

Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

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■ HUMAN FIGURATIONS – A NEW ONLINE JOURNAL

We are delighted to announce – at last – a new online journal, *Human Figurations*, for which we hope readers of the *Figurations* newsletter will write their best work.

Human Figurations, with its strapline 'Long-term perspectives on the human condition', will be published – initially twice a year – starting in January 2012.

The idea of a journal for figurational studies was first discussed in detail as far back as the ISA World Congress of Sociology at Bielefeld in 1994, just when the first issue of this newsletter appeared. At that time, and on several occasions since, we decided not to proceed, partly because of the risk of ghettoising figurationalists away from mainstream journals, and partly on grounds of cost. Both dangers have diminished. There are now many high-quality online journals, and the cost of publishing in this way is much less. And the risk of ghettoisation is perhaps less important now than the need – in an age when the social sciences are disastrously over-specialised and fragmented – to bring together the many scholars in a whole range of disciplines and sub-disciplines whose work shares the common thread that they are employing figurational ideas and developing long-term perspectives on the human condition in all its aspects.

So finally, at the 'business meeting' preceding the Figurational Sociology group's dinner at the World Congress of Sociology in Göteborg in July 2010, it was decided to start the new online journal. The Norbert Elias Foundation has entered into an agreement with MPublishing, the imprint of the Scholarly Publishing Office at the University of Michigan for the publication of *Human Figurations*, which will – like all MPublishing publications – be rigorously peer-reviewed.

Although the journal is sponsored by the Norbert Elias Foundation, it is intended that, rather than focusing on Norbert Elias *per se* the journal will be *in the spirit of* Elias, not a vehicle for ancestor worship. In the long run, we may also begin to publish in hard copy too.

Katie Liston has been appointed Editor, and Stephen Mennell will act as a Chairman. They have assembled a provisional Editorial Board, and will be putting together an Editorial Advisory Board, both of them representative of the international figurational studies network. Clare Spencer, who is the Foundation's webmaster, has agreed also to act as administrator of the journal.

Currently, we envisage that the first issue will contain invited essays by representative of a whole range of disciplines – sociology, history, anthropology,

criminology, international relations and so on. Subsequent there will probably be special issues centring on international relations, the expanding anthroposphere and so on. But there will, of course, also be general issues containing a variety of articles submitted to the journal in the normal way.

We envisage that the *Figurations* newsletter will continue to be published, though perhaps in slimmed-down form, with book reviews in particular being transferred to the *Human Figurations* journal.

Start thinking now about your contributions to *Human Figurations*! Contact Katie Liston (k.liston@ulster.ac.uk) for further information.

The initial Editorial Board consists of:

Editor: Katie Liston

Journal Manager: Clare Spencer

Board Members

Joop Goudsblom (Amsterdam)

Jose Esteban Castro

(Newcastle-upon-Tyne)

Robert van Krieken (Dublin/Sydney)

Stephen Vertigans (Aberdeen)

Barbara Evers (Perth, Australia)

Andrew Linklater (Aberystwyth)

Giselinde Kuipers (Rotterdam)

Florence Delmotte (Brussels)

Paddy Dolan (Dublin) – *Co-ordinating Reviews Editor*

Stephanie Ernst (Hamburg)

Tatiana Savoia Landini (São Paulo)

Stephen Mennell (Dublin) – *Chairman*

We shall also be recruiting lots of others to assist the journal as members of an Editorial Advisory Board.

■ APOLOGY FROM THE EDITORS!

Figurations has sometimes in the past arrived a couple of weeks later than scheduled, but never has the delay been as dramatic as in this case. Issue 34 will reach you about two *months* late. Our sincere apologies: as readers will gather from the announcement above, and much else in this issue, a great deal of other work has been afoot.

We are pleased that Barbara Górnicka has joined the editorial team, with special responsibility for making sure we do not miss deadlines in future.

■ PEOPLE

- Congratulations to Robert van Krieken on his election as one of the three Vice-Presidents of the International Sociological Association, with responsibility for membership and finance.

- *However*, readers of *Figurations*, perhaps especially those who attended Robert's inaugural lecture as Professor of Sociology at UCD, on 8 April 2010 will be sad to hear that Robert will after all be returning to the University of Sydney in the middle of 2011, after two years in Dublin. Robert has achieved a great deal while in Dublin, but unfortunately there appeared to be little prospect of a post in Ireland for his wife Virginia, who is Senior Lecturer at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). (Anyone who reads the newspapers will not be surprised that there is a paucity of job openings in Ireland.) All their friends in Dublin, indeed in Europe, wish Robert and Virginia well in their return to Australia.

- José Esteban Castro is a second member of the figurational network to take on high responsibility within the ISA. Esteban has been appointed a member of the Programme Committee for the next World Congress, in Yokohama in 2014.

- Stephen Mennell has been elected unopposed as President of the new ISA Working Group 02, Historical and Comparative Sociology, the formation of which was approved by the ISA Executive at its meeting at the World Congress held in Gothenburg in July.

- Jean-Bernard Ouédraogo has been appointed a Director of Research in CNRS, the French national research organisation.

- Miguel Fernandez Llanos was selected as a finalist in the Fifth Worldwide Junior Sociologist Competition by International Sociological Association, for his paper 'Un modelo analítico del cambio social y cultural' [An analytical model of social and cultural change]. In the paper, he proposes a synthesis between figurational sociology and the analytical sociology, focusing on – besides Elias – the concept of social mechanism formulated by Hedström and Swedberg. The Chilean sociologist read his paper at the XVII ISA World Congress of Sociology pre-seminar, Gothenburg, Sweden, 7–10 July 2010.



- On 23 November 2010, Marc Joly successfully defended his doctoral thesis in history at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris, on the subject 'Becoming Norbert Elias: a contribution to the analysis of a trans-national process of scientific recognition – the French reception.' The jury consisted of Roger Chartier, Johan Heilbron, Bernard Lahire, Bertrand Müller, Gérard Noiriel (director of the thesis) and Michael Werner. The English abstract of the thesis can be found later in this issue of *Figurations*.
- Nina Baur gave her inaugural lecture as Professor of Empirical Research Methods at the Technische Universität Berlin on 14 December 2010, on the subject 'Räume erforschen: Konturen einer Methodologie sozialwissenschaftlicher Raumanalyse'

(Exploring space: contours of a methodology of social scientific analysis of space).

■ FROM THE NORBERT ELIAS FOUNDATION

Giselinde Kuipers's Inaugural Lecture

On 11 June, 2010, Giselinde Kuipers gave her inaugural lecture at the Erasmus University Rotterdam as the third holder of the Norbert Elias chair. The text of her lecture is printed as a special supplement to *Figurations* 34. It is also published in Dutch, as 'De fiets van Hare Majesteit: over nationale habitus en sociologische vergelijking', *Sociologie* 6: 3 (2010), pp. 3–26.

Norbert Elias Prize, 2011

The seventh Norbert Elias Prize will be awarded in 2011. The Prize consists in a sum of €1,000 and it will be awarded to a significant first major book published between 1 January 2009 and 31 December 2010. First-time authors from any part of the world are eligible for the award.

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'. This does not mean, however, that the prize-winning book will necessarily be directly inspired by Elias's own work.

Previous winners of the Elias Prize have been:

1999 David Lepoutre, *Coeur de banlieue: Codes, rites et langages* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1997)

2001 Wilbert van Vree, *Meetings, Manners and Civilisation* (London: University of Leicester Press, 1999)

2003 Nikola Tietze, *Islamische Identitäten: Formen muslimischer*

Religiosität junger Männer in Deutschland und Frankreich (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2001)

2005 Jason Hughes, *Learning to Smoke: Tobacco Use in the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003)

2007 Georgi Derlugian, *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World-System Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

2009 Elizabeth Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

For the 2011 prize, the jury will consist of three previous winners of the prize, under the chairmanship of Wilbert van Vree.

Nominations for the prize should be sent to Marcello Aspria, Secretary to the Norbert Elias Foundation, by 30 April 2011, either by post to J.J. Viottastraat 13, 1071 JM Amsterdam, The Netherlands, or by email to elias@planet.nl

'Classic Essays' on Foundation Website

With the permission of their authors, three essays that have often been cited but the texts of which are difficult to obtain have been made available on the Norbert Elias Foundation website. They are:

Godfried van Benthem van den Bergh, 'Attribution of blame as the past and present means of orientation: the social sciences as a potential improvement' (1978)

Eric Dunning, 'In defence of developmental sociology: a critique of Popper's Poverty of Historicism with special reference to the theory of Auguste Comte' (1977)

Johan Goudsblom, 'The Paradox of Pacification' (2001)

See <http://www.norberteliasfoundation.nl/network/essays.php>

Readers are welcome to suggest other essays that ought to be made available in this way.

Personal websites of figurational sociologists

Several figurational sociologists now have their own personal websites, on which – among other things – details, and in some cases full texts, of their publications may be found. See:

Maarten van Bottenburg – <http://www.vanbottenburg.nl/>
Christien Brinkgreve – <http://www.christienbrinkgreve.nl/>
Peter Emerson's sociology and politics blog – <http://www.peter-emerson.co.uk/>
Robert van Krieken – <http://robertvankrieken.net/>
Giselinde Kuipers – www.giselinde.nl
Stephen Menell – <http://www.stephenmennell.eu>
Abram de Swaan – <http://www.deswaan.com/index.htm>

In addition, please note the new blog by Bruce Mazlish, the great 'global historian' at MIT, whose writings are always congenial to figurationalists: <http://www.bmazlish.blog.com/>

And please notify the editors of others who should be added to this list.

■ LATEST VOLUME OF ELIAS COLLECTED WORKS

Norbert Elias, *The Society of Individuals* (Dublin: UCD Press, 10 December 2010 [Collected Works, vol. 10]). xvi + 224 pp. ISBN: 978-1-906359-07-2. Translated by Edmund Jephcott. German text edited by Michael Schröter. This volume edited by Robert van Krieken.

