

Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

EDITORS' NOTES

- Gabriele Klein has been appointed Professor of Sociology, with special reference to the sociology of the body, gender studies and movement and dance culture, at the University of Hamburg. Her recent publications include: *Electronic Vibration: Pop Kultur Theorie* (a theory of pop culture) 1999; *Tanz Bild Medien* (Dance, Image, Media), 2000; *Tanz Theorie Text*, 2002.
- Two of Norbert Elias's books that have been out of print for some time have now been republished in paperback editions by Continuum, New York. They are *The Loneliness of the Dying* (ISBN: 0-8264-1373-0) and *The Society of Individuals* (ISBN: 0-8264-1372-2).
- We are finding that the large number of books now being submitted to *Figurations* for review is making it difficult to provide thorough notices even of the most important among them. We should welcome volunteers for a panel, especially from people able to review books in German, French, Dutch and (increasingly) in other languages such as Portuguese.
- In the last issue, we announced a minor change in the contact details for *Figurations* at UCD. With effect from the next issue, the change will be reversed. That is because, as a result of unforeseen circumstances in the Department of Sociology, Stephen Mennell is resigning a few months early as Director of the new Institute for the Study of Social Change and returning as Head of Department with effect from 1 September 2002.

■ FROM THE NORBERT ELIAS FOUNDATION

Latest Volumes of the Elias *Gesam-melte Schriften*

Two new volumes have appeared in the Suhrkamp standard edition of the works of Elias. They are: Volume 10, *Die Gesellschaft der Individuen* (Frankfurt, 2001, 236 pp. ISBN: 3-518-58314-X); and Volume 13, *Symboltheorie* – that is, *The Symbol Theory* appearing for the first time in German, translated by Reiner Ansén (Frankfurt, 2001, 236 pp. ISBN 3-518-58309-3). Annette Treibel took principal responsibility for

editing Volume 10 on behalf of the Editorial Board, and Helmut Kuzmics for Volume 13. (An article about the new edition of *Die Gesellschaft der Individuen* by Jan-Peter Kunze appears below.)

The Board of the Norbert Elias Stichting regrets that these new editions should have been the occasion of controversy. We print below a 'Note of Protest' by Michael Schroeter, the original editor of *Die Gesellschaft der Individuen*, who is unhappy that his own later essay, describing the origins of the book in his collaboration with Elias, is

not cited in the Editorial Report which concludes the new edition. We understand that Dr Schroeter declined to be involved in the new edition, although his name still appears on the title page as the original editor, and his brief *Editorische Nachbemerking* is still included.

Unfortunately, the name of Richard Kilminster was omitted by mistake from the title page of *Symboltheorie*, on which he worked with Elias. The German Editorial Board has adopted the policy of excluding introductory material by others from the new edi-

tions of Elias's works, but Richard did a great deal more than write an Introduction to the original English edition. He shaped the entire text, and not only divided the book into numbered sections, but even decided where the paragraph breaks should come. Richard's name will be restored by Suhrkamp when the book is reprinted.

Third Norbert Elias Amalfi Prize 2003

The Norbert Elias Foundation, in cooperation with the Academic Committee of the European Amalfi Prize for Sociology and Social Sciences, announces the Third European Prize dedicated to Norbert Elias. The Prize consists in a sum of €1000 and it will be awarded to a significant *first* work by a European author published in Europe between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2002.

The Prize is awarded 'in commemoration of the sociologist Norbert Elias (1897–1990), whose writings, at once theoretical and empirical, boldly crossed disciplinary boundaries in the social sciences to develop a long-term perspective on the patterns of interdependence which human beings weave together'. Norbert Elias was himself the first recipient of the European Amalfi Prize for his book *Die Gesellschaft der Individuen*. Now the Norbert Elias Prize is intended to draw attention to a promising young European scholar who has published a first book in sociology or a related discipline. The first Norbert Elias Prize was awarded in 1999 to David Lepoutre for his book *Coeur de Banlieue* and the second in 2001 to Wilbert van Vree for *Meetings, Manners and Civilisation*.

In order to nominate an author's first book for the award, please send a letter of recommendation to

Saskia Visser

Secretary, Norbert Elias Foundation
J.J. Viottastraat 13
1071 JM Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Please do not forget that many high-quality books may remain to be published in the second half of 2001.

In order that books written in other languages may received fair consideration,

it is requested that for books not written in English, French or German, a summary in English accompany the letter of recommendation.

Appeal for Photographs

Many readers who have over the years attended conferences and other events connected with Norbert Elias and figurational studies will have collections of photographs taken at them. The Foundation would like to establish an archive of such photographs. If you are willing to donate photographs to the archive, please send them, along with descriptive details, to Saskia Visser at the address given above.

Marbach Stipend

The German Literature Archive and the Norbert Elias Foundation, Amsterdam will once again award a Marbach Graduate Stipend to undertake research for six months in 2003 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, D-71666 Marbach-am-Neckar, Tel. +49-7144-848-432).

Applications should be submitted before 31 August 2002 to:

Deutsche Schillergesellschaft,
Personalstelle
Postfach 1162
D-71666 Marbach am Neckar
Germany.

The Foundation's Website

As readers may have discovered, we have been having some problems with the Foundation's website, our ISP having provided a somewhat intermittent service. The website is now being completely redesigned and reconstructed, with the advice of the University of Amsterdam Computing Services, and it will be hosted on the University's webserver. It will be relaunched later in 2002, and details will be given in *Figurations* 18.

In the meantime, back numbers of *Figurations* can be found on the website created by Robert van Krieken at the University of Sydney:
<http://www.usyd.edu.au/su/social/elias/figsframe.html>

■ THE 'YOUNG WORKERS PROJECT' RENEWED

It is unusual for researchers in sociology to have access to data that has remained largely unanalysed for nearly forty years. However, around eighteen months ago, eight hundred and fifty interview schedules from a little known project were 're-discovered'. Stored in an attic office, it transpired that the interviews were from a project called *Adjustment of Young Workers to Work Situations and Adult Roles*. Led by Norbert Elias, researchers at the University of Leicester carried out an interview based survey exploring the school to work transition experiences of nearly nine hundred young adults. The Department for Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) funded the project for three years, from 1 April 1962, with a grant of £15,081.

The research was based on Elias's assertion that the transition from school to work constituted a 'shock' experience and that young people would experience real difficulties in adjusting to their new role as adults and workers. Suggesting that much of the early research on young people was essentially 'adult centred', Elias argued that his approach would be radically different from other studies of the time which focused more on the 'problems which adults experience so far as the younger generation is concerned, not problems which confront, and which are experienced by the young generation itself' (Elias 1962a: 1). Elias wrote, in the original grant application, that this project would be concerned with the problems which young male and female workers encounter during their adjustment to their work situation and their entry into the world of adults. When they go to work, or begin to train for work, young workers have to make a wider adjustment to a situation and to roles which are new to them, whose implications are often imperfectly understood by them and by the adults concerned, and for which they are in many cases not too well prepared (Young Worker Project, 1962a: 2).

This broad position was then translated into five specific areas of enquiry – adjustment to relationships with older

workers and supervisors; adjustment to job problems; adjustment to role as workers; adjustment to role as 'money-earner' in home relations; and adjustment to role as 'money-earner' in leisure time. Initially the idea was for the data to be collected via interviews, informal discussions, case studies and participant observation; in the event, however, only interviews were used. The interview schedule was semi-structured but the responses tended to be open-ended, textual and reflective in nature. It contained a series of 82 questions in five sections: Work, Family and Expenditure; Leisure; School and Work; and General. The interviewees were asked to write all answers to questions verbatim if possible and always in as full detail as the time and circumstances allowed. The sample of young adults was drawn from the Youth Employment Office index of all Leicester school leavers from the summer and Christmas of 1960 and the summer and Christmas of 1962. At the end of the fieldwork in 1964 882 interviews, plus a pilot survey of 28 interviews had been completed.

Yet despite the fact that the fieldwork was completed, the 'Adjustment of Young Workers to Work Situations and Adult Roles' has received scant attention within the existing literature on Elias and remains largely unknown outside of the University of Leicester or those fully familiar with every aspect of Elias's life and work. Where Elias's involvement has been reflected upon, it is either done so briefly (Mennell 1992) or obliquely (Brown 1987).

Someone who had thought so long and to such good effect about sociological problems as he had could find it difficult to understand why others did not see things as he did, or to take on board ideas and points of view different from his own. There was in my experience one major disagreement about the conduct of a research project which proved quite damaging to all concerned and to the progress of the research (Brown, 1987: 538).

One possible reason for the apparent obscurity of the research is the difficulties that surround the end of the research in 1964. At the start of

the project in 1962, the researchers involved were unaware that Elias had arranged to take up a Chair in Sociology at the University of Ghana. Although Elias attempted to direct the project remotely via a research committee, problems with working practice emerged, the Research Officers resigned from the project and other members of staff distanced themselves from the research. Despite being one of the largest government sponsored projects on young workers of the time, the research became characterised by acrimony, distrust and feelings of failure. The feelings of failure seem to have felt not only by the researchers but also Elias himself, as his comments in later correspondence indicate: "the fact that a questionnaire designed and interviews conducted under the influence of divergent views cannot be salvaged by a later effort, was for me a lesson which I shall not forget" (Elias, 1972a: 1–2).

