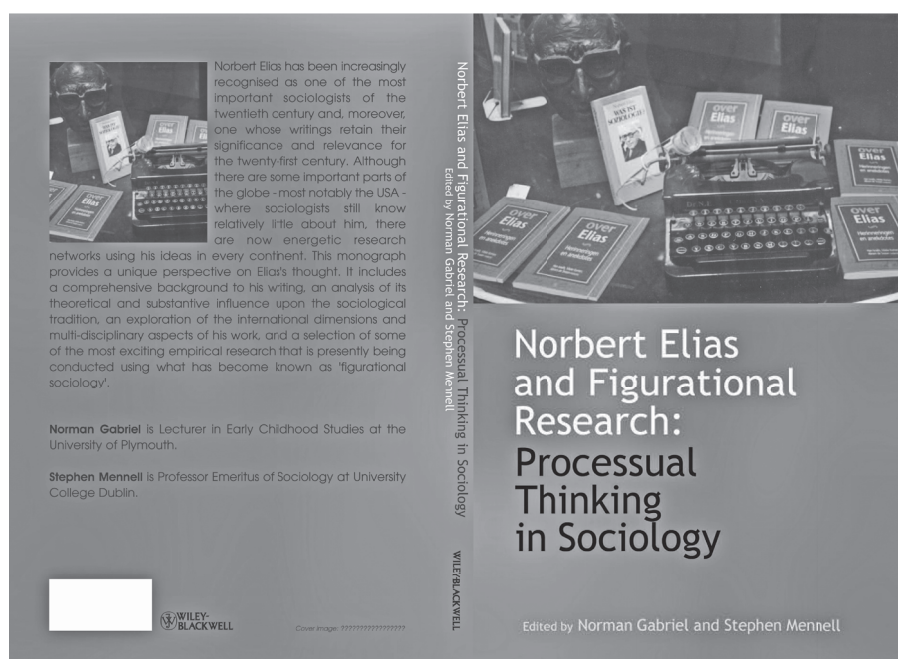
Angela Perulli (ed.), *Fare sviluppo: Identità, luoghi, trasformazioni, sociali in un'area della Toscana* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2010). 248 pp.

Emmanuel Taïeb, *La guillotine au secret: Les exécutions publiques en France, 1870–1939* (Paris: Belin, 2011). 317 pp. ISBN: 978-2-7011-5696-5

Andrew Linklater, *The Problem of harm in World Politics: Theoretical Investigations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). xiv + 306 pp. ISBN: 978-1-107-00443-6 (hb); 978-0-521-17984-3 (pb).

■ FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

Norman Gabriel and Stephen Mennell (eds), *Norbert Elias and Figurational Research: Processual Thinking in Sociology*.



Norbert Elias has been increasingly recognised as one of the most important sociologists of the twentieth century and, moreover, one whose writings retain their significance and relevance for the twenty-first century. Although there are some important parts of the globe – most notably the USA – where sociologists still know relatively little about him, there are now energetic research networks using his ideas in every continent. This monograph provides a unique perspective on Elias's thought. It includes a comprehensive background to his writing, an analysis of its theoretical and substantive influence upon the sociological tradition, an exploration of the international dimensions and multi-disciplinary aspects of his work, and a selection of some of the most exciting empirical research that is presently being conducted using what has become known as 'figurational sociology'.

Norman Gabriel is Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies at the University of Plymouth.

Stephen Mennell is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at University College Dublin.

Edited by Norman Gabriel and Stephen Mennell

WILEY-BLACKWELL

Cover image: 9781118777777

Norbert Elias and Figurational Research: Processual Thinking in Sociology

Edited by Norman Gabriel and Stephen Mennell

Sociological Review Monographs. (Oxford: Wiley–Blackwell, 2011). 265 pp. ISBN: 978 1 444339 57 4.

This collection will be published in June or July. The focus is not on Elias's own work, but on the subsequent research tradition in all its diversity. Indeed, the editors' introduction is entitled 'Handing over the torch: inter-generational processes in figurational sociology'. The book contains essays by: Robert van Krieken, Andrew Linklater, Stephen Quilley, Richard Kilminster, Nina Baur and Stefanie Ernst, Cas Wouters, Katie Liston, Steven Loyal, Norman Gabriel, John Pratt, and Wilbert van Vree. Full details will be given in *Figurations* 36.