Philosophers and social scientists have for decades – centuries even – tied themselves in knots over the supposed problem of 'individual' versus 'society', and its offshoots such as 'agency' and 'structure'. Elias shows the falsity of problem, which ought to be easily resolved by thinking in terms of processes extending over the generations – though in practice the baleful

influence of philosophy leads to its constant resurrection. *The Society of Individuals* consists of three essays, the first written in 1939, the second dating from the 1940s and 1950s, and the third a final reflection composed in 1987 only three years before Elias's death. In each, Elias takes the discussion to a new level, demonstrating that individualisation is an inherent component of the personal socialisation process and of inter-generational civilising processes, exploding the myth of the 'We-less ego', and introducing important conceptual innovations, including 'I-identity' versus 'We-identity' and the 'We-I balance'.

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(1940s–1950s)

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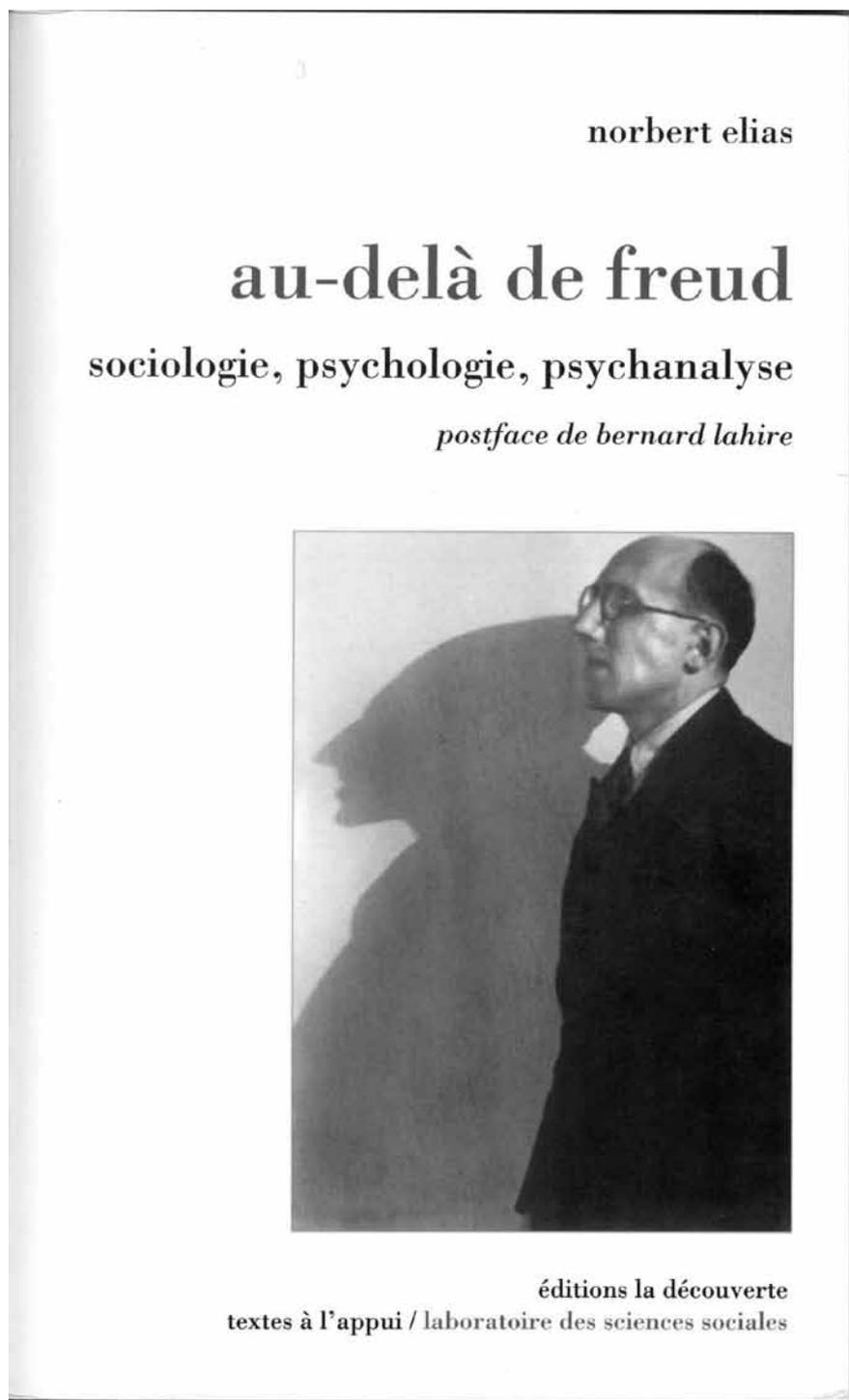
This volume is published at the list price of €60.00, but it can be purchased direct from the publishers at the discount price of €48.00 – go to www.ucdpress.ie.

■ NORBERT ELIAS: BEYOND FREUD

Norbert Elias, *Au-delà de Freud: sociologie, psychologie, psychanalyse* (Paris: La Découverte, 2010). Edited by Marc Joly; translated from English and German by Nicolas Guilhot, Marc Joly and Valentine Meunier; with an afterword by Bernard Lahire. 215 pp. ISBN: 978-2-7071-5760-7.

This is arguably the most important 'new' book by Elias to appear in the last

decade. Marc Joly has put together a collection of Elias's writings that bear upon psychology and psychoanalysis, none of which has previously appeared in French. These include the essays on 'Sociology and psychiatry' (1969), 'The civilising of parents' (1980) and 'civilisation and psychosomatics' (1988), which have already been published in English and (in the first two cases) German. The volume also includes a translation of the transcript of Elias's 1950 lecture, 'The field of social psychology', delivered at King's



College, London – which has been included in neither the *Gesammelte Schriften* nor the *Collected Works*.

But what makes this volume of the greatest significance is that Marc Joly has succeeded in making a coherent, readable and cogent text from the sprawling multivariate drafts of the major essay on ‘The Freudian conception of society and beyond it’ that Elias was writing in the months immediately leading up to his death in 1990.

Elias never made any secret of the profound influence that Freud had on his work from the 1930s onwards. The influence was in any case very obvious. Yet careful reading always revealed that, as Elias said himself, he was never an uncritical and orthodox adherent of psychoanalysis. Freud’s impact upon the human self-image remains profound, but today Freud’s ideas are markedly less fashionable among *à la mode* intellectuals – who seem generally to throw the baby out with much of the bathwater that arguably is indeed disposable. That is relevant to the reception of Elias’s work because, especially in the USA, the perception that Elias is ‘a Freudian’ *tout court* becomes an excuse not to read his works with the care and attention that is required. One problem is that Elias never set out at length where he stood in relation to Freud – what he agreed with, what he disagreed with, and why – until he attempted to do just that in the last months of his life.

As readers will be well aware, in his last few years Elias was effectively blind. His last writings, including *The Symbol Theory* and the ‘Maycomb model’ essay, as well as his work on Freud, were dictated to assistants. Since he could not read the result, he had also had to rely on the assistants to read back what they had typed up from the previous day. This appears to have exacerbated Elias’s existing tendency to produce many different drafts of the same ideas. Nevertheless, in the case of *The Symbol Theory* (which he did more or less complete), Elias would not give permission to Richard Kilminster to take radical editorial initiative to eliminate false starts and repetitions and

to sort out the material into some more coherent and systematic exposition. Precisely such radical editorial initiative is what Marc Joly has achieved with the Freud papers – which, hitherto, had languished at the DLA in Marbach in a state that was thought to preclude publication.

The resulting 54-page essay (pp. 131–85) is highly convincing. It is in certain respects – to those familiar with Elias’s thinking – fairly predictable, but it is no less persuasive for all that. The first major section describes Freud’s as ‘a social theory founded on the opposition of individual and society’; like so many others up to the present day, Freud had no effective notion of social dynamics. He was after all a psychologist, so it is hardly surprising if his thought was psychologistic – his explanations were sought in the properties of the individual human mind. In other words: *homo clausus* rides again. The next section of the text assembled by Joly follows logically under the heading ‘a myth of origins’. Next comes an extended discussion of ‘social repression and psychological repression’. And then, in characteristic fashion, Elias moves on to advocate ‘a processual reorientation of Freudian concepts’. And finally: ‘beyond nature and culture’: or, Elias might have written, ‘In my beginning is my end’, for the problem of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ had been one of his preoccupations from the beginning of his intellectual life.

Now that Marc Joly has shown what can be done with the Freud papers, we have plans to publish his edition of them in the original English. Watch this space to find out how we manage to squeeze them into the last volumes of the *Collected Works* that are now under preparation. In the meantime, if you read French, read this book.

SJM

■ LETTER TO THE EDITOR

We are pleased to report that later in 2011, Ashgate Press is going to publish David Matsinhe’s University of Alberta PhD thesis on ‘Cleaning the Nations: Anti-African Patriotism and Xenophobia in South Africa’ (an abstract of which appears later in this issue). The title of the book will be *Apartheid Vertigo*, but when he was seeking advice about possible publishers, he wrote a rather depressing email to the Editor, an edited version of which (with David’s permission) we print here. We wonder whether other graduate students elsewhere have had similarly discouraging experiences.

‘Dear Professor Mennell,
A year ago I completed a doctorate in sociology at the University of Alberta. The dissertation was a figurational study of migration, nationalism, and violence in South Africa with focus on antagonistic relations between black insiders (former victims of apartheid) and black outsiders (African migrants). I am in the process of revising it for publication as a book. But I was wondering who among publishing companies would be sufficiently open to publish a book written from a figurational approach. The reason I am asking this is this. ... I sent a proposal to *** Press just to test the waters. I received comments from three reviewers. One had a tangential knowledge of Elias. He had heard that Elias was only appropriate for studying the past, so it would be indeed interesting to see his ideas applied to contemporary issues. The other two acknowledged they had never heard of Elias or figurational sociology before. One of them went as far as asking his colleagues about Elias and figurational sociology – all of them said they had never heard of either. However, they both admit that such an approach would be novel in the field of African studies. Practically all the issues they raised were exactly the same issues raised by my examination committee. I addressed all of them, many of them in anticipation. I would greatly value any advice you might have on this issue....’