We are using the recovered material, comprising 851 original interview schedules and a series of background documents written by the original research team, to form part of a new and wider ESRC project *From Young Workers To Older Workers: Reflections on Work in the Life Course* (R000223653). The overall aim of the project is to examine the process of adjustment to working life and retirement of a single cohort of male and female workers over the four decades 1962/3–2002/3. This project will analyse the data from the original project and then we aim to trace two hundred of the 851 original young workers currently facing or preparing for retirement. This will enable us to explore (a) the adjustment these workers made on first entering the labour market in Leicester in the 1960s, (b) the subsequent adjustments they made to changes in the local labour market and associated structure of opportunities in mid-life and (c) the ways in which they are currently approaching the transition to retirement.

John Goodwin and Henrietta O'Connor
Centre for Labour Market Studies,
University of Leicester.
<http://www.clms.le.ac.uk/youngworkers.html>

Note

We have recently completed a working paper which offers a fuller consideration of the issues relating to Elias's involvement in this research, copies of which are available on request:

J. Goodwin and H. O'Connor (2002) *Forty Years On: Norbert Elias and the Young Worker Project*. The Centre for Labour Market Studies, University of Leicester Working Paper No. 35.

References

- Brown, R. (1987) Norbert Elias in Leicester: Some Recollections. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 4 (2–3): 533–39.
Elias, N. (1962) *Unpublished Memo: Notes In Reply To The Staff Notes From 16 October 1962, With A Few Additional Remarks On RB's Memorandum To The Problem Of Sampling*, 22 October 1962. University of Ghana. (Teresa Keil Collection).
Elias, N. (1962a) *Third Memorandum, Unpublished*. Marbach: Deutsches Literaturarchiv.
Elias, N. (1972a) *Unpublished Letter to Jennifer Platt*, 4 March 1972. Marbach: Deutsches Literaturarchiv.
Mennell, S. (1992) *Norbert Elias: An Introduction*. London: Blackwell

■ Note of Protest

Recently my edition of *Gesellschaft der Individuen* was re-published as part of the *Gesammelte Schriften* of Norbert Elias. This happened without my having been informed. I regard such a procedure as inconsiderate and disrespectful, to say the least, and wish to declare that I have nothing to do with this re-publication.

In the philological end-note, added by the re-editor, my account of the complicated events which determined the present shape of this book (see my *Erfahrungen mit Norbert Elias*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 1997, pp. 307–11) was left unmentioned. By this omission future readers have been deprived of what I believe to be a basic and relevant piece of factual information.

Michael Schroeter

■ NEW EDITION OF DIE GESELLSCHAFT DER INDIVIDUEN

The German publisher Suhrkamp has brought out a new edition of Elias's *Die Gesellschaft der Individuen* (*The Society of Individuals*) originally compiled in collaboration with Elias by Michael Schroeter as editor. It comes as volume 10 of the *Elias Gesammelte Schriften* ('Collected Writings'), a project comprising 19 volumes altogether and to be completed in 2006. It was commissioned by the Elias Stichting in Amsterdam and is carried out by an Editorial Board, whose members are Reinhard Blomert, Heike Hammer, Johan Heilbron, Annette Treibel and Nico Wilterdink, with Annette Treibel being specifically in charge of this volume.

Perhaps the most important addition to the book is an index which now makes its complexity and richness of subject-matter accessible through a large number of entries and cross-references. This new index was created from the English one in *The Society of Individuals*, but was thoroughly revised and considerably expanded. Also, one now finds, in Annette Treibel's editorial report, a detailed account of how the different parts of the book originated.

A very distinct trait of Elias is the continuity with which he worked throughout his scholarly life on problems that he saw as central to (his) sociology – tackling them from different angles, carrying them through different stages of development. (Incidentally, the collected works edition is an opportunity to re-discover just that.) In *Die Gesellschaft der Individuen*, whose three essays span a period from the 1930s to the 1980s, we find Elias grappling with the question of the relationship between the plurality of humans when considered individually and the same plurality as it forms societies – hence the programmatic title. In his preface, Elias says that the book originally was a spin-off (not his exact words) of the *Civilising Process*, where this problem had preoccupied him. At a later point, his own further development of the question prompted him to introduce 'figuration' into his conceptual apparatus.

In *Die Gesellschaft der Individuen*, the core of Elias's argument is as follows: the concepts and realities of 'society' and 'individual' should not be thought of as separate and opposed entities. Instead, it is the plurality of interdependent individuals that make up and form societies, and in turn it is the simple fact that interdependent humans form societies that gives each human existence within them its unique place, shape, and course. By living in societies, humans become individuals.

The first essay, written in 1939 and giving the book its title, elaborates the core argument in different ways. Elias starts with a criticism of the traditional 'society vs. individual' dichotomy, pointing out how this false dichotomy was established and maintained by the partisan and value-laden views of those who placed superior value on either side of it, society or individual. He then puts forward his own conception: the functional interdependency of humans and human groups is what holds any society together; the first essay, written in 1939 and giving the book its title, elaborates the core argument in different ways. Elias starts with a criticism of the traditional 'society vs. individual' dichotomy, pointing out how this false dichotomy was established and maintained by the partisan and value-laden views of those who placed superior value on either side of it, society or individual. *Verflechtung* comes in as a key concept at this point. Here and elsewhere in this essay, Elias's argument is about fundamental positions. He sketches the great outline; his style is, even by Eliasian standards, largely non-technical and quite often metaphorical.

The second essay, entitled 'Probleme des Selbstbewusstseins und des Menschenbildes' ('Problems of Self-Consciousness and the Image of Man') and dated '1940s–1950s', is more technical in an Eliasian sociological sense. In the first of its three sections, Elias begins by stating the parallel between the low degree of control over nature in simpler societies and the equally low degree of control over social events in more complex societies. In the latter case, Elias suggests, the value-laden 'society vs. individual' dichotomy may be just

another example of 'wishful and fear-inspired self-images', in a form specific to the present stage of human history. He then asks how we could step out of the vicious circle that is constituted by a low degree of control over events in society on the one hand and a high degree of fantasy and feeling in the prevalent mode of thinking about society on the other hand. In the second section of this essay, 'Die denkenden Statuen' ('The thinking statues'), we enter philosophical terrain. One of Elias's longstanding targets of criticism, the *homo clausus* concept and some of its derivatives, such as the 'subject vs. object', 'inside vs. outside', or 'I vs. world' dualisms, are placed by Elias into the historical context where they were formulated (by Descartes, Locke, and others), and thus historicised or 'sociologised'. Elias concedes that these dualisms do in fact represent a stage in the development of human thought marked by an increase in self-detachment and reality-congruence, but that we would take yet another step in this direction if we could overcome them. Lastly, there is the third section of the second essay, 'Individualisation in the Social Process'. It comes across as a small 'process book', only that its scope is world history and its central focus is on individualisation. Here, Elias delineates the overall shift that took mankind from small kinship groups of hunter-gatherers, where interdependencies between members were few and less varied but intense and almost inescapable, down to our own age, where members of modern societies are faced with a set of opportunities and problems that is equally specific to them – loneliness being a good example – and with a different route to individualisation. The 'Social Process' from the section's title is multi-faceted – here you find the usual candidates for modernisation theories like (functional) differentiation, urbanisation, increasing role of knowledge and education, etc., but also (partial) processes that are familiar from Elias's theory of civilising processes, like an increase in the control over nature and over oneself, thereby opening new room to manoeuvre for individuals. Individualisation in this processual sense forms part of this bundle, and it takes place in spurts.

The last of the three essays, 'Wandlungen der Wir-Ich Balance' ('Changes in the We-I Balance') was written by Elias in 1987. Again, its scope is as broad as the history of mankind, and as in *The Civilising Process*, Elias's double focus is on interrelated changes on the two levels of figurations: the psychic and the social organisation of humans. This time however, today's world and 'society' conceived of as 'world society' receive the most attention. Elias observes that, contrary to a deeply entrenched self-image in Western societies, there can be no 'we-less I', no personal identity, without a 'We' element. Instead, the 'I' and the 'We' elements presuppose one another, and all that can empirically be found are changes in their balance – a tilt towards one or the other side. Moreover, the feeling of 'We' may become attached to several integration units of different size in the course of history. The group-specific psychic structure or habitus with its association to one or more 'We' groups may also be 'out of sync' with the development of social organisation. People may cling to a 'We' unit that, in the course of social transformation, has ceased to fulfill the functions for the group's survival which it had when the 'We' identification, usually carrying a strong affective charge. Elias specially focuses on two fields where the 'drag effect' can be observed. One is the transition of nation states which used to serve as primary survival units but are now gradually being replaced by supra-national units and institutions – as in the cases of European integration or the emergence of global political institutions. Here too, the difficulties associated with a 'we' identification in transition are not the least of political problems. "This book", Elias writes in his preface, "offers tools for thinking about and observing people. Some of them are quite new". Given the current state of sociological debate, this is still true.