Norbert Elias, *The Symbol Theory* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2011 [Collected Works, vol. 13]). ISBN: 978-1-906359-10-2. (See www.ucdpress.ie)

The latest volume of the Collected Works will be published in September. It is edited by Richard Kilminster, to whose care Elias entrusted the first edition, published posthumously in 1991. This new edition contains many corrections, clarifications and explanatory notes, but of particular interest is the new text of Elias's Introduction. In 1991, it ended in mid-sentence and the editor simply put the word 'Unfinished' at the foot of the page. But it was subsequently discovered that Elias had dictated some more text to his assistant Mieke van Stigt on Sunday 29 July 1990 – his last working day before his death on 1 August. It proved possible to retrieve this passage – and several others – from a floppy disk in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach am Neckar. Readers will find Elias still on trenchant form in, for instance, his brief demolition job on Jacques Derrida.

■ RECENT CONFERENCES

Historical and Comparative Sociological Approaches to Water Inequality and Injustice

Sao Paulo, Brazil, 25–27 October 2010

Prof. José Esteban Castro (Newcastle University, UK) has continued to develop his work on long-term comparative studies of socio-environmental inequality and injustice, focusing on the case of water as the main empirical reference. He is currently coordinating GOBACIT, an international and interdisciplinary research network with partners in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America (www.gobacit.org). The Latin American section of the network, WATERLAT (www.waterlat.org) has been recently granted support from the

Leverhulme Trust. As part of its ongoing activities, WATERLAT held an international conference on 'The Tension between Social and Environmental Justice: the Case of Water Management' that took place in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on 25–27 October 2010.

The event took place in the premises of the Latin American Memorial, a place dedicated to the ideal of regional integration among Latin American countries that has been revived in recent years under the leadership of progressive political movements, particularly in South America. The Conference attracted around 300 participants from the Americas and Europe, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, England, Haiti, France, Honduras, Italy, Mexico, The Netherlands, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Scotland, Spain,

Promoção:

Newcastle University iej Instituto de Estudos Avançados da Universidade de São Paulo uepb Universidade Estadual da Paraíba FUNDAÇÃO MEMORIAL

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Rede WATERLAT
Conferência Internacional
Memorial da América Latina
São Paulo, Brasil
25-27 de outubro de 2010

"A tensão entre justiça ambiental e social: o caso da gestão da água"

WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT
ÁGUA NOSSA
WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT
ÁGUA



Sweden, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The programme focused on the social struggles flaring up from structural inequalities and injustice related to the ownership, control and management of water. These include a wide range of situations, from the inequalities in the access to essential water services, the public health impacts of widespread poisoning of water, soil and air caused by the unregulated use of dangerous substances in extensive mining and agricultural activities, to the violent repression of indigenous communities that are being displaced from their territories as a consequence of the building of large water infrastructures, just to mention a few notorious examples. The proceedings of the conference, mostly in Portuguese and Spanish, are already available in the form of an electronic book at: <http://www.waterlat.org/publications.html>. A DVD containing the plenary speeches, five roundtables, and a number of interviews with

key participants in the conference is available by request (waterlat@ncl.ac.uk). The network is also developing a number of books, special journal editions and other publications based on the conference material.

A central assumption underlying the work of these research networks is that historical and comparative sociological approaches have a major role to play in the intellectual and policy debates taking place worldwide around the seemingly worsening conditions of socio-environmental inequality and injustice that affect a large proportion of humanity and that present a real threat to the future of the biosphere. Sociology has been notoriously slow to take up the challenge, and although in recent years there has been a significant development of sociological work on these issues by and large the topic remains a relatively marginal concern for the discipline. This is also true in

the field of historical and comparative sociology, where some of the few important contributions to this topic have been largely inspired by the work of Norbert Elias, including Johan Goudsblom's *Fire and Civilization*.

In this regard, some of the main intellectual challenges that we want to address are: (a) the need to systematically examine and overcome the epistemological obstacles that continue to hamper the observability of the interwoven nature of social and environmental processes in sociology (and in social science more generally). This is notoriously the case in the debates about 'development', where the predominance of technocratic and economic reductionism continues to preclude a more comprehensive understanding of the problems and reduce our chances for successful policy interventions. And (b) the need to sustain and deepen the critique of ahistorical, hodiecentric approaches that continue to permeate much social science and also constitute a significant obstacle for the scientific understanding of the intertwining of social and environmental processes. Although the thematic field covered by the research networks is necessarily interdisciplinary, sociology is uniquely placed to make a major contribution to the enterprise of addressing the environmental challenges facing humanity in the twenty-first century. This is especially true of historical and comparative sociology, and we envisage that the work of Norbert Elias will continue to be a major reference and source of inspiration in the research work being developed by our international networks. Some of these issues will receive prominent attention in the next meeting of the WATERLAT network, which will be hosted by the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences in Mexico City on 24–26 October 2011.

Contact: José Esteban Castro, Professor of Sociology, Newcastle University, and Co-ordinator of the GOBACIT-WATERLAT networks (j.e.castro@ncl.ac.uk).