David Matsinhe



■ RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006). xviii + 228 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8014-7416-3.

Barbara H. Rosenwein is a medieval historian who specialises in the history of emotions, a still rather underestimated field of history in general. In her book she challenges the general tendency among historians either to ignore or to over-generalise about some important components of social history, such as the complexity of human emotions. She proposes the existence of *emotional communities*, meaning certain groups of people who tend conform to their own standard of norms of emotional expression. The more the author develops this concept, the more it reminds us of Foucauldian notion of *common discourse*, with a twist of Bourdieu's *habitus*. Although Rosenwein's work presents impressive historical microanalysis, such as of the writings of Pope Gregory the Great or the funerary inscriptions in several Gallic cities, it seems to be yet another example of misinterpretation of Elias's concept of civilising processes. Apart from the attempts to undermine the historical validity of Elias's work, the author also seems to assimilate the civilising process with Stearnses' concept of *emotionology*. With no offence to the Stearnses' themselves – who have produced a fascinating body of work – their enterprise in more in line with the piecemeal approach of conventional history, so that juxtaposing *emotionology* with the more

general theory of civilising processes seems somewhat inaccurate and lazy. Ironically enough, Rosenwein herself criticises the simplistic interpretations of early medieval descriptions of emotions that are present in most historical works about that period. With the use of more recent psychological theories, she provides us with new interpretations of certain displays of emotions that were conveniently ritualised by others in the past. All in all, the book is a good contribution to the debates on understandings of the nature of human emotions.

The chapter titles of Rosenwein's book are: 1. The Ancient Legacy; 2. Confronting Death; 3. Passions and Power; 4. The Poet and the Bishop; 5. Courtly Discipline; 6. Revelling in Rancour.

Also worth mentioning is a previous book by the author, *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Cornell University Press, 1998) – not previously mentioned in *Figurations* – which is a compilation of essays exploring the variety of contexts of medieval anger. Yet again, the book is a polemic on the work of Norbert Elias, with the one exception of the essay by Zouhair Ghazzal ('From Anger on Behalf of God to "Forbearance" in Islamic Medieval Literature'), who accepts Eliasian theory in order to contrast the development of the Western and Islamic societies.

Barbara Górnicka
University College Dublin

Stephen Quilley, 'Integrative levels and "the great evolution": Organicist biology and the sociology of Norbert Elias', *Journal of Classical Sociology* 10: 4 (2010), pp. 1–29.

Abstract: The achievement of Norbert Elias was to develop a paradigmatic foundation for sociology as the lynchpin in a broader human science encompassing the social and biological dimensions of human development. The extent to which he remains at the margins of a discipline profoundly suspicious of the biological sciences is perhaps an index of his originality. But this outsider status also obscures the unoriginality of his work. Elias's unifying epistemological framework centring on 'integrative levels' and 'emergent dynamics' drew heavily on a long tradition of organicist biology. Reviewing developments in twentieth-century biology, it is argued that Elias simply absorbed an organicist *Zeitgeist* that had become subtly paradigmatic at around the time of the elaboration, in the 1940s, of the 'modern synthesis' in genetic-evolutionary theory.

Andrew Linklater, 'International society and the civilising process', *Ritsumeikan International Affairs*, 9 (2010), pp x–xx.

Abstract: This article develops new connections between Norbert Elias's study of the 'civilising process' and English School reflections on the European society of states and its worldwide expansion. Elias discussed

the development of European ideas about the 'civilised' nature of their society, and he explained how that sense of civilisation made little impression on how Europeans conducted their relations with each other and with the European world. His writings paid no attention to the emergence of the European society of states or to how it was influenced by the civilising process that first developed within 'court society'. The 'standard of civilisation' which Europeans invented in the nineteenth century to justify the domination of the non-European world is a clear example of how the civilising process shaped the development of the society of states. Although the English School has analysed such phenomena, it has not considered their relationship with the civilising process. By creating new links between Eliasian sociology and the English School it is possible to explain how the radical transformation of European societies found expression in the society of states and in policies that have transformed human society as a whole. An improved understanding the prospects for a global civilising process that does justice to all cultures can be built on such foundations.

Andrew Linklater, 'Global civilising processes and the ambiguities of human interconnectedness', *European Journal of International Relations* 16: 2 (2010), pp. 155–178

Abstract: Increased social power over the millennia has led to remarkable achievements in varied spheres of endeavour while introducing new possibilities for more destructive forms of harm over greater distances. Efforts to create moral frameworks to protect persons from senseless harm have been critical replies to the ambiguities of human interconnectedness. Over the millennia, societies have become entangled in global 'civilising processes' such as the systems of communication that now encompass humanity as a whole, enabling different peoples to become better attuned to each other. Societies of states have immense significance for that long-term development. They have been arenas in which independent communities

have discovered the prospects for, as well as the constraints on, agreements on norms that can be anchored in the most readily available points of solidarity between strangers — those vulnerabilities to mental and physical suffering that are shared by human beings everywhere. The recovery of 'universal history from a cosmopolitan point of view' can examine the contribution that international societies have made to global civilising processes that harness such solidarities to restrain the human capacity to cause violent and non-violent harm to distant peoples. It can support the normative project of promoting global civilising processes that employ unprecedented levels of collective power to reduce the tragic effects of the ambiguities that have accompanied long-term trends towards higher levels of human interconnectedness.

Keith Thomas, 'Bodily control and social unease: the fart in seventeenth-century England', in A. McShane and G. Walker (eds), *The Extraordinary and the Everyday in Early Modern England: Essays in Celebration of the Work of Bernard Capp* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

Keith Thomas's fascinating essay on ... the fart (!) in early modern England is just one of many interesting works in the book by McShane and Walker, which juxtaposes the ordinary with the extraordinary aspects of everyday life in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century England. Farting, insulting, drinking, ghosts and cannibalism – it sure is all in there, and it is compiled in celebration of the work of Bernard Capp.

The title of the essay by Thomas on bodily control and social unease leads one to expect something along the lines of Monty Python's '*We shall fart in your general direction!!*'; but if so, one is in for a surprise, because this piece is a serious and consistent account of the incidence of flatulence. Even though breaking the wind might not be a condition which distinguishes human beings from animals, the social and historical aspects of the changing attitudes of people to this bodily process is most certainly

worth looking into. This anti-social act was very often placed between the physical necessity stated by the medical experts at the time, and social propriety. In accordance with the Eliasian perspective, Thomas speaks of the control of this infamous act as one of the ways of distinguishing the social status at the time. The way the author presents it, farting is most certainly not just a trivial and disgusting act of our everyday social sphere, and surely accounts for a fascinating read.

Barbara Górnicka
UCD

Artur Bogner, 'Making peace in northern Ghana: the role of non-governmental organisations and traditional authorities', in S. Tonah (ed.), *Contemporary Social Problems in Ghana* (Accra: Yamens Press, 2009), pp. 73–102

This book is a collection of articles that reflect on a variety of social problems in contemporary Ghana written by sociologists, economists, anthropologists, gender advocates and lawyers. The book provides detailed analysis of Ghanaian major social problems, such as ethnic conflicts, human rights violation, child sexual defilement, but also cultural aspect of it such as widowhood or funeral celebrations. The reasons for mentioning this book here are quite obvious, since Norbert Elias was very fond of African art and taught at the University of Ghana between years 1962–64 in Accra, and Artur Bogner – one of his student assistants in the early 1980s – became an African specialist.

Bogner's article on non-governmental organisations and their role in the peace-making process, describes the attempts at renegotiating the relations between the ethno-political groupings in a violence-free manner. The author points out how unrealistic the process of formation of 'civic society' is when very young nation-states with multi-party regimes in Africa are involved. He argues that the NGOs' ways of dealing with intra-ethnic conflict are developing very slowly and are very limited in their scope.

See also Artur Bogner's related essay, 'The peace process in the wake of Ghana's Northern Conflict: Its course and conditions for success', in Gabriele Rosenthal and Artur Bogner (eds), *Ethnicity, Belonging and Biography: Ethnographical and Biographical Perspectives* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2009), pp. 41–62.

Barbara Górnicka
UCD

Una MacConville and Regina McQuillan, 'A figurational approach: views of communication and awareness of death and dying in Ireland', *Irish Journal of Sociology* 17: 2 (2009), pp. 41–55.

Abstract: Open awareness and communication in death and dying have become important aspects in caring for people who are terminally ill. This change began in the 1960s and has been driven by social and ideological factors, especially in highly individualistic societies such as the US and the UK. While this is the preferred interaction within palliative care, open awareness and communication about death and dying can be resisted in some societies where families seek to protect their relative from the truth of a terminal illness. This article considers some attitudes to open awareness and communication in Ireland from recent research and a popular radio talk programme. This suggests that while there is openness about issues of mortality in Ireland, there can be resistance when terminal illness becomes a reality within a family. Elias's figurational approach is utilised to understand these differing responses.

Matt Clement, 'Teenagers under the knife: a decivilising process', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 13: 4 (2010), pp. 439–51.

Abstract: The contradiction emerging between the lived experience of a minority of marginalised urban youth and the punitive operant conditioning of antisocial behaviour legislation is illustrative of the increasing gap between society's expectations of behaviour and the coming reality. In this paper, Loïc Wacquant's sociology of advanced

marginality is combined with Norbert Elias's concept of civilising and decivilising processes and applied to the dilemma of young offenders in a typical UK city. It identifies increasing educational exclusion and institutional abandonment in affected 'neighbourhoods of relegation'. This process is part of a general trend towards the desocialisation of labour, which ushers in a reactionary, violent decivilising process among the minority most affected, where use of violence becomes the foundation of repute for otherwise powerless individuals, or for gangs in their control of small urban spaces. By analysing this dilemma from the perspective of the 'perpetrators' rather than the victims of knife crime, we seek to describe their praxis; that is, the nature of their habitus or consciousness.