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■ RE-CIVILISING PROCESSES AS MISSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY? – Problems of economic involvement and military overstretch

Godfried and Stephen raised a very important question, which is worth to be discussed in *Figurations* as an issue of general interest. When civilisation is the general path of human development, how can we explain obvious examples of decivilisation? What is out of control in ongoing processes of decivilisation? What means decivilising? We think of violence, breakdown of justice and manners and a change of the habits of people in their relation to each other. (And, by the way, we should add now: decivilised habits in relation to nature!). Godfried's thesis is, that decivilising processes are temporary, while the civilising process is expanding on a global level. How do decivilised nations find their way back to the general path of mankind? Godfried describes three models of recivilising processes:

1. 'People living in countries in which a breakdown of civilisation has occurred, begin, when it fails to bring the promised results, to compare their fate with that of the population of normal civilised states,' and then 'attempts are made to get rid of the 'barbaric regimes'.'
2. The deviant states could be reformed by what he calls the 'international community'. The 'reforming process' seems to have happened in Serbia with the process of peaceful democratisation after Milosevic, which was supported by the northern military Alliance (a process of transformation, that was not possible being fulfilled in the case of Russia and China).
3. The third way of 're-civilising' is the direct influence of the 'international community' by occupation: The 'defeat of Japan and Germany made direct pressure towards re-civilisation possible'.

Godfried does not mention, how barbaric regimes get into power, how the process of brutalisation in the relations between people is coming about. Yugo-

slavia was supported by the western 'international community', as long as it served as a political instrument against stalinism. Noone called it a barbaric regime - it was called a 'soft socialism'. When Milosevic came to power, he was another fonctionnaire of Tito's hereditary. How did he get dictator? What happened to the Serbian nation and what happened to the 'international community'?

When Elias spoke of a 'breakdown of civilisation', he spoke about the rise of the Hitler regime as a 'decivilising process'. What happened to Germany? Hitler did not come out of the blue and Godfried is right, to speak of the 'rise' of Hitler as the decivilising process: But what made Hitler rise? We have to look at that process under the frames, Godfried stated: Internalisation is the result of family, peer-group and school pressures, but it has as precondition the maintaining role of state constraints - the continuing role of police and, not to forget, justice.

The power relations, the German society was build upon, were destroyed through the Versailles treaty. The American president Wilson forced the abdication of the Kaiser, the centre of emotional authority. He couldn't foresee the consequences. The aristocracy was not only a warrior class, it was a leisure class too, that formed manners and was designed, to give the model of a 'gute Gesellschaft': The 'satisfaktionsfähige Gesellschaft' was a 'gute Gesellschaft' (Elias), formed by aristocracy, high military and bourgeois middle class members with high income. It did not offer the model in the way, people like Max Weber and the Bildungsbürgertum wanted it to do, but it had its role as well: to hold an emotional and political balance between the classes. One may not forget, that the Social security, introduced by Bismarck, smoothed the class struggles and weakened the revolutionary mood, and that the German working class fought for their Kaiser in the War against the French working class.

The function of Kaiser and 'guter Gesellschaft' lacked after 1919, and no one was there to give an example, how to deal with the defeat. Moreover the

Weimar society was ruled mainly by social democrats and the catholic Zentrum and a small liberal democratic party - the first two parties were constituted by groups, that had not been accepted by the 'good society' of the Kaiserreich (they were not 'satisfaktionsfähig'). The ruling government of the Weimar republic was alone, without the super-ego of an aristocracy and without the necessary recognition from foreign countries on an international level. France denied any financial and scientific relations with Germany till the Briand-Stresemann treaty.

For Elias, Weimar republic was not a 'state'. In many of his writings he refers to Weimar as a 'failed state', that had no government with authority: He remembers the 'Freikorps', soldiers, that came back from war, brutalised, trained to kill people, supported by some middle class entrepreneurs and the government of the Bavarian state, they murdered without the risk of being accused (see Gumbel, 'Vier Jahre politischer Mord'). From the Nazi-groups and the communist groups to a wide scale of conservative groups there was a widespread feeling of non commitment to the parliamentary 'system' - 'system' was negatively connotated. Elias described it vividly in his interview and in his book on *The Germans*. And he found, that the antisemitism rose in that time: The middle class was in power and did no more feel obliged to cooperate with another powerless group in fighting for tolerance and liberalism.

An international political regime can help to keep the decivilising consequences limited. The historian Reinhard Koselleck somewhere mentioned, that it would have been better, to occupy Germany after the World War I. But there was not such a thing as the 'international community': The British hegemony was over, and the Americans were not yet on stage. When they signed the 1945 treaties, the Americans had learned from Versailles: After the Second World War they occupied Germany and Japan, but left the institution of the Japanese Kaiser intact, if also with reduced power functions.

Weimar would have come to inner peace under conditions of economic

strength. The best period in the republic was in the end of the twenties, when the activity of the Freikorps had been reduced, the money flows that kept them alive, had been restrained, and the interstate relations to France had come to a new peaceful beginning by the Stresemann-Briand treaty. But the few years of stabilisation were disrupted by the great depression. The Black Friday 1929 made an end to the liberal credit conditions, on which the blossom of the Weimar cities was built. The financial resources from the capital markets were dried up, state credits from English government were refused, Germany again felt left from international support, and was struck back to its own shaky fundamentals - the living standard fell, the number of workless people increased the lower middle classes radicalised and there came no sign of help from the Brüning-regime, that reduced financial help to keep inflation low and the currency strong. Karl Polanyi has pointed at this reason for decivilisation: economic forces, that are not controlled and restraint by a state, that balances the interests, lead inevitably to social conditions, that have decivilising consequences. For 'normal' people the incompetence of the Brüning-government was obvious, and the distrust for the liberal parliamentary system brought about a newly division of the nation between the rightists and leftists. The rise of votes for the Nazi-party was an immediate consequence of the breakdown of the German banking system. There are only few studies on the changing of habits of workless people, and people from the lower middle class, that loose their business autonomy and have fear for their economic future. The most famous is the study of Marie Jahoda on the workless of Marienthal, where we are confronted with these consequences of psychic depression and loss of initiative. It would be interesting to look at the consequences of economic forces on the habits of Argentinian people today.

Later on this sort of measures, Brüning used, were criticized by Keynes, and led to the establishment of the International Monetary Fund, that should help governments in getting credits in critical cases, when they don't get any more credits from the private markets.

Keynes and the American leaders draw the political consequences of the War Desaster, that had developed out of economic pressure.

Why can we rely on an 'international community'? Whatever this means, it could fulfill the role of a 'good society' - to set models of behaviour, like the aristocrats in the former states did. A big part of the German political and economic postwar-elite was trained in the USA, and for most of them the American soldiers were not an occupation army, but an army, that brought Germany back to the 'normal' western path.

But, how many soldiers has the United Nations? And apart from the question of overstretch: Occupations by UN-Soldiers have their own dynamic. One is the rise of prostitution and drug traffic, that followed the occupation in Yugoslavia as well, as in all other countries, that were affected by the troupes of the western societies. This raises mistrust, because the sort of people, that are involved in such military missions, are seen as representatives of that 'good society'. So: how good is the 'international community', our 'good society'? Is it good enough?

We should more lay stress on the processes, that initiate decivilising processes, not only political, but also economic processes. This is, what Elias left to do for us (e.g., when he asked: What is inflation?) The long term control of economic processes is a mission, that the International Monetary Fund obviously fails to fulfil, as the Russian, the Asian and the recent Argentinian crash symbolizes. Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel laureate of 2001, has described the working of the economists of that 'international community' - and it turned out, that it seems not a good idea, to let the world economist do their job alone and without sociological advice (they follow the rules of private markets, not the advices of history). It might be better, than to send troupes as permanent 'obstacle for decivilising tendencies', a mission, that shows the tendency to overstretch the possibilities of the 'international community'. Stephen asks: 'Could the 'modern world' collapse and fulfil the hopes of Bin

Laden?’ In case of overstretch: yes, he could be victorious for a while, and the international community as responsible super government would prove as a paper tiger. There is no guarantee against the decivilising risks of globalisation, which come out of increased financial dependencies and, not to forget, out of unrestraint exploitation of the natural resources, which is the more likely risk, that could make the collapse prophecy true.

Reinhard Blomert
Humboldt Universität Berlin

■ QUEST FOR SECURITIES: FINANCIAL REGIMES AND SHAREHOLDER POWER: JOHAN HEILBRON’S INAUGURAL LECTURE

On 13 December last, Johan Heilbron gave his Inaugural Lecture as Norbert Elias Professor at the University of Utrecht – a chair that is supported financially by the Norbert Elias Stichting – on ‘Quest for Securities: Financial Regimes and Shareholder Power’.