British Sociological Association: 60th Anniversary Conference

*London School of Economics,
6–8 April 2011*

This conference marked the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the British Sociological Association. For it, Katie Liston and Jon Fletcher organised two sessions focused on Elias's position among – and prolonged neglect by – British sociologists. Mainly because of the outrageously high conference fee charged by the BSA, several people who had planned to contribute papers were unable to attend, but nevertheless the two sessions were very well attended. We were particularly pleased that Malcolm Pines, one of the founders in the early 1950s, along with Foulkes and Elias, of Group Analysis, was able to join us. The following papers were presented:

Marc Joly (*in absentia*: read by Stephen Mennell): 'Norbert Elias's networks in the field of British sociology before his appointment in Leicester'

Joop Goudsblom: 'Norbert Elias as an educator: an autobiographical account'

Norman Gabriel: 'Collar the lot! Norbert Elias on the Isle of Man'

Eric Dunning: 'Long-term patterns of sports-related violence: some figurational observations and related concepts'

Hermann Korte (*in absentia*: read by Katie Liston): 'Norbert Elias at the University of Leicester'

Marjorie Fitzpatrick: 'The hidden agenda for "absolutist" monarchical power in the eighteenth-century court society in England: the libretto of Handel's *Messiah*'

Matt Clement: 'Trade unions: a significant social figuration?'

Afterwards, as is customary at figurational gatherings, about 18 people gathered for lunch at the Café Rouge in nearby Covent Garden. Commensality plays an important role in the continuity of the figurational research network!



At the Café Rouge: Jason Hughes, Eric Dunning, Akira Ohira, Gordon Fyfe, Richard Kilminster.

■ FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

IIS World Congress, New Delhi, 16–19 February 2012

The International Institute of Sociology (IIS) has announced that their 40th World Congress will take place in New Delhi on 16–19 February, 2012. Our sessions at recent IIS conferences have been successful and we will be hoping to organise something similar in New Delhi. The conference website is currently under construction so precise details have yet to be released. In the meantime it would be helpful if you could inform either Robert van Krieken (robert.van-krieken@sydney.edu.au) or Stephen Vertigans (s.vertigans@rgu.ac.uk) if you would be interested in presenting a paper. This will enable us to establish levels of interest and to respond quickly once the IIS issues invitations for conference sessions.

Norbert Elias and Figurational Sociology: Prospects for the Future Copenhagen, 2–4 April 2012

The focus of this two-day conference will be on the development of figurational sociology in relation to other disciplines. In *What is Sociology?*, Elias argues that sociology needs to develop new ways of ‘thinking’ about its relationship with other disciplines like biology and physics. But since that time, we have seen a rapid expansion of these academic disciplines, yet there has not been sufficient time to consider the theoretical implications of what this would mean for the future development of a figurational sociology. The conference will address these issues by focusing on the following themes:

First day, based on the ‘boundaries’ and relationships between figurational sociology and the following disciplines:

- 1) Politics
- 2) Economics
- 3) History
- 4) Psychology
- 5) Biology

Second Day, where there will be further discussion on the major themes that

emerge from this ‘boundary’ work across disciplines, considering some of the strengths and limitations:

- 1) Survival Units
- 2) Organisational Sociology and Economic Sociology
- 3) Civilising Processes
- 4) Informalising Processes
- 5) The Expanding Anthroposphere

We look forward to seeing you in Copenhagen!

Lars Bo Kaspersen, University of Copenhagen – lbk@ifs.ku.dk

Norman Gabriel, University of Plymouth – norman.r.gabriel@plymouth.ac.uk

ISA Forum

1–4 August 2012, Buenos Aires

The main objective of the ISA Forum is a meeting of the various Research Committees, Working Groups, and Thematic Groups, although there will also be an overall theme of ‘Social justice and democratization’.

There will be a figurational presence at the Forum, under the auspices of RC 20 (Comparative Sociology), Working Group 02 (Historical and Comparative Sociology), and various other initiatives by individuals (including José Esteban Castro, who hales from these latitudes).

All readers who are interested in taking part or organising sessions should contact Stephen Vertigans (s.vertigans@rgu.ac.uk) and/or Robert van Krieken (robert.van-krieken@sydney.edu.au) as soon as possible.

■ ERRATA

The review of *O controle das emoções* edited by Ademir Gebara and Cas Wouters, which appeared in *Figurations* 33, was by Cláudia Wermelinger, not by Tatiana Savoia Landini. Our sincere apologies to Cláudia.

■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

The next issue of *Figurations* will be mailed in December 2011. News and notes should be sent to the Editors by 1 November 2011.

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Contributions should preferably be e-mailed to the Editor in the form of MS Word (.doc), Rich Text (.rtf), plain text (.txt) or Open Office Text (.odt) files. Do not use embedded footnotes. Hard copy is accepted reluctantly. Photographs should be submitted in JPEG format.

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