Paddy Dolan, 'Space, time and the constitution of subjectivity: comparing Elias and Foucault', *Foucault Studies* 8 (2010), pp. 8–27.

Abstract: The work of Foucault and Elias has been compared before in the social sciences and humanities, but here I argue that the main distinction between their approaches to the construction of subjectivity is the relative importance of space and time in their accounts. This is not just a matter of the 'history of ideas', as providing for the temporal dimension more fully in theories of subjectivity and the habitus allows for a greater understanding of how ways of being, acting and feeling in different spaces are related but largely unintended. Here I argue that discursive practices, governmental operations and technologies of the self (explanatory claims of both Foucault and the Foucauldian tradition) take shape as processes within the continuities of the figurational flow connecting people across space and time. Continuity should not be understood as stability or sameness over time, but as the contingent relations between successive social formations. As Elias argues, there is a structure or order to long-term social change, albeit unplanned, and this ultimately provides the broader social explanation for the historicity of the subject.

Though discursive practices happen in particular spaces, we must recognise these spaces, and the practices therein, as socially constructed over time in response to largely unplanned moral and cultural developments.

Paddy Dolan, 'Figurational dynamics and parliamentary discourses of living standards in Ireland', *British Journal of Sociology* 60: 4 (2009), pp. 721–39.

Abstract: While the concept of living standards remains central to political debate, it has become marginal in sociological research compared to the burgeoning attention given to the topic of consumer culture in recent decades. However, they both concern how one does and should consume, and, indeed, behave at particular times. I use the theories of Norbert Elias to explain the unplanned but structured (ordered) changes in expected standards of living over time. This figurational approach is compared to other alternative explanations, particularly those advanced by Bourdieu, Veblen and Baudrillard. Though these offer some parallels with Elias's theories, I argue that consumption standards are produced and transformed through the changing dependencies and power relations between social classes. They cannot be reduced to the intentions, interests or ambitions of particular elites, nor to the needs of social systems. Using qualitative data from parliamentary debates in Ireland to trace changing norms and ideals of consumption, as well as historical data to reconstruct shifts in social interdependencies, I further contend that discourses of living standards and luxury are vital aspects of the growing identification and empathy between classes, which in turn encourages greater global integration in the face of emigration and national decline.

Paddy Dolan, (2009) 'Developing consumer subjectivity in Ireland: 1900–80', *Journal of Consumer Culture* 9: 1 (2009), pp. 117–41.

Abstract: The development of consumer subjectivity cannot be solely understood in terms of the intentions, strategies and discursive practices

emanating from diverse power centres. Following Elias, and using Ireland as an empirical case, the consumer is presented as undergoing a shift along a continuum of We-I balances towards the latter pole. This occurs within the context of increasing social interdependencies, functional specialisation and social integration. Through complex, unplanned social processes over time, the consumer is seen more individualistically. I conclude by suggesting that there are opportunities to synthesise figurational and Foucauldian approaches to consumer subjectivity once long-term social change is prioritised.

Robert J. Lake, “Managing change” in British tennis 1990–2006: Unintended outcomes of LTA talent development policies’, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 45: 4 (2010), pp. 474–90.

Abstract: Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) initiated several policies aimed at developing talent in British tennis, chief of which was the transformation of traditional tennis club cultures to make them more open, accessible and performance-oriented. The 1990s also witnessed other changes that influenced the LTA’s overall position: a shift in emphasis from mass to elite-level provision within wider British sport policy, the introduction of new investment opportunities through the National Lottery, the rise of New Labour, a change in LTA leadership and a swell in LTA investment drawn from Wimbledon profits. This article draws upon Norbert Elias’s Game Models theoretical framework to: i) examine some of the talent development policies introduced by the LTA from the early 1990s onwards; ii) analyse the gradual shifting power relations throughout the late 20th century between the LTA and its affiliated tennis clubs, which came to influence the former’s ability to implement policy; iii) uncover problems that the LTA encountered in delivering policy objectives in tennis clubs; and, iv) analyse the overall unintended and undesired outcomes of these policies for the LTA itself, and for British tennis clubs, coaches and players.

Marc Joly, ‘Devenir Norbert Elias: contribution à l’analyse d’un processus transnational de reconnaissance scientifique: la réception française [Becoming Norbert Elias: contribution to the analysis of a trans-national process of scientific recognition: the French reception]’. Unpublished doctoral thesis, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 2010.

Abstract: The purpose of this research is to contribute to the understanding of the process of international recognition of the work of Norbert Elias. The first chapter presents a synthesis of the many ‘theoretical’ problems raised by the research topic. The aim was to complete theory of the field of cultural production by taking into account the ‘psychological’ dimension of scientific creation and the trans-national environment where a work in the field of humanities is embedded.

The aim of the second chapter is to enlighten the path of Norbert Elias from his departure from Germany in 1933 to the beginning of the 1970s. This chapter mainly focuses on the situation of Elias – who had to face exile – in the field of British social sciences and humanities in the period after the Second World War and to piece together the structure of his relationships at that time; in parallel, this chapter shows that Elias had an underground recognition in the Netherlands and in Germany as early as the 1950s.

Finally, the third and fourth chapters aim at explaining the reasons why *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* was first translated in French, as a result of the book being able for the first time to gain real public recognition thanks to the historians of the *Annales* school. In this sense, the French reception from the beginning of the 1970s marks a turning point in the process of recognition of the Eliasian *oeuvre*: this doctoral research aims at defining the underlying questions and the dynamics of its development

David Matsinhe, ‘Cleaning the Nations: Anti-African Patriotism and Xenophobia in South Africa’, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Alberta, 2010.

The subject of this thesis is ‘apartheid vertigo’, a dizzying sensation following prolonged oppression and delusions of skin colour. For three centuries, the colour-code shaped the state and national ideals, created social and emotional distances between social groups, permeated public and intimate spheres of life alike, filled the landscapes with signposts, always imposing the unbearable burden of inhumanity on Africans of all nationalities in South Africa. Two decades after the demise of apartheid, including four successive black governments, apartheid vertigo still distorts the postcolonial reality. The colour-code, notably the aversion toward Africa and blackness, still prevails, now in postcolonial masks. Freedom notwithstanding, to a greater or lesser extent the black citizenry has adopted the code, adapting it to fit the new reality. This vertiginous reality is perhaps most salient in what could be called the neo-apartheid ideology of Makwerekwe, that is, the postcolonial color-code mobilised to distinguish black outsiders from black insiders. The vertigo ranges from negative sentiments to outright violence against black outsiders, including insults, humiliations, extortions, searches, arrests, detentions, deportations, tortures, rapes, beatings, killings, etc. Ironically, the victims are not only the outsiders against whom the code is mobilised but also the insiders who mobilise it.

Aggression against black outsiders picked up in May 2008, when mobs of black nationals, the former victims of apartheid, ironically went on a deadly rampage against perceived black foreign nationals with clubs, knives, guns, machetes, sticks, and stones. Circulated electronically across the world, the graphic images revived some repressed memories of apartheid and ethnic cleansing. So far the explanatory arguments have maintained that this antipathy toward black foreign nationals issues from visible distinctiveness of the victims

(the black foreign nationals) from the offenders (the black nationals). Hitherto this aversion toward black outsiders by black insiders has been conventionally seen as xenophobia. Here the theory of established-outsiders relationships introduces a different approach to African Studies.

Françoise Lartillot (ed.), *Norbert Elias: Études sur les Allemands* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009). 224 pp. ISBN: 978-2-296-07644-0

It is a little ironic that this excellent French collection of essays centred on Elias's *Studien über die Deutschen* is published before there is as yet a French translation of the book itself. The contributors and their topics are:

Françoise Lartillot: En guise d'introduction. Norbert Elias: Du mythe aux histoires 'symboliques', la méthode 'Elias'

Nathalie Heinich: De quelques malentendus concernant la pensée d'Elias

Daniel Azuelos: Le modèle configurationnel de Norbert Elias en discussion

Gerard Rautet: Le processus de la civilisation et le *Sonderweg* allemand

Manfred Gangl: Zivilisation und nationaler Habitus Zu Norbert Elias' *Studien über die Deutschen*

Reinhard Blomert: Die Weimarer Republik Oder: Wie kreierte man einen gescheiterten Staat?

Reiner Marcowitz : Geschichte eines (vor-) programmierten Scheiterns? Norbert Elias' Interpretation der Weimarer Republik

Karl-Siegbert Rehberg: Positionalität und Figuration versus Gemeinschafts-Verschmelzung Soziologisch-anthropologische Theorieverschränkungen bei Norbert Elias und Helmuth Plessner

Olivier Agard: Norbert Elias et Helmuth Plessner: deux visions du *Sonderweg*

Andrea Allerkamp: 'Träume von Nationen sind gefährlich': Zur Rolle

der psychischen Ökonomie in Elias' *Studien über die Deutschen*

Thomas Keller: Deutsches Raubrittertum oder europäischer Nonkonformismus?: Zur Frage der Gewalt in Norbert Elias' Doppelbiographie des Menschen und der Gesellschaft

We hope that a French translation of *Studien über die Deutschen* will appear fairly soon. In the meantime, these essays are essential reading for anyone interested in the questions raised in that book.

SJM

Stefanie Ernst, Prozessorientierte Methoden in der Arbeits- und Organisationsforschung: Eine Einführung (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2010). 186 pp. ISBN 978-3-531-15979-9.