In his lecture, he considered the rapid expansion of financial markets during the last decades of the twentieth century as a new stage in a long-term social process. Stock markets, he argued, have emerged and developed as an integral part of the process of state formation. Financial markets first emerged during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for trading the bonds and shares issued by states and by trading companies which were closely related to these states. When the states which pioneered the new financing techniques (the Dutch Republic and England) appeared to have gained significant advantages over their main political and military rivals (Spain and France), the new financial techniques were introduced in other states as well. As soon as the trade in the new financial instruments reached a certain volume and regularity, professional intermediaries emerged (brokers and jobbers), and their associations created the national stock exchanges which have appeared from the end of the eighteenth century onwards. The development of stock markets accelerated in the latter half of the nineteenth century

after changes in company law made it possible for private firms to become limited-liability joint stock corporations as well. Trading stocks of private firms now became an integral part of the financial markets and started to dominate the public perception of the stock market. The most recent phase of expansion, stimulated by technological innovation and the politics of competitive deregulation, is characterized primarily by the rise of institutional investors (pension funds, mutual funds), which have become the dominant force in the actual functioning of financial markets as well as in the development of large firms. Their emergence has gradually altered the balance of power among the various groups within firms (workers, employees, management) as well as between firms. The major changes in functioning of the stock market during the past two decades can be explained by the increasing power of institutional investors and by the ways they have succeeded in realigning various groups to their interests (higher management, consultancy firms, financial specialists, accountants).

The lecture has been published in Dutch, under the title ‘Effectbejag: Ontwikkelingen in financiële regimes en aandeelhoudersmacht’, *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 28 (4) 2001: 415–44.

■ CAS WOUTERS ON PIM FORTUYN

In an e-mail to Stephen Mennell on 30 April 2002, Cas Wouters reported that he had been talking to a journalist from the German magazine Der Stern about the Dutch right-wing gay politician Pim Fortuyn. In view of the fact that Fortuyn was assassinated, to the horror of the whole Dutch people, on 6 May, Cas suggested that it would be interesting to include his reflections, written a week earlier, in Figurations.

Pim Fortuyn is the Dutch variant of a European development: a populist representing the (rising) discontent – about what? From the early 1980s onward, as feelings of discontent and insecurity spread, the longing for a more stable and secure we-group inten-

sified. Robbed of the feeling of belonging to an expanding social universe (as was still prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s) and stuck with a feeling of insecurity, increasing numbers of people would appear to have come to experience their many part-identities as somewhat problematic. In the meantime, however, most of the old we-groups, groups like family, city, class or nation, seemed to have crumbled or lost cohesion. They merely seemed to provide a rather limited and insecure sense of belonging, and the same goes for we-groups on a transnational plane, only more so. I-ideals and we-ideals seemed to have lost their harmony. This collective experience appears to have been a principal source from which the recent rise of right-wing populist parties and politicians spring.

In Europe, we-identity in relation to the state has become ambivalent because the weakened position of the national state and of European states in the world came to be experienced if not realized more fully. Nation-states have become quite noticeably involved in continental and global integration processes, from which perspective most national countries are in fact little more than regions within global networks of interdependency. Particularly in Europe, it has increased the awareness that most nation-states, including one’s own, have but little control on the course of these processes. On the one hand this awareness has stimulated the formation of a we-identity in relation to humanity at large, to ‘human rights’ and international justice. On the other hand, however, the curtailing of national power and sovereignty, together with decreasing prospects and chances of having a say on the national as well as on the European and global level, became a source of intensified feelings of discontent, uncertainty, loss and threat. They also became a source for many people to experience an intensified longing for a larger and stronger we-group. This is also possible via the detour of indicating groups of scapegoats like ‘foreigners’ and criminals to be excluded respectively punished – creating new enemies as an attempt at creating the desired feeling of new communal solidarity and safety. Pim Fortuyn represents this

without showing any relationship to earlier forms of fascism or racism. I think his popularity also is a reaction to the purple coalition in which the political left and right have been compromising to the extent that the whole of established politicians turned grey and blabla. And you can say a lot about Fortuyn, but he's not grey and blabla.

■ BOCHUM CELEBRATES HERMANN KORTE'S 65TH BIRTHDAY

Hermann Korte celebrated his sixty-fifth birthday on 28 March 2002. He had retired after seven years in his chair at Hamburg in 2000, when his *Abschiedsvorlesung* was followed by a memorable performance of Norbert Elias's play *Der arme Jakob* (see *Figurations* 13). But, before moving to Hamburg, he had taught sociology from 1974 to 1993 – and served as Dean and Pro-Rector – at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum. And so it was that his former colleagues at Bochum took the initiative to meet on 9 May 2002 formally to celebrate Hermann's career and achievements. Guests were first greeted by Prof. Dr Notburga Ott, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, followed by the Rector of the University, Prof. Dr Dietmar Petzina, and the chairman of the Sociology Department Prof. Dr Klaus Peter Strohmeier, who recalled Hermann's contribution at Bochum. Prof. Dr Bernhard Schäfers of the University of Karlsruhe then deliv-

ered the main formal lecture, on 'Kultur and Zivilisation – No End to the Dichotomy?'. Annette Treibel-Illian, who was Hermann Korte's PhD and habilitation candidate at Bochum and who is now Professor at the Pädagogische Hochschule Karlsruhe (as well as chair of the editorial board for the collected works of Norbert Elias in German) then delivered a heartfelt but amusing *laudatio* to Hermann. She entitled it 'The Torch Passed On – Hermann Korte in Bochum', an allusion in part to Elias's favourite image of the 'torch race' (or more commonly in English 'relay race') in the growth and transmission of knowledge from generation to generation. Finally, the *Jubilar* himself responded in his usual elegant and witty way, and the reunion of many old friends was marked by the usual libations.

■ DUBLIN DEVELOPMENTS

The Institute for the Study of Social Change, established at UCD through major grants from the Irish government and private donors, moved into its purpose-designed brand new building at the beginning of January, with Stephen Menzell as its first Director. ISSC brings together economists, political scientists, sociologists and social policy specialists in interdisciplinary research programmes, especially on international trade and investment, public opinion and political behaviour, governance and evidence-based policy research, and identity, diversity and citizenship. It

also offers a structured doctoral programme, and (at last) first-class facilities for more than 40 PhD students in an up to the minute research laboratory occupying the whole top floor of the Institute.

Irish Journal of Sociology

For the next four years, the UCD Department of Sociology has assumed responsibility for editing the *Irish Journal of Sociology*, which is published twice a year by the Sociological Association of Ireland. Tom Inglis is Editor, and Stephen Menzell is serving in the much less onerous role of International Editor. Other members of the Editorial Board are Anne Cleary, Alice Feldman, Steve Loyal, Aogán Mulcahy, Sara O'Sullivan, and Steve Quilley.

In the past, the journal has published mainly articles about Ireland and mainly by Irish sociologists, but we are eager to broaden the range of contributions and contributors. We should welcome papers not only about Ireland itself but also about topics of important interest to Irish society, such as emigration and the Irish diaspora, problems of the European periphery, or comparative cultural studies. Papers incorporating a sociological perspective in fields related to sociology, such as cultural studies, social policy, social geography, social anthropology, political economy, and social and economic history are also welcome. Papers should be submitted to the *IJS* at the same address as that given for *Figurations*.



■ RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Abram de Swaan, *Words of the World: The Global Language System*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001. xi + 253 pp. ISBN: 0-7456-2747-1 (hb); 0-7456-2748-X (pb)

We have been waiting some years for De Swaan's *magnum opus*; why he has taken his time is evident from the sheer thoroughness with which he covers the globe. His argument is that the human species is divided into more than 5,000 language groups that do not understand each other. And yet these groups constitute one coherent world

language system, connected by multilingual speakers in a surprisingly powerful way. The chances of a language thriving depend on its position in the system. There are thousands of small, peripheral languages, each connected to one of a hundred central languages. The entire system is held together by one global language: English. A language

is a 'hypercollective' good: the more speakers it has, the higher its communication value for each one of them. Thus, when people think that a language is gaining new speakers, that in itself is a reason for them to want to learn it too. That is why, in an age of globalisation, only a few languages remain for transnational communication and these often prevail even in national societies. He discusses several constellations in detail: India, Indonesia, Sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa and the European Union. He concludes with a 'sober but illuminating' view of language policy in multilingual societies, which will not be a comfortable read for some minority language enthusiasts.

Given that De Swaan is one of the leading figures in figurational sociology, readers may be surprised that the name of Norbert Elias does not appear in the index. And *What is Sociology?* is the only one of his books that appears in the bibliography. But it is obvious that the figurational perspective permeates the whole book.



J. Goudsblom, *Stof waar honger uit ontstond: Over evolutie en sociale processen*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 2001, 191 pp., ISBN 90 290 7015 3

In this new collection of Dutch essays, Johan Goudsblom continues and extends the programme he had already suggested in *Sociology in the Balance* (1977) and worked out in *Fire and Civilization* (1992) and other publications. His aim is to broaden the scope of sociology far beyond its conventional borders and to integrate it with history and anthropology on the one hand, the natural sciences and in particular biology on the other. For Goudsblom the field of sociology is human history, the development of mankind as a whole in which different human societies are interdependent. Any human group or society at any moment in time can only be understood as part of this development. Human history, extending over hundreds of thousands of years, is in turn part of world history, or Big History, which includes the evolution of life on earth and, beyond that, the evolution of the universe. In this cosmic view of the

very long run, even the broad and ambitious studies by historical sociologists such as Wallerstein and Tilly are only small and short-term history.

The book's title, *Stof waar honger uit ontstond*, or, to give an approximate translation: 'Matter from which hunger originated', is derived from a poem. It alludes, as Goudsblom writes in the opening essay with the same title, to 'biology, Darwin and evolutionary theory'. Indeed, the Darwinian theory of biological evolution and its relation to sociology are a central theme in this first essay and the three next ones. Goudsblom, like Elias, is careful to distinguish between biological evolution and socio-cultural development, but he also sees continuity and interaction between the two. Both were essential to the process of hominisation which created the conditions for the accelerating socio-cultural development characteristic of mankind during the past thousands of years. This in turn had large consequences for 'nature'. Humans multiplied their numbers by eliminating and subjugating other animals, growing plants and taking ever-increasing amounts of fuel from the earth. In Goudsblom's terms: the anthroposphere expanded and penetrated more and more into the rest of the biosphere and the earth's ecosphere, with unintended consequences now known as environmental problems.

Despite all his detachment Goudsblom is not simply the neutral, value-free social scientist. At several places he shows his moral concern and sensitivity to current problems. This is most apparent in his essays on economic growth and the monopolisation of violence. In Goudsblom's sceptical view, economic growth is almost a tragedy. Until the last few centuries economic growth was mainly 'extensive' – it hardly surpassed the growth of the human population – and often took the form of 'hypertrophy' (excessive enrichment) on the one hand, 'atrophy' (impoverishment) on the other. And the 'intensive' growth of recent times has brought even more hypertrophy. In the chapter on the monopolisation of violence Goudsblom points out the Eliasian 'paradox of pacification' – pacification is brought about by the concentration of the means of

violence – to which he adds another side of the paradox: the fact that effective organised violence requires a high degree of 'internal' pacification. Any established monopoly of violence is unstable and always under threat from within and without, as is exemplified by the events of 11 September last year.

The last part of the book contains essays on morality, Freud and the social sciences, the sociology of philosophies (a defence of Randall Collins's *magnum opus* against his critics), and, finally, 'the importance of sociology' itself. It is amazing how Goudsblom succeeds in saying so much about such a diversity of wide-ranging topics within less than 200 pages. My only major criticism is that he is sometimes too brief. These essays are full of intriguing lapidary statements which beg for further explanation and elaboration.


However diverse the topics, they are held together by one coherent sociological perspective – the long-term, developmental and processual approach, the view of humans as interdependent and involved in competition for power and status. This perspective is clearly Eliasian, as Goudsblom repeatedly acknowledges. Elias, however, is not the only master; in this book, Goudsblom places himself particularly in the tradition of Auguste Comte (as Elias had done in *What is Sociology?*). Moreover, and more importantly, Goudsblom succeeds in going 'beyond Elias'; his scope is broader, and he is able to make use of a larger stock of knowledge. Where Elias again and again attacked the predominant static views of reality, Goudsblom argues with good reason that the dynamic, processual, long-term views are now gaining the upper hand, especially in the natural sciences.

This modest-sized book betrays immodest ambitions. Like Comte, Goudsblom wishes to bring the whole range of human knowledge into a sociological synthesis. The fact that these essays do not collapse under the weight of such an ambition has much to do with the precision and liveliness of Goudsblom's prose. Unlike Comte, Goudsblom always keeps the reader in mind. In a unique manner, the book brings together 'the two cultures' of literature

and the humanities with the natural sciences in an overarching perspective which derives from the 'third culture' of the social sciences. In this perspective there is accumulation and improvement of knowledge but also much continuity. Goudsblom does not hesitate to connect recent advances in cosmology with Heraclites' postulate 'everything changes', and present-day moral uncertainty with the questions put by Socrates.


It goes without saying that these innovative, erudite and carefully written essays deserve to be translated into English. One may hope that this will be done without bringing too much damage to their stylistic precision and sober elegance.

Nico Wilterdink
University of Amsterdam



Richard Kilminster, *The Sociological Revolution: From the Enlightenment to the Global Age*. London: Routledge, 2002. xvi + 221 pp. ISBN: 0-415-26310-7

Richard Kilminster's important book, discussed at length in *Figurations* 11 by Steve Loyal, has now been issued in paperback – and about time too!




Johann P. Arnason, *The Peripheral Centre: Essays on Japanese History and Civilisation*. Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2002. 234 pp. ISBN: 1-8768-43-95-0 (hb); 1-8768-43-07-1 (pb).

This book usefully collects together Johann Arnason's previously published essays on Japan, many of which have been noted in earlier issues of *Figurations*. The contents are:

Introduction: The Peripheral Centre and its Transformations
East Asian Approaches: Region, History and Civilisation
Comparing Japan: The Return to Asia
Is Japan a Civilisation *Sui Generis*?
State Formation in Japan and the West
Elias in Japan: State Formation, Mili-

tary Elites and Organised Violence
Multiple Modernities and Civilisational Contexts: Reflections on the Japanese Experience
Miracles and Mirages: Comparative Perspectives on Japanese Capitalism



Dominic Malcolm, 'Cricket and Civilizing Processes: A response to Stokvis', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 37 (1) 37–57: 2002


This paper examines Ruud Stokvis's contention that the tendency of figurational sociologists of sport to focus on violence and its control would be unproductive in the study of the development of non-contact sports such as cricket and that, rather, the formal organization and standardization of modern sports are their defining features.

A review of the processes which led to cricket developing from its folk antecedents into its modern form demonstrates (i) that early cricket was characterized by high levels of violence, physical contact and injury relative to today, and (ii) that the early codification of cricket, through which the game's structural features (laws, customs, physical environment) became standardized, was characterized by the implementation of rules which served to reduce violent conduct and, in particular, which served to separate the participants from the spectators, and the participants from each other.

Thus, rather than giving primacy, as Stokvis suggests, to researching the standardization and national diffusion of sports, it is more adequate to view these processes and the control of violence as highly interdependent. Moreover, this research demonstrates that the previously described characteristics of the developmental processes of relatively violent sports such as football, rugby and boxing have parallels in, and similarities with, this non-contact sport.

Cricket, though not a sport in which human bodies are literally used as weapons (e.g. rugby, boxing), is a game in which the basic equipment, the bat and the ball, may quite literally and,

within the game's rules, quite legitimately be used as weapons. As such, this study provides a rather different sort of examination of civilizing processes than has previously been undertaken by sociologists of sport.



Cas Wouters, 'What is Love?', *Body & Society* 7 (4) 2001: 77–86.

This is a review essay on M.L. Bush's book *What is Love?: Richard Carlile's Philosophy of Sex* (London: Verso, 1998). Carlile was an early nineteenth-century English radical, who edited a weekly journal *The Republican*, in which in 1825 he published his essay 'What is Love?'. That was reissued in 1826 as 'a little pocket book' entitled *Every Woman's Book, or What is Love?*. It became notorious for its advocacy of contraception, but Wouters focuses more on its stress on the importance of love: mutual attraction legitimises sex. Wouters interprets this in terms of his own notion of the 'just balance' between love and sex. Carlile's views would today be regarded as sensibly liberal, and Wouters sets them in the context of discussions of informalisation since the 1960s.



Hermann Korte, *Soziologie im Nebenfach: Eine Einführung*. Konstanz: UVK Verlag. 223 pp. ISBN: 3-89669-950-4.

Written with Hermann Korte's customary elegance, this is an introductory textbook specifically for the large number of students in German universities who only ever take one course in sociology, as a subsidiary option in their first year of studies. Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* provides an ingenious point of entry to three chapters dealing with the history of sociology since the nineteenth century, which are followed by chapters on systems theory (Parsons, Luhmann), the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, action theory (rational choice as well as symbolic interactionism), and on women and gender research. These approaches are then brought together in a chapter showing how Elias and Bourdieu forge the connection between 'action' and

'systems'. The book concludes with chapters on social stratification, individualisation and globalisation, and empirical social research.



Stefanie Ernst, *Geschlechterverhältnisse und Führungspositionen: Eine figurationssociologische Analyse der Stereotypenkonstruktion* Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1999. 364pp. ISBN: 3-531-13322-5.