A considerable literature is beginning to emerge on process-orientated research methods. Stefanie Ernst's book, which is addressed especially to students working in the area of organisational and occupational sociology, follows on the heels of Nina Baur's *Verlaufsmusteranalyse: Methodologische Konsequenzen der Zeitlichkeit sozialen Handelns* (Wiesbaden: VS, 2005), and Ernst and Baur have recently collaborated on an essay on process-methods that will be published in English in 2011. All of this is welcome. Figurationists have traditionally been uninterested in questions of method, unlike mainstream sociologists who seem to have become more and more obsessed with them – 'Are you quant or qual?' (Scream!) This lack of interest no doubt helped to enhance the perception of figurationists as a race apart. The work of Ernst and Baur will serve the dual purpose of reawakening figurationists' interest in serious questions of (mainly 'mixed') methods and also alerting other sociologists to ways of making their research more processually orientated.

SJM

Andrea D. Bührmann and Stefanie Ernst (eds)

Care or Control of the Self?: Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault, and the Subject in the Twenty-First Century (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010) ISBN (10): 1-4438-2135-7; ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-2135-3

This book is an anthology that resulted from the conference at the University of Hamburg held on 3–5 July 2008 (see the report on the conference in *Figurations* 30). The main aim of the book is to discuss the relationship to oneself and the relationship towards others in contemporary societies, using the Eliasian perspective of process sociology and the Foucauldian post-structural theory. Since both theorists have been concerned with the nature of the individual and its consequences to the long-term historical transformation, it does seem very valuable to use their reflections to analyse the fundamental societal changes that took place at the turn of the century. Contents are as follows:

Andrea D. Bührmann and Stefanie Ernst **Introduction**

Fundamental Questions

Andrea D. Bührmann: 'The death of the subject' and its sociological rebirth as subjectivation.

Sam Binkley: Discipline, civilisation and temporality: the rise of abstract time in the constitution of modern subjectivity

Stephen Mennell: American individualism and its consequences for the world (including the credit crunch)

Stefanie Ernst: The self, the market and changes in working life: a process sociological contribution to an enduring debate

Work

Hans Pongratz: A Society of entrepreneurs: the expansion and profanation of 'creative destruction' in capitalist economies

Magdalena Freudenschuss: Under construction: 'precarious subject' and/or 'entrepreneurial self'?

Inga Truschkat: Manager or entrepreneur? the competent subject and the challenge of self-regulation

Body

Boris Traue: The cybernetic self and its discontents: care and self-care in the information society

Gabriele Klein: Bodies and subjects:

aspects of a politicisation of life

Mona Motakef: Do-gooders, club-member or organ broker?

Desire

Volker Woltersdorff: sexual politics in neoliberalism: managing precarious sexual selves

Elisabeth Tuijer: The Desiring Subject: The constitution of the subject between regulation and normalisation

Eva Tolasch: Rethinking identity politics by bringing 'words' and 'things' together

Barbara Górnicka

UCD

Lynne Truss, *Talk to the Hand: The Utter Bloody Rudeness of Everyday Life (or six good reasons to stay at home and bolt the door)* (London: Profile Books, 2005). ISBN: I 861979339

Not very often on the pages of the *Figurations* (if ever!) do we get to mention the best-selling and mainstream authors like Truss, who became extremely popular after the publishing *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* (2003). Initially the book may seem as yet another big rant on what makes somebody's blood boil, but actually the book itself is a bit more insightful than one might expect. The author offers a polemic to what seems to be the growing epidemic of the ignorance towards manners and everyday politeness in the modern world. Surprisingly enough in this case, the author has done her homework, and traced back the subject of spitting for instance, to Elias's *The History of Manners*. As Truss modestly points out herself, she fails to fully venture the in-depth analysis of the civilising process (p. 47), but yet manages to gracefully regain her composure through presenting very entertaining and light elaboration of the history of manners and the large list of acts of rudeness of modern everyday life.

Barbara Górnicka

UCD

Peter Westbroek, *Terre!: Des menaces globales à l'espoir planétaire* (Paris: Seuil, 2009). 224 pp. ISBN: 978 2 098064 7.

Pieter Westbroek is Professor Emeritus of Geophysics at the University of Leiden, and in recent years has been taking very seriously the problem of the entire future of the planet. This has led him to an appreciation of Elias's insights into very long-term processes. In later writings (such as *The Symbol Theory*, 1991, and *Humana Conditio*, 2010) Elias greatly enlarged the original period he had investigated in *The Civilising Process* by examining civilising processes that had influenced humanity as a whole over thousands of years of social development. That Elias was prepared to see such processes as unfolding over the whole course of human history and pre-history is one reason why the earth scientist Peter Westbroek has been able to see so clearly the irrelevance of the charge of 'Eurocentrism' so often levelled at Elias by sociologists and anthropologists. Westbroek writes:

'Elias took refuge in a method frequently applied in the natural sciences, although he likely arrived at this trick by mere intuition. The first biochemists for instance were confronted with a dazzling variety of phenomena. They wished to unravel the workings of all living organisms at the molecular scale, from bacteria to humans, whales and sequoia trees. Clearly, they would never be able to unravel the biochemistry of millions of different species. Yet they found a way out. They selected just one organism that was easy to handle experimentally, and simply assumed that all the rest would be more or less the same. Nature always repeats itself, was their motto.

And so it came that *Escherichia coli*, a simple bacterium in our intestines, became the *model system* by which the biochemistry of all life was studied. And it worked! We now know that most of the principles underlying the molecular machinery of *E. coli* are common to all of life (apart from significant differences of course). This is how *E. coli* became the key to understanding our own molecular underpinnings.

So, what was to become the *E. coli* of humanity? Elias looked for a fragment of history that could be studied in relative isolation, that was far enough back in the past to keep the involvement away, and that was well documented. After a long search, he chose a neat little subject – the transformation of etiquette in Western European post-medieval courts. The documentation was excellent, as he had manners books at his disposal from about 1350 onwards. As he found out, the changes in etiquette over that period had been dramatic. ... How could these changes be explained? Elias argued that they were associated with profound modifications of the power structure in society.' (pp. 168–9)

It is intended that *Terre!* will also be published in English and Dutch. Other essays by Westbroek of general interest are:

'Back to Nature? The punctuated history of a natural monument', in B. de Vries and J. Goudsblom (eds) *Mappae Mundi* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), pp. 379–92.

'Gaia, Ockham's razor and the science of complexity', *World Futures* 60 (2004), pp. 407–20.

'Taming Gaia: The history of the Dutch Lowlands as an analogy to Global Change', in S. H. Schneider *et al.* (eds), *Scientists debate Gaia: The next century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004).

SJM

W. G. Runciman, *The Theory of Cultural and Social Selection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). viii + 257 pp. ISBN: 978-0-521-13614-3.

Runciman, one of Britain's most distinguished social scientists, has long advocated an evolutionary perspective in sociological theory, in strong contrast to his sociological fellow member of the House of Lords, Tony Giddens, who declared the intention of eradicating all traces of evolutionism from his 'social theory'. Readers of *Figurations*

are therefore likely to sympathise with Runciman rather than Giddens. Runciman's emphasis is, however, on competitive social selection mechanisms, and he shares the British sociological establishment's scepticism about long-term trends – including especially Elias. Runciman writes (p. 197):

‘the selectionist response is that just as synchronic correlation is no proof of underlying causality, so is diachronic sequence no proof of underlying process. This type of narrative is well illustrated by Norbert Elias's *The Civilising Process*. Elias tells a well-documented and convincing story of sequential changes in European manners and mores over a chosen period. But here ignores similar changes in non-European cultures, including the courtly sub-culture of Japan; and as has been pointed out ever since its original publication in German in 1939, the assumption implicit in his chosen title was being falsified in the very society in which it was being written during the very years in which he was writing it.’

Actually, this remark is almost respectful in comparison with what was the mainstream British sociological/anthropological view of Elias, but it is disappointing to hear repeated once again the famously sneering comment made by the late Sir Edmund Leach in a review of *Quest for Excitement* in 1986. Elias deserves more careful reading, and not just of the first volume of his *magnum opus*.

SJM

Antonin Cohen, Bernard Lacroix and Philippe Riutort (eds), *Nouveau manuel de science politique* (Paris: La Découverte, 2009). 787 pp. ISBN: 978-2-7071-5366-6.

This book is a massive student textbook for the whole field of political science – actually too massive to be reviewed thoroughly here. But, given the presence of Bernard Lacroix among the editorial trio and contributions from Alain Garrigou, Eric Phélippeau, Hervé Fayat, and Erik Neveu, it is no surprise to find that the volume is congenial

from a figurational or process-sociology point of view. That is especially noticeable in chapter 2, on the parliamentary state, a longstanding field of research among the Groupe d'analyse politique at Nanterre – as far back as 1997, *Figurations* 8 contains a report of the Elias centenary colloquium on ‘The formation of the parliamentary state’ organised by the Nanterre team.

SJM

■ BOOKS BY ELIAS IN ITALIAN

The Italian publishers Il Molino recognised Elias's importance during his lifetime, inviting him to lecture in Bologna during his last years. They have since published most of his books in Italian translation. The three most recent titles are:

La società di corte

[*Die höfisch Gesellschaft*] ISBN: 978-88-15-13780-7

Marinaio e gentiluomo

[*The Genesis of the Naval Profession*] ISBN: 978-88-15-13773-9

Potere e civiltà

(vol. 2 of *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation*) ISBN: 978-88-15-23413-4

What a great pity that in the case of *Potere e civiltà* the Italians followed the awful and seriously misleading title *Power and Civility* that was used for the American edition of the second volume of *The Civilising Process*, which has helped to cause endless confusion – including the prevalent fault in America of representing ‘civility’ as Elias's own etioc concept rather than the emic concept that it actually is!