Norbert Elias's approach to the civilising process has not only revealed some interesting perspectives about the long-term development of self-control. It also hints at the relations between men and women in several ways (sexuality, family life, business life). The use of etiquette books was one important source of evidence to demonstrate the increase in self-control and control of others. A detailed analysis of the specific literature of career guides from the eighteenth century up to the present day shows impressively the development of behavioural codes between men and women. Moreover, the social construction of these instructions reflects the opposing structure of gendered male leadership posts to female qualifications: for example it is nowadays still a challenge for women to be the boss and a woman at the same time. Women have to balance their gender appearance and their professional identity.

One of the main explanations of women's under-representation in leadership posts is the persistence of stereotypes. Elias's figurational approach sheds light on the origin and meaning of stereotypes. Being an outsider in leadership positions means ambiguity, fluctuating stigmatisation and counter-stigmatisation. Making use of the established-outside model of Norbert Elias and John L. Scotson helps in understanding the complex polyphony in the movement of ascending and descending groups in leading positions which are already constructed as a 'mans world'.



Pieter Spierenburg 'Violence and the Civilising Process: does it work?' *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés (Crime, His-*

tory & Societies) 5 (2) 2001: 87–105.

Abstract: Among historians, especially those investigating violence, Norbert Elias's theory of civilisation has received divergent appreciations recently. In the Anglo-Saxon world, notably in North America, it has obtained increasing recognition over the last ten years or so. In particular, many authors agree that he offers the only theoretical framework which easily accommodates the empirical evidence on the long-term decline of homicide. Conversely, in Continental Europe during the 1990s, a number of historians, notably German historians of crime, have criticised Elias's work. In this discussion, too, the subject of violence looms large.

This discussion article confronts the criticism levelled at the theory of civilising processes, in so far as it pertains to violence. It deals with four broad clusters of problems: (1) the reliability and validity of the evidence for the long-term trend of declining violence; (2) the character of violence, in particular its function as an indicator for the level of behavioural control; (3) the interdependence of long-term change in the field of aggression and human emotions on the one hand and the overall development of society on the other; (4) the new wave of interpersonal violence in the Western world in the late twentieth century.

It is concluded that research on the long-term development of homicide over the last twenty years has yielded impressive new evidence for the theory of civilisation, which some historians nevertheless tend to ignore or attempt to explain away. The only objection to the theory not based on a misinterpretation refers to the historical study of honour and ritual. None of the data generated by this research, however, are incompatible with the processes first observed by Elias. Contrary to what his critics assume, the theory of civilisation invites creative elaboration, which should be the aim of future research.



Peter Wesly, 'Johan Goudsblom: More than a Sociologist', *The Low Countries:*

Arts and Society in Flanders and the Netherlands, 10, 2002: 257–62.

'That man is too good for sociology' – these are the concluding words of Peter Wesly's ingenious article, in which he aspires at once to praise Goudsblom and to bury sociology. Goudsblom, points out Wesly, is a poet and man of letters as well as a sociologist, whose poems, aphorisms and essays have earned him a place in Dutch literature. 'Goudsblom is a sociologist who writes exceptionally well, which is unusual in a discipline that has long been an object of satire thanks to its proneness to drivel. There are some sociologists, such as Bourdieu, who have nothing to say – and say it in the most exciting way. And there are sociologists who carry out empirical research, but describe their findings in the most off-putting academic jargon' (which Wesly proceeds to illustrate with a quotation from the Leiden sociologist C.J. Lammer, an old sparring partner of Goudsblom's as it happens). Wesly appreciatively sketches the argument of three of Goudsblom's major books, *Nihilism and Culture*, *Sociology in the Balance* and *Fire and Civilisation* but, while recognising their strength, in effect denies that any of them owes very much to sociology as a discipline. In one section of his article, amusingly entitled 'The unbearable lightness of 'figuration'', he sets out to deny that this concept of Elias's adds very much new. Actually, I do not disagree with Wesly – I have always said that the concept is not a load-bearing structure in the edifice of figurational sociology, although it is certainly very useful as shorthand and as a means of *not* using various other terms (for example, 'system') that have acquired connotations that we want to avoid.

But, of course, Wesly misses the whole point of Goudsblom's sociological writings. As Goudsblom says himself, the underlying logic of his arguments is wholly derived from his reading of sociology and, especially, of the work of Norbert Elias. In one sense it is unfortunate that the elegance of his writing deceives some readers – both non- and anti-sociologists like Wesly and also even some sociologists – about its sociological underpinnings. This points to a more general dilemma for sociologists.

Yes, our discipline does generate such a large proportion of ‘drivel’ that one is tempted to distance oneself from it stylistically. On the other hand, though, if one does not insert enough intellectual signposts for readers, they may lose their way and – in particular – fail to realise how far they have marched beyond the overcrowded main streets of sociology.

Joop Goudsblom and I were provoked by Wesly’s article into debating this dilemma. We agreed that we had both been profoundly impressed and influenced by Elias’s ‘Game Models’, in chapter 3 of *What is Sociology?*. We agreed that they represented a striking intellectual breakthrough in several respects, even though Elias makes only modest claims for them: they forge a vitally important connection between the ‘unintended consequences of purposive social’ (or unplanned social processes) and balances of power between individuals and groups; they solve the futile ‘structure and agency’ and ‘structuration’ issues in which most of ‘social theory’ is still bogged down; and they effectively reconcile the sociologies of Durkheim and Weber. Yet have they been widely cited or discussed? No. I have drawn on them a few times in expositions of Elias’s work, but not even committed ‘figurationists’ flag them much in their substantive writing. Goudsblom’s account of the human attainment of a species hegemony over other animals is scarcely imaginable except against the background of the ‘Game Models’, but there is no reference to them in *Fire and Civilisation*. And there indeed is the dilemma. If one loads one’s text with references to underlying sociological arguments, one risks being denounced by Wesly (and others of like mind) for being prone to drivel. And if one does not do so, such readers completely miss the indispensable fount of sociological reasoning on which the text draws.



Abram de Swaan, ‘Dyscivilisation, Mass Extermination and the State’, *Theory, Culture & Society* 18 (2-3) 2001: 265–76

Previously published in Dutch (‘Dys-

civilatie, massavernietiging en de staat’, *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 26 (3) 1999: 289–301), this essay has taken some time to appear in English (*TCS* has been running a bit in arrears). De Swaan asks whether massive violence and destruction are a manifestation of ‘modernity’, even its very essence, or rather its total opposite: ‘a breakdown of civilization’? Although ostensibly, Norbert Elias mainly occupied himself with the civilizing process, he was always, though mostly implicitly so, preoccupied with its complement and counterpart: violence, regression and anomie. In recent years, a number of his students have returned to these themes. Whether they wanted to or not, they were drawn into a debate that in this century has never subsided for long. De Swaan argues for a position that transcends this opposition between ‘modernization’, and ‘regression’: at the core of the civilizing process, another contrary current may manifest itself, allowing extreme violence on a mass scale to be perpetrated towards specific categories of people, while civilized relations and modes of expression are maintained in other sections of society. The concepts of identification, disidentification and compartmentalization should help to describe and explain these ‘dyscivilising’ processes in their complex relations to processes of civilization.



Michael Reed, ‘From Eating to Meeting: The Rise of the Meeting Society’, *Theory, Culture & Society* 18 (5) 2001: 131–43.

A review essay on Wilbert van Vree’s *Meetings, Manners and Civilisation* (the book that won the second Norbert Elias Amalfi Prize in 2001) counterposes Van Vree’s Eliasian interpretation with ‘new managerialist/postmodern’, ‘virtual/network’ views.



Tom Inglis, ‘Honour Pride and Shame in Rural Ireland: the case of the Kerry Babies’, *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 28 (4) 2001: 495–512.

Through the story of what happened to a young single mother in rural Ireland

as recently as 1984, Tom Inglis explores the utility of Scheff’s theory of pride and shame in the social bond, and of the concept of honour particularly as developed by Bourdieu, in linking the ‘microworld’ of emotions and interpersonal relations with the ‘macroworld’ of long-term social change.



Gina Zabludovsky, ‘Por una psicología sociohistorica: Norbert Elias y las criticas a las teorías de la racionalidad y la acción social’ (Towards a Socio-historical Psychology: Norbert Elias and the Critiques of the Theories of Rationality and Social Action) *Sociologica* (Mexico), 14, 40, May–Aug 1999, 151–79.

Abstract: Examines criticisms levied against Norbert Elias’s theories of rationality and social action, comparing his thought to that of others, and identifying some of his most important intellectual influences, for example Max Weber’s conceptions of the state and, in particular, the ideas of Sigmund Freud. Peculiarities of the reception of Elias’s work, as well as the criticisms made in it of sociological and historical research, are reviewed. It is shown how, before [? – SJM] Weber’s theory of domination, rationality, and individualism, Elias proposed a wide scope theory of historical processes and a conception of modernity based on the transformation of behaviour. Limitations and contributions of the criticisms of Elias are evaluated, and some problems with regard to the interpretation of his work are identified.




Jean Stengers and Anne van Neck, *Masturbation: The History of a Great Terror*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. x + 238 pp. ISBN: 0-312-22443-5

We mention this fascinating book only because it is known that Elias collected a good deal of historical material on masturbation when he was writing *The Civilising Process* in the 1930s – but, for understandable reasons at the time, did not include a section on it. Stengers and Van Neck do not mention Elias or the theory of civilising processes, but

some readers of *Figurations* may like to read this book in the light of the theory.

The book was originally published in French in 1998 as *Histoire d'une grande peur: La masturbation*, by the Institut Synthélabo pour le progrès de la connaissance.



Klasien Horstman, *Public Bodies, Private Lives: the Historical Construction of Life Insurance, Health Risks and Citizenship in the Netherlands, 1880-1920*. Rotterdam: Erasmus Publishing, 2001. 211pp. ISBN: 90-5235-156-2.

Another example of the unexpected directions in which ideas from Elias can be put to work, this book deals with the public role of medicine. It focuses on the introduction of risk selection and analyses the interrelatedness of medicine and life insurance. It seeks to demonstrate how the medical involvement in life insurance has contributed to a redefinition of health in terms of risks, the construction of the body as a public body, and the individualization of the responsibility for preventive behaviour.



Avalanche in Nanterre

Alain Garrigou, *Les Élités contre la République: Science Po et l'ENA*. Paris: La Découverte, 2001. 242 pp. ISBN: 2-7071-3511-9.

Alain Garrigou, *Histoire sociale du suffrage universel en France 1848-2000*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2002. 363 pp. ISBN: 2-02-051082-0.

Éric Phéllippeau, *L'invention de l'homme politique moderne*. Paris: Belin, 2002. 367 pp. ISBN: 2-7011-3058-1.

Jean-Pierre Dozon and Didier Fassin, eds, *Critique de la santé publique: une approche anthropologique*. Paris: Balland, 2001.

All four of these books have been published since the last issue of *Figurations*, and all four are the product of members or associates of the Groupe

d'analyse politique at the Université de Paris X – Nanterre led by Bernard Lacroix and Alain Garrigou. Hallmarks of the group are the application of an Eliasian or figurational way of thinking to many of the traditional concerns of political scientists, and also specifically to the area of public health policy – the annual Entretiens Franklin colloquium is also organised by the Nanterre gang. In *Les élites contre la République*, the prolific Garrigou brings the perspective to bear on the much-discussed power in French society of graduates of the *grandes écoles*, in this case the École Nationale d'Administration and the Fondation nationale des sciences politiques (known universally as 'Sciences Po'). The subject of *Histoire sociale du suffrage universel en France* is self-explanatory, but not – emphasises Garrigou – to be taken for granted. The attainment of universal suffrage was a complex struggle, and yet today declining voter turnouts seem to indicate '*une étrange langueur*' among the electorate – very topical in the light of the first round, though not the second, of the recent presidential election.

Éric Phéllippeau's long-awaited book on the sociogenesis (as figurationalists say when feeling loquacious) of the professional politician is an outstanding contribution. It is a revised version of his 1995 doctoral thesis (see *Figurations* 6). A notable feature is the fruitful use he makes of the little-known 1950 essay by Elias on the development of the naval profession; it is a fine example of sociological imagination to see the parallel between the conflict of gentleman and tarpaulin sailors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and that between gentleman and professional politicians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Critique de la santé publique contains 12 chapters by 10 authors – none actually from Nanterre, but loosely connected with it through Franklin. The contributions form a coherent whole, yet the handiness of the book is spoiled by the lack of an index (as, indeed, is *Les élites contre la République*); no academic boom should ever be published without an index!



Special Issues of Three Journals

Norbert Elias: The Civilising Process between History and Sociology. Mutûn, No.2, Cairo, 2001 (in Arabic).

This special issue of the Arabic journal *Mutûn* contains a wide range of articles, the majority of them translated from French originals. They include:

Roger Chartier: Introduction to the *Court Society* 'from the Court to the Salons' (review of Gordon's *Citizens without Sovereignty*) followed by extracts from early twentieth-century Egyptian rules of good behaviour in the presence of the Caliph, and from al-Sabi's account of the rituals of the caliphate.

Norbert Elias: extract: 'The social constraint, towards self-constraint'

B. Dupret: 'Intesubjectivity, institutes and history (comment)

J-N. Ferrie, 'Unreflected Interaction' (comment on Dupret's comment)

G. Stauth: 'Elias in Singapore: civilizing processes in a tropical city'

A. Salivatore: 'A stage in the Egyptian civilising process'

N. Puig: 'The civilising of oriental manners: some aspects of civility in contemporary Cairo'

N. Elias: 'Individual and Society in Weber and Durkheim' (extract) 'A Sociology of the Emotions?' (extract)

B. Dupret: 'Egyptian justice between medical ethics and public morality'

A. Garrigou: 'The Great Game of Society'

N. Elias: 'The concept of figurations' (extract)

A. Appadurai: 'Playing with Modernity: Indian cricket'

Extract: 'The Ahli Club' (Egypt, ca.1900)

P. Veyne: 'The Olympics in Antiquity' 'Manners and the oriental economy; on food' (extract from Nadim, Egypt, late nineteenth century)

N. Elias: the Fork (excerpt)

'Etiquette: the banquet' (extract from Bashtali, late nineteenth century).

Rethinking Civilisational Analysis:

Special issue of *International Sociology* (Journal of the International Sociological Association) Vol.16, no. 3. September 2001

This special issue is guest edited by Edward A. Tiryakian. Abstracts of the articles are provided in English and French in the journal, but they would take up too much space to be reprinted in *Figurations*. The contents are:

Introduction: The Civilisation of Modernity and the Modernity of Civilisations *Edward A. Tiryakian*
Civilisation in a Historical and Global Perspective *Bruce Mazlish*
Global Civilisation and Local Cultures: A Crude Look at the Whole *Wolf Schäfer*

The Civilisational Dimension of Modernity: Modernity as a Distinct Civilisation *Shmuel N. Eisenstadt*
The Clash of Civilisations or of Paradigms? Theorising Progress and Social Change *Daniel Chirot*

For the Last Time: Civilisations *Hamid Dabashi*

Civilisation and its Sources *Arpad Szakolezai*

Civilisational Patterns and Civilising Processes *Johann P. Arnason*

Rationalisation, Transformations of Consciousness and Intercivilisational Encounters: Reflections on Benjamin Nelson's Sociology of Civilisations *Donald A. Nielsen*

Ayse Oncii, 'Elias ve medeniyetin oykusu' (Elias and the Story of Civilization – in Turkish), *Toplum ve Bilim* (Science & Society) 84, 2000: 8–17.

We understand that the whole of this issue of the journal was devoted to Elias and the civilising process but, our Turkish being less than perfect, we are unsure whether the above reference (picked up by Phil Sutton in *Sociological Abstracts*) refers to the whole or only one of several articles. The abstract says that Oncii 'focuses on Norbert Elias's seminal book *The Civilising Process* (2000), considering why the book went unnoticed in his own time and discussing how Elias uses Sigmund Freud as a *leitmotiv* throughout the book. Colonising processes and practices outside Europe are juxtaposed with the civilising processes that Elias describes by bringing in Michel Rolph Trouillot's (1995) book on silencing history. The different ways that Oriental/Occidental and primitive/civilized binary oppositions are currently being reproduced

through practices of advertising, tourism, & media industries are assessed'.

■ RECENT CONFERENCES

VI International Symposium on Civilising Process, Assis, S.P., Brazil 12–14 November 2001

The theme for this conference was 'History, Education and Culture' and it was attended by historians, sociologists, psychologists, educationalists and specialists in physical education from many parts of Brazil.

Johan Goudsblom (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands), Eric Dunning (University of Leicester, England) and Stephen Mennell (University College Dublin, Ireland) were special international guests. Each of them presented a paper and also conducted a debate, which were based on their chapters of the book *Norbert Elias: La politique et l'histoire*, organized by Alain Garrigou and Bernard Lacroix, recently translated into Portuguese and published in Brazil.

At the first day of the Symposium Johan Goudsblom's paper focused on Elias's place in the history of sociology, his ambitions as a sociologist and the misunderstandings of his early works. Professor Goudsblom also led a debate on the theme of 'Thinking with Elias'. On the second day Stephen Mennell presented a paper on frontiers, state-formation and civilising processes in the United States, taking his departure from the events of 11 September 2001, and relating debates about the Western frontier to current concerns about the rise of an American global empire. He also led a debate on the processes of decivilisation, arguing that we do not have a long-term rise in violence but that, in contemporary world there are explosions of violence in specific places, referring to the article by Godfried van Benthem van den Bergh in *Figurations* 16.

Eric Dunning's presentation was on the relationship between emotions and civilising processes, relating it to State formation and the development of modern sports. There is a lack of theory about sports and leisure in Brazil and the studies conducted by Elias and Dunning are very important for people who work in this field – that is why his audience

was full of teachers of physical education who were very pleased to have the chance to meet him and talk to him.