Other Elias titles from Il Molino are:

La civiltà delle buone maniere

La solitudine de morente

Humana conditio

Coinvolgimento e distacco

Saggio sul tempo

La società degli individui

Mozart

Teoria del simboli

For further details, see www.molino.it

■ BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RETROSPECT

Adam Kuper, *Culture: The Anthropologists' Account* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999). xviii + 299 pp. ISBN: 0 674 00417 5 (pbk).

We overlooked this book a decade ago, perhaps because yet another discussion of the concept of ‘culture’ was not immediately appealing. That was a mistake. This is an important, engaging and well-written book. Our attention was belatedly drawn to it by the fact that its first chapter contains a long and positive discussion of Elias, but there is much more to it. As an old Parsons hand (well, briefly, in my distant youth), I also learned a good deal about which I was previously unaware, such as the unease that even Parsons's close associates among American anthropologists, such as A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, felt about his intellectual enterprise. The following chapters deal with the views of other leading anthropologists, especially Clifford Geertz, David Schneider, Marshall Sahlins, together with the younger generation of postmodernist, post-structuralist trendies. Kuper is refreshingly sceptical of them all. As he remarks in the first words of the book, ‘American academics are waging culture wars. (Not many dead)’. That is preferable to the culture wars that have ravaged American politics in recent decades, in which people *have* died. Kuper's own stance is more towards something like the cultural materialism of Marvin Harris, as against the philosophical idealism to which Sahlins abruptly switched in the late 1960s and which became the anthropological orthodoxy for several decades. In short, his views are congenial to those of us who are developmentally and processually minded.

SJM

Gregory Brown, ‘Social encounters and self-image in the age of enlightenment: Norbert Elias in eighteenth-century French cultural historiography’, *Journal of Early Modern History* 6: 1 (2002), pp. 24–51.

Abstract: This paper advances the recent debate among early modern French historians on the application of Norbert Elias by discussing how his approach to the problem of social encounters among individual members of a community can be applied to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France. Drawing on various examples from history and literature, the article argues that Elias's approach holds much potential for this field, because it conceives social encounters and individual identities as forms of symbolic interaction through which patterns of inequality are reproduced among small groups and then replicated across the entire society.

Joshua Lavie, 'The lost roots of the theory of Group Analysis: "Taking inter-relational individuals seriously!"', *Group Analysis*, 38: 4 (2005), pp. 533–50.

Abstract: This paper is a micro-historical analysis of unpublished drafts of S. H. Foulkes – intended to be part of his 'Theory Book' on group analysis – together with a comprehensive new historical reading of Norbert Elias's published writings relevant to group analysis, focusing on two lost roots of the theory of group analysis: (1) Elias's discovery of the simultaneous-interdependent process of 'individualisation and socialisation', and (2) Foulkes's innovative conception of the 'mind as a multi-personal phenomenon'. This analysis forms the main argument of this paper – that the theory of group analysis 'takes inter-relational individuals (in the plural) seriously', not the reified concept of 'The Individual' nor the abstract concept of 'The Group'. It is proposed that Foulkes's conception of the individual's mind 'as a multi-personal phenomenon' is compatible with, although it preceded, Mitchell's 'relational' conception of 'multiple selves'.

J. David Slocum, 'Cinema and the civilising process: rethinking violence in the World War II Combat Film', *Cinema Journal* 44: 3 (2005), pp. 35–63.

Abstract: This essay proposes an alternative critical approach to the 'violence' of the World War II combat

film. Guiding this approach is the idea of a 'civilising process' that attends both to specific representations in war films and to the institutional role of cinema in socialising and regulating individual behaviour. The theoretical grounding here is the sociological work of Norbert Elias, whose major study *The Civilising Process* was first published in 1939.

■ FUTURE PUBLICATIONS

Special issue of *Política y Sociedad*

Raúl Sánchez García (European University of Madrid) and Fernando Ampudia de Haro (New University of Lisbon) are currently preparing a special issue on figurational sociology for the journal *Política y Sociedad* (Politics and Society), a sociological journal from the Faculty of Political Sciences and Sociology of the Complutense University of Madrid. The issue will appear in 2012. Contact raul.sanchez@uem.es or fernandoampudia@gmail.com.

Call for contributions:

Norbert Elias, Social Theory and its Key Issues. Contributions are invited to a book, provisionally entitled *Norbert Elias, Social Theory and its Key Issues*, to be edited by François Dépelteau (Laurentian University, Canada) and Tatiana Savoia Landini (Universidade Federal de Sao Paulo, Brazil)

Norbert Elias has become one of the most important social scientists of the twentieth century. His name has appeared frequently in textbooks and his books have been re-published and translated all over the world.

Our aim is to publish a book presenting rigorous comparisons between the work of Norbert Elias and other social (or human) scientists, either classical or contemporary. We welcome texts which analyse and compare the work of Norbert Elias with significant classical and contemporary thinkers such as (but not limited to) Pierre Bourdieu, Ernst Cassirer, Michel Foucault, Sigmund

Freud, Bruno Latour, Karl Marx, Georg Simmel and Max Weber.

The comparison can be on specific issues or concepts, such as: the formation of the State, the significance of violence in the contemporary world, the concept of social class, the critique of positivism, the relation between sociology and history or sociology and psychology, the relation between engagement and detachment, or the critique of the dualism between the society and the individual. In this case, it is expected that the text would compare the work of Norbert Elias to the contribution of other key specialists in the selected issue.

Texts on other related issues could also be accepted. We welcome contributions from all the disciplines. Texts should be limited to 20 pages (Times New Roman 12, double space), including bibliography.

Deadline for receiving the texts:
1 May 2011

Please submit your text by email (on Word) to:
Francois Depelteau
(fdepelteau@laurentian.ca) and,
Tatiana S. Landini
(tatiana.landini@unifesp.br)

■ RECENT CONFERENCES

XVII ISA World Congress of Sociology

Göteborg, Sweden, 11–17 July 2010
The list of speakers scheduled for the figurational sessions in Göteborg was given in *Figurations* 33. Only a few people were unable at the last moment to turn up, so the sessions were long and lively, with a welcome number of new faces among the speakers. We were all grateful to Stephen Vertigans and Robert van Krieken for organising the event.

For the first time, the figurational group held a semi-formal 'business meeting' on the Tuesday evening. The most important item for discussion was the proposal to establish an online journal – the outcome of which is reported on page 1 above. Then we went downstairs

to an excellent dinner in the Restaurang Trädgår'n, hosted by the Norbert Elias Foundation. Most of the group fell into the habit of eating together every evening in the Restaurant Lipp. (It is drinking together regularly that has kept the network functioning for over 30 years!)

Overall, though, the Congress was a slightly curious event. The plenary sessions, and some at least of the ordinary sessions of the various Research Committees, took place in the cavernous Göteborg Congress Centre. But other sessions were held in the far-flung campuses of Göteborg University. Since our own sessions did not begin until early evening on the Wednesday – the Congress having begun on the Sunday – I for one did not fully appreciate how far away some of them were from the conference

headquarters. Our sessions were in fact about a 20-minute walk from there. If one wished to attend sessions of our parent Research Committee 20, or of RC 27 Sociology of Sport, then their campus was a further ten minutes' walk. Of course, this only reinforces what the organisation of the ISA in hermetically-sealed sub-disciplinary boxes already ensures: that there is little sense of the intellectual unity of the discipline of sociology at these events. We hope the ISA will at least try to avoid this geographical dispersion at the next Congress, in Yokohama in 2014. (This is an ill-coded message to our own Robert van Krieken who, as reported elsewhere, was elected Vice-President of the ISA.)

World Congresses are also occasions for intensive politicking. One of

the most important outcomes of this one was that the ISA Executive approved the upgrading of the existing Thematic Group 02, on 'Historical and Comparative Sociology', to the status of Working Group (the rank next below full Research Committee in the ISA hierarchy) – on condition that it also incorporated the figurational group. So we figurationists now belong to two ISA entities – RC 20, Comparative Sociology, and WG 02, Historical and Comparative Sociology. Ours is not to reason why ...

Of course, it wasn't all business – photographs of the dinner at the Restaurang Trädgår'n, another in the Restaurant Lipp, and of a relaxed afternoon in the Café Husaren after our last session are evident of that.



In the Restaurang Trädgår'n



Restaurant Lipp – Giseline Kuipers, Stephen Mennell, Joop Goudsblom, Norman Gabriel, Dominique Memmi, Bo Paulle (rear view), Stefanie Ernst, Katie Liston, Stephen Vertigans, Paddy Dolan.



Cafe Husaren: Barbara Evers, Joop Goudsblom, Stephen Mennell, Giseline Kuipers, Dominique Memmi.

Beyond dichotomous thinking: the society of individuals – The legacy and continuing relevance of Norbert Elias's sociology

University of Florence, 7–9 October, 2009

Despite being extended into a third day, this conference attracted so many papers – 50 were listed in the final programme – that there isn't space to list them all here. See instead the conference website, <http://eliasfirenze2010.wordpress.com/>.

The conference opened with three plenary speakers: Angela Perulli, Alessandro Cavalli and Johan Goudsblom, and it closed with a round-table discussion with Florence Delmotte, Robert van Krieken and Stephen Mennell. In between, the speakers were close-packed.

A conference in the wonderful city of Florence was always going to be popular, and the organisers – Angela Perulli especially – made sure that the peripheral events would make the conference stick in our memories. Alessandro Cavalli played a DVD of his interview with Elias from the 1980s, which few of us knew. Before the main conference dinner, we were invited to a private view in the Accademia Gallery – where we could wander around the feet of Michaelangelo's *David* and his *prigioni*.

It seems to be a recurring problem that every Elias-orientated conference generates so many contributions that the time-slots available are too short for the meaningful development of a complex argument. Of course, constraints of time and expense (and sometimes space) prevent longer conferences. Sometimes it seems we need to be in permanent session, like the Petrograd Soviet.