Indeed these discussions were of great interest, in view of the fact that the acceptance of Elias in Brazil has been growing in the late years, and not only in the field of sociology but also in other areas, as was reflected in the diversity of people attending the meeting.

Besides these presentations by our international visitors, Brazilian researchers made some very interesting ones. There were three round tables, each one with around five presentations, all relating the civilising process to different subjects: education, culture, and sports and leisure. A few concentrated on Elias's concepts such as the public and private spheres through the civilising process, involvement and detachment, and the theory of sports. It was a good opportunity for people from different universities to present and discuss their work, always focusing on ideas derived from Elias.

Moreover, the Symposium had the quality of putting together professors and students from different areas, with different subjects and from different places, establishing a net of collaboration and discussion. It was of great value to listen to and have the chance to talk to some of the most important interpreters of Elias. We congratulate the organizer of this meeting, Carlos da Fonseca Brandão, and hope to meet everyone again in 2003.

Tatiana Savoia Landini and Enio Passiani
University of São Paulo

■ FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

Conference on Court Society
A new edition of Elias's *Die höfische Gesellschaft* will be published by Suhrkamp early in 2003 as volume 2 of the Standard Works in German.

To mark the publication, Claudia Opitz is organising a conference on court society in Stuttgart on 1–3 May, 2003. If you are interested in participating, please contact Claudia at: Opitz-Belakhal@t-online.de

British Sociological Association at Leicester:

Group photo: From left to right: Eric Dunning, Peter Emmerson, Joe Maguire, Maria Goudsblom, Joop Goudsblom, Stefanie Ernst, Jason Hughes, Richard Kilminster, Stephen Mennell, Ton Zwaan.



British Sociological Association Annual Conference, Leicester, 25–27 March 2002

The BSA this year met in Leicester, where Elias taught from 1954 until the 1970s, and Jason Hughes organised a stream on the theme ‘Figurational Sociology – the New Debates’. The five sessions were very well attended, and the meeting room allocated recalled Lenin’s advice that one should always book a venue smaller than is needed for the numbers expected. The papers presented were:

Eric Dunning The rise and fall of the Leicester tradition

Johan Goudsblom The place of Norbert Elias in the history of sociology

Stephen Mennell Frontiers and the American state formation process

Joseph Maguire Global games and civilisational struggles

Tim Newton Credit networks and civilisation

Richard Kilminster What does it mean to be ‘critical’ in sociology? Some remarks from an Eliasian perspective

Norman Gabriel Learning to communicate: the development of ‘thinking’ and ‘speaking’ by young children

Stefanie Ernst From blame gossip to praise gossip? Gender, leadership and the figurational approach

Ad van Ijzerson Blame and praise gossip in organisations: the established and the outsiders

Ton Zwaan Civilising and decivilising processes: a theoretical discussion

John Goodwin and Henrietta O’Connor intended to present their paper ‘Forty years on: Norbert Elias and the Young Worker Project’ in one of the figurational sessions, but were allocated to a different and clashing stream. After

the close of the conference, therefore, we adjourned to the Centre for Labour Market Studies where, with wine and nibbles, they entertained us to a most enjoyable reprise at greater length. A summary of their fascinating presentation appears in this issue of *Figurations*.

First International PRINWASS Conference: Meaningful Interdisciplinarity: Challenges and Opportunities for Water Research – Oxford, 24–25 April 2002 Professor Johan Goudsblom was the keynote speaker at the conference. He gave a lecture on ‘Water control and fire control: The formation and functions of two socio-ecological regimes’. PRINWASS is a research project funded by the European Commission and coordinated by José Esteban Castro. Details of the project and the conference can be accessed at: <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/~prinwass/newsletter.shtml>; most papers presented will be available for downloading in the web site.

■ OBITUARY

Pierre Bourdieu 1930–2002

On January 23 of this year, Pierre Bourdieu died in Paris at the age of 71. After having devoted a last series of lectures in 2001 to the sociology of the sciences, he had just retired from the Collège de France, where he taught for twenty years. Like his numerous other activities, however, his research seminar at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) was to be continued. It was scheduled to start again in January 2002, and was cancelled only at short notice.

The announcement of Bourdieu’s death was prominent on the front page of every French newspaper. Pierre

Bourdieu was not only the internationally acclaimed sociologist and one of the most frequently cited social scientists, he had, over the past decade, also become one of the leading public intellectuals in Europe. Bourdieu had been satisfied neither with the professorial fate of the academic specialist nor with the prophetic role of the ‘total intellectual’. Part of his indefatigable activities in recent years was to rethink and redefine a critical role for intellectuals.

A committed scholar

Pierre Bourdieu first of all leaves us an *oeuvre* in the proper sense of the term – that is, a coherent and innovative body of scholarly writings, marked by a distinctive problematic and perspective. Some of his books have already become sociological classics. *La distinction* (1979) is the best example, *Homo academicus* (1984), *La noblesse d’Etat* (1987) and *Les règles de l’art* (1993) are good candidates, just as his more theoretically oriented books like *Le sens pratique* (1980) and *Méditations pascaliennes* (1997).

Whereas his major scholarly works have become well known and are readily available in translation, other aspects of Bourdieu’s activities are less well known outside France. This applies to his civic and political engagements, as well as to his role as editor and director of journals. Bourdieu was not only a creative researcher and author; the reflexive social science which he progressively developed naturally led him to rethink the teaching of social science, the publishing policies of journals, the relationship between scientific research and social commitment.

Bourdieu’s political publications, spanning the years from the early 1960s to his death, have just been collected in a posthumous volume, *Interventions* (Agone, 2002), edited by Franck Poupeau and Thierry Discepolo. As is clear from this collection, Bourdieu did not merely defend a variety of social movements and cultural causes against the ongoing concentration of economic power. Besides the specific issues concerned, one of the primary aims during the last decade of his life was to find new organisational forms for combining scholarship and commitment.

The collective research project which resulted in *La misère du monde* (1993), translated as *The Weight of the World* (1999), was one of these initiatives. The book of more than 900 pages on social suffering in contemporary societies became a bestseller in France, where it was vividly debated both in the public discussion and in social science circles.

Another example is the Association he founded to promote research and reflection on higher education. The association, ARESER, published a booklet containing an incisive analysis of the state of higher education and proposing a whole series of concrete measures for improvement. The booklet was published by a small publishing house which Bourdieu himself had founded, *Raisons d'agir*, and which has published a series of small and cheap books on various topics of public interest (some of these sold over a 100,000 copies). For Bourdieu the series would become something of an 'international people's encyclopedia'.

Lesser known in the English speaking world are also the two journals which Bourdieu has founded and directed: *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* and *Liber*. Norbert Elias and other figurational sociologists, Johan Goudsblom and Abram de Swaan among them, have been connected with both. *Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias* Launched in 1975, *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* instantly became one of the most original social science journals in the world. When the journal published Norbert Elias's essay 'The genesis of sport' in 1976, in a translation by J. and A. Defrance, it was accompanied by drawings, documents and illustrations, which is one of the hallmarks of the journal. Bourdieu added a 'postscript' situating the article within the larger framework of Elias' work and underlining the significance of Elias's work for the social sciences. Over the years *Actes* has remained a critical, non-conformist, and extremely creative social science journal, for which there is no equivalent elsewhere.

After the publication of 'The Genesis of Sport', Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias met on several occasions. Bourdieu invited Elias to lecture at the

Collège de France and the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales. After the very successful lecture at the Collège de France in 1985, Bourdieu organised a meeting at the Fondation Hugot with a small number of colleagues and friends to reflect upon the situation of intellectuals in Europe. Elias gave his view, as did the historian Georges Duby and a few others. One of the possible initiatives discussed was the founding of a European review of books, which Bourdieu launched a few years later as *Liber*. For nearly ten years *Liber* was published with enormous efforts in many European languages, publishing interviews, portraits, reviews, commentary and analysis. Unfortunately *Liber* was not published in English (except for the very first issues which appeared as a European supplement to the *Times Literary Supplement*).

When Elias 90th birthday was celebrated in 1987 with a conference in Apeldoorn in the Netherlands, Pierre Bourdieu presented a striking comparison of the social functions of the court during the old regime with the school system in contemporary societies. Immediately after the conference, Bourdieu also participated in festivities in Amsterdam and spoke in the auditorium of the University of Amsterdam, celebrating Elias's achievements.

Besides mutual respect and sympathy, Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias shared some fundamental views on sociology and social science. Although they belonged to different generations and were trained in different national traditions, both incarnated a sociological approach which transcends the main dichotomies that divide the social sciences up to this day. Bourdieu, just like Norbert Elias, effectively refused narrow specialisation, combated sterile oppositions and consistently combined empirical research and theoretical reflection. Pierre Bourdieu has contributed a wide range of exemplary sociological studies, and his reflexive sociology offers a lucid and refreshing perspective on the practise of social science today.

Johan Heilbron
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■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

The next issue of *Figurations* will be mailed in November 2002. News and notes should be sent to the Editors by 1 October 2002.

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

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