XIII International Symposium on Civilising Processes

Bogotá, Colombia, 9–12 November 2010

The XIII International Symposium on the Processes of Civilisation was held at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia's Faculty of Social Sciences in Bogotá, with support from Sociology Department of the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

The Symposium was opened with words from Bertolt Brecht's *The Life of Galileo Galilei*, spoken by Santiago García. Theatre director García thus returned to the university where, during the mid-1960s, he had introduced students into Brecht's ideas about the relation between theatre and social reality and specifically on Brecht's notion of reflective distance.

Then, authors mainly from Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Argentina presented some 60 papers on a wide range of subjects grouped in four thematic lines, which had been organised by coordination committees on: (1) Sports and Leisure, (2) Education and Culture, (3) Socio- and Psychogenetic Processes in Latin America, (4) Debates on Theory. Furthermore 5 keynote conferences were given in plenary sessions on (1) *Elias in Brazil* by Ademir Gebara, Brazil; (2) *The Critical Perspective of Norbert Elias's Sociology* by Gina Zabłudovsky, Mexico; (3) *The Programme of Structural-genetic Sociology* by Georg W. Oesterdiekhoff, Germany; (4) *The Problem of Human Development in Pre-World War II Psychology related to Elias* by Vera Weiler, Colombia; (5) *The Development of the Historic-genetic Theory after Piaget* by Laura Ibarra, Mexico.

As the program suggests, one of the topics stressed by the organisers of the Bogotá symposium was the inter-relationship between Elias's work and developmental psychology before 1940. This focus called for an exploration of the psychogenetic aspects in his work and his place within a

wider historic-genetic tradition. It was demonstrated that from early on Elias was familiar with amongst other things Piaget's work. There is no doubt that he found much support by Piaget's data. But there is also evidence that Elias found Piaget's model of limited help for the explanation of what he perceived as 'medieval' traits of mainstream social sciences of his time (supposed as to be at the stage of formal operations). A developmental science of human beings thus called for a revision of the Piagetian model. Such a revision, much in line with Elias's thinking, has been suggested by the historic-genetic theory after Piaget (see Günter Dux, *Historisch-genetische Theorie der Kultur*. Engl. translation, *The historic-genetic theory of culture*, January 2011 transcriptverlag-de). This was the subject of the final lecture given by Laura Ibarra. A book based on the plenary conferences and some papers on the abovementioned topic is being prepared (forthcoming at Ediciones Aurora, Bogotá, February 2011).

The Fourteenth International Symposium on Civilising Processes will be held at the Universidade Federal da Grande Dourados in Brazil in November 2012.

Vera Weiler
Universidad Nacional de Colombia

■ FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

Sociology of Film and Cinema: Between World-Culture and Regionalism. Graz, Austria, 25–27 March 2011.

www.uni-graz.at/filmsoziologie

The conference is organised by the Cultural Sociology section of the German Sociological Association, the Department of Sociology of the University of Graz and the Austrian Diagonale film festival (<http://www.diagonale.at/>).

Beside its major relevance for modern culture and the understanding of the contemporary world, film, TV, and cinema are not major concerns of

sociology. Today, visual studies provide important contributions for a deeper understanding of pictures and iconographic signs. However, beside some pioneering studies, all sorts of motion pictures and films – their content, moods and emotions – are widely ignored as important sources of the social live. This is striking, because the social sciences focused on film and cinema very early: there were studies by Emilie Altenloh (*Zur Soziologie des Kinos*, 1913), Herbert Blumer (*Movies and Conduct*, 1933) or Siegfried Kracauer (*Von Caligari zu Hitler*, 1947, and *Theorie des Films*, 1960). These classical studies show that motions pictures and films are important social institutions helping to visualise and to illustrate complicated social processes and structures. Films are major sources of knowledge about the past and the present. They also portray drafts of possible futures and, thus, give orientation. Above all, film, TV, and cinema are properly the most important producers of aesthetic standards in the contemporary world. To ignore the relevance of film, TV, and cinema, therefore, would endanger sociology of becoming a marginalised field amongst the cultural and social sciences.

Thus, this conference seeks to promote the perspective of a sociology of film. The conference is open for all relevant topics, theoretical, and empirical fields. The conference will be held in cooperation with the annual ‘Diagonale’ film festival. The conference will also include discussions with people from the film industry, directors, actors, or other experts in films and motion pictures.

Conference languages: English and German.

Contact: Dieter Reicher,
dieter.reicher@uni-graz.at

British Sociological Association: 60th Anniversary Conference

London School of Economics,
6–8 April 2011

This conference marks the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the

British Sociological Association in 1951. One session (organised by Katie Liston and Jon Fletcher) will focus on the reception – and non-reception – of Elias during the four decades in which he lived, wrote and taught in Britain. The speakers and their topics are:

John Goodwin and Jason Hughes: ‘Ilya Neustadt, Norbert Elias and the development of Sociology in Britain – formal and informal sources of historical data’
Eric Dunning: ‘Long-term patterns of sports-related violence: some figurational observations and related concepts’
Marc Joly: ‘Norbert Elias’s networks in the field of British sociology before his appointment in Leicester’
Norman Gabriel: ‘Collar the lot! Norbert Elias on the Isle of Man’
Hermann Korte: ‘Norbert Elias at the University of Leicester’

A number of other figurationalists offered papers too, but the BSA offered us only one session. So those which did not fit narrowly into the topic of this session were offered to the conference organisers for possible presentation in other sessions. As we go (belatedly) to press, however, we still have not heard their decisions about these.

Authors will be contacted directly by the BSA office to confirm acceptance and arrange registration. Any queries should be referred to the BSA office and to Liz Jackson in particular – liz.jackson@britsoc.org.

9th European Social Science History Conference

Glasgow, Scotland, UK,
11–14 April 2012

The ESSHC aims at bringing together scholars interested in explaining historical phenomena using the methods of the social sciences. The conference is characterised by a lively exchange in many small groups, rather than by formal plenary sessions.

The Conference welcomes papers and

sessions on any topic and any historical period. It is organised in a large number of networks:

Africa – Antiquity – Asia – Criminal Justice – Culture – Economics – Education and Childhood – Elites – Ethnicity and Migration – Family and Demography – Health and Environment – Labour – Latin America – Material and Consumer Culture – Middle Ages – Oral History – Politics, Citizenship and Nations – Religion – Rural – Sexuality – Social Inequality – Spatial and Digital History – Technology – Theory – Urban – Women and Gender – World History

The deadline for pre-registration on our website is 1 may 2011.

The 9th European Social Science History Conference is organised by the International Institute of Social History in co-operation with Glasgow University

Further information and the online pre-registration form for the conference please go to the Conference website at www.iisg.nl/esshc or contact the conference secretariat:

European Social Science History Conference 2012
c/o International Institute of Social History
PO Box 2169
1000 CD Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Telephone: +31.20.66 858 66
Fax: +31.20.66 541 81
E-mail: esshc@iisg.nl

Norbert Elias, Emotional Styles and Historical Change

An Interdisciplinary Collaboratory – ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, Change Program, University of Adelaide

University of Adelaide
14–15 June, 2011

1. Conceptualisation

This is an international Collaboratory on the historical development of emotional styles in Europe and North

America from medieval times to the present. The meeting will focus on the seminal ideas of the sociologist Norbert Elias about changes in emotions and society in his *The Civilising Process* (1939) and his work more generally. Contributions are sought from historians, sociologists, cultural theorists and others working in the field of the history of emotions and may take the form of substantial historical essays or theoretical papers discussing alternative models and interpretations to those of Elias.

Besides making substantive contributions to historical knowledge, the Collaboratory will address two important theoretical issues:

what are the drivers of change in Western societies' emotional regimes?
what is the role of collective emotions in socio-historical change?

These questions have been chosen because of their intrinsic importance and their salience for sociologists and anthropologists, as well as historians and students of law, media, politics and religion.

2. Date and Venue

The Collaboratory will be held at the University of Adelaide 14-15 June, 2011. It is sponsored by the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, Change Program. The meeting is organised by Professor David Lemmings and Professor Ann Brooks.

3. Call for Papers

Please submit an abstract of 200 words by 1 February 2011. Completed papers should be submitted by 15 April 2011. Papers are invited on the following themes:

The history of emotions, especially relating to:

- collective emotions and historical change
- collective identity
- mass emotions and media
- violence
- the body

- crime, the administration of justice and punishment
- gender and social theory
- the state and emotional politics.

Papers should not exceed 8,000 words in length. They will be pre-circulated to delegates and uploaded onto the Collaboratory website. At the meeting abbreviated presentations will be made by all but the keynote speakers so as to maximise time for discussion. Discussants will be called for at a later point and further details will be circulated in January 2011.

Abstracts should be submitted to david.lemmings@adelaide.edu.au and ann.brooks@adelaide.edu.au.

4. Keynote Speakers

Keynotes will include Professor Barbara Rosenwein (Loyola University of Chicago), Professor Bryan Turner (City University of New York and the University of Western Sydney), Professor Nicole Eustace (New York University) and Professor Stephen Mennell (University College Dublin and the Norbert Elias Foundation).

5. Registration and Accommodation

There will be no formal Registration fee but a charge of AUS\$80 will be made to cover the costs of the Collaboratory dinner. Accommodation details will be provided in January 2011.

Emotions in the Medieval and Early Modern World

*University of Western Australia
9–11 June 2011*

For further details, see

http://www.mems.arts.uwa.edu.au/news/2011_conference_emotions

Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, M208
University of Western Australian
35 Stirling Highway CRAWLEY WA
6009, Australia.

ERGOMAS Conference

Amsterdam, 13–17 June 2011

For details of this conference, see *Figurations* 33, or go direct to the website www.ergomas.ch.

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.vankrieken@ucd.ie) 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.

■ STOP PRESS

It has just been announced that the ISA Executive Committee has voted for Buenos Aires, Argentina, to host the ISA Forum on 1–4 August 2012. This is the newly instituted 'mid-term' gathering of the ISA between full Congresses. Much expensive travel – India, Argentina, Japan – seems in prospect for Europeans.

Norbert Elias and Figurational Sociology: Prospects for the Future

Venue: Copenhagen. Time:
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:

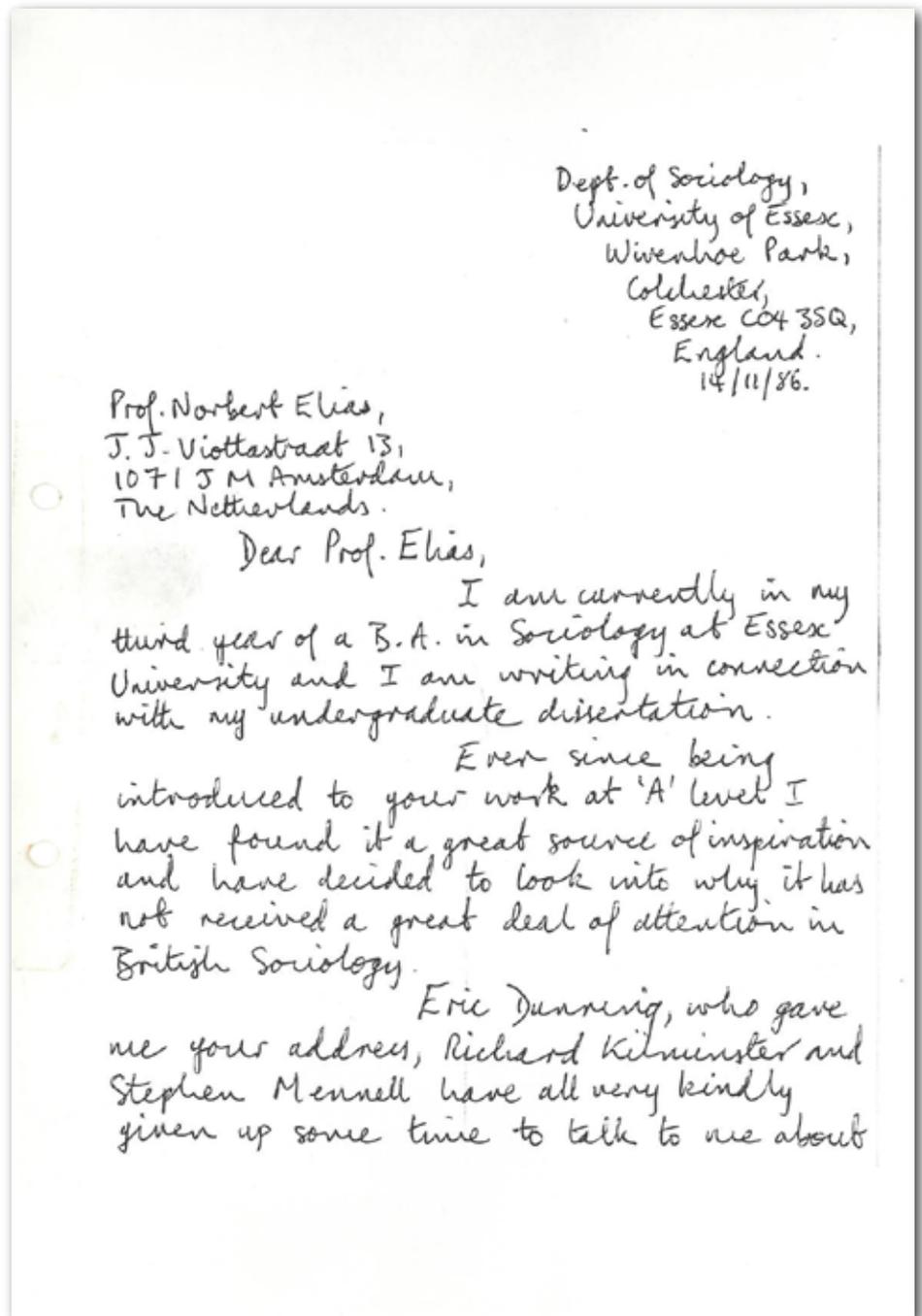
- 1) Survival Units
- 2) Organisational Sociology and Economic Sociology
- 3) Civilising Processes
- 4) Informalising Processes
- 5) The Expanding Anthroposphere

We look forward to seeing you in Copenhagen!

Lars Bo Kaspersen,
CBS lbk.cbp@cbs.dk
Norman Gabriel, University of
Plymouth

■ BRITISH SOCIOLOGY: A 1987 LETTER FROM ELIAS

In 1986, when still an undergraduate at the University of Essex, Jonathan Fletcher wrote to Norbert Elias to ask him why – in his own opinion – he had largely failed to gain recognition in British sociology during his four decades living in England. We print Fletcher’s letter and Elias’s reply below, and will make copies of *Figurations* 34 available at the BSA 60th Anniversary conference in April – see above.



my project and have been very helpful in their suggestions.

I was wondering if you may have any ideas as to why your work has not caught on in Britain in particular, compared to other European countries, most notably of course the Netherlands, and also in North America.

There do seem to be a number of 'external' reasons on the one hand, to do with British Sociology, the influence of American Sociology and the time lag in translations. On the other hand, there are of course, the misunderstandings of your work.

I realize my question is rather broad and there are some more detailed reasons but I would be most grateful even for some general impressions:

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Fletcher.

1
Tel. 020-718520
Mr. Jonathan Fletcher
Dept. of Sociology
University of Essex
Wivenhoe Park
Colchester
Essex CO4 3SQ
England

Amsterdam, 2 January 1987

Dear Mr. Fletcher,

Thank you for your letter. I am glad you wrote it. Don't misunderstand the long delay of my reply. I am simply involved in my own work and my correspondence suffers. The problem you raise interests me very much. But there is no time to answer as extensively as I ought to do it. Also it may now be too late for you. I'll just mention a few points. Neglect, resistance, incomprehension of my approach to sociology briefly of process-sociology is not confined to Britain. But you are right in thinking that it is particularly strong in Britain. One can perhaps distinguish two types of reason, extraneous and intrinsic reasons. Let me mention briefly a few of the former.

When I came to Britain in 1935 there were only two chairs in sociology in the country. One of them, the most influential was held by Morris Ginsburg, a kind highly intelligent pupil of Hobhouse with a sharp critical mind and an immense loyalty towards his teacher Hobhouse whose successor he was at the LSE. As a result the books of Hobhouse formed even in the 30s and 40s of this century a focal point of generations of sociological students at the LSE. When in the 50s and 60s more and more sociology chairs and sociology departments were created in Britain, most of the chairs went to the brightest disciples of Ginsburg. Donald MacGrae, Gould, Bottesmore were some of them. Joe Banks and his wife, according to their own choice were probably the last of that generation to get chairs in Leicester. I am not sure whether it was in the 60s or in the early 70s. By that time of course the Hobhousian type of sociology was completely outdated. I do not know whether you have ever read, or even heard of, Hobhouse. He was a highly cultured intelligent and completely straightforward representative of 19th century

evolutionism. He had a clear simple and unilinear picture of mankind's progress in morals, knowledge and elsewhere. In the 20th century European intellectuals everywhere reacted sharply against the 18th and 19th century conception of social development as a necessary quasi-natural process in the direction of progress. In Britain this reaction was particularly strong, partly because students at the most prominent teacher centre of the social sciences had been fed up to the end of the second world war on a diet of Hobhouse. A traumatic reaction set in. People abhorred everything that smacked of long term social development,

2

of the false prophesies of 18th and 19th centuries philosophy of enlightenment. The traumatic shock of 20th century barbarities induced social scientists, social philosophers and indeed a great part of the European intelligentsia to move from one extreme to the other. There was no development in human society and no progress at all. Many people were inclined to believe conditions in the 20th century were worse than those in any earlier period.

When I presented a theory of civilising processes, therefore, many people saw in it, and see in it to this day, simply a rehash of 18th and 19th centuries philosophy. It was not possible to say: look, I am neither concerned with social philosophy, nor with social ideology, left, right or middle. I am concerned with factual evidence not used before by either historians or sociologists and a testable theoretical framework corresponding to that evidence. I find the exploration of social processes previously unexplored more stimulating than the recurrent contests between antagonistic political sagas. Such an attempt, however, makes, as I found, too great demands on people's capacity for detachment. I don't know whether any of this is of help to you, but I am fairly certain that the traumatic collapse of the old philosophical theories of social development in combination with the economic oneness of Marx has induced many sociologists to throw out the child with the bathwater. This, I believe, is one of the strenuous reasons for the difficulties one encounters today if one considers the investigation of long term processes as a central theme of sociology.

The difficulty is all the greater as a fairly high level of detachment is one of the cognitive requirements for the perception of long term social processes in the manner I am trying to present them. Hence, my preoccupation with problems of involvement and detachment and their cognitive implications. Perhaps I can add very briefly what I regard to be one of the main intrinsic reasons for the difficult reception of my kind of sociology which is by no means confined to Great Britain. Basically I am saying that all social data, including human beings themselves, are in a condition of structured flux. They have to be perceived as aspects of processes. That, I know, is a very difficult proposition. Many of our basic concepts require as a matter of course a process reduction, a reduction to static conditions. Nature instead of the evolving universe is an obvious example. It places into the centre of attention eternal laws. If one puts into the centre instead the evolution of the universe, a process moves into the centre and laws become auxiliary tools for the construction of a process model.

It is difficult to write all this because I do not know how far you have advanced in your studies or in your own quest for knowledge. I tell you what I will do. In the middle of this year friends of mine on the occasion of my 90th birthday, are organising a symposium. May be you would like to attend. I'll see whether I can persuade them to send you an invitation. I myself may not have much time on that occasion, but perhaps the attendance and participation might be of help to you.

Sincerely,

Yours

■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

The next issue of *Figurations* will be mailed in May 2010. News and notes should be sent to the Editors by 1 April 2011.

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embedded footnotes. Hard copy is
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