

Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

■ SOCIAL SCIENTISTS AND THE WORLD SITUATION

Over the last few months, there has been some controversy on the Elias-I discussion list about whether it was appropriate that it carry explicitly political debate about the war in Iraq. My general and entirely impressionistic perception (from Elias-I and from other contexts) is that the vast majority of figurationists have been opposed to the war, and some – Tom Scheff and I, for example – have in our private capacities actively campaigned against it. Others supported the Anglo-American adventure. Behind the political debate *per se*, however, has lain the issue of whether social scientific insights – and, in particular, insights about long-term figurational dynamics – can properly be brought to bear within an emotionally charged political dispute.

Sometimes, in conversation, this has taken the make-believe form of asking what would have been Norbert Elias's attitude to recent events. It can be argued either way. Some say he would have argued for a highly detached stance; that he would have stressed that the use of violence has historically been a precondition for internal pacification; that his emphasis on the unforeseen outcomes of blind historical processes may support the view that something good could possibly come out of the Iraq War after all; and that in 1982 (to the surprise of many of his friends) he supported the British in the Falklands War. On the other hand, it can be pointed out that in Elias's thinking a relatively high degree of detachment was the product of a long-term process of social development, not of some heroic individual effort; that there was no such thing as absolute detachment, and good social science involves a felicitous balance of detachment and involvement; and that he was by no means Pollyanna-ish about the prospects for the world's future. Beyond dispute, however, Elias wanted sociology to be able to contribute to a wider understanding of, and eventually to a greater degree of human control over, the processes that are shaping that future.

It has struck me that the voices of sociologists have been heard but faintly, compared with the outspoken writings of many historians (see, for example, History News Network, www.hnn.us). So, below, we are printing two reflections – by myself and by Reinhard Blomert – on what *may* prove to be a significant turning point in history. I hope they measure up to the requisite standard of relative detachment.

Stephen Mennell

The Dubya Addendum and the Final Pacification of the World

The collapse of the Soviet empire left the USA as the overwhelmingly dominant power in the world, there no longer

remaining a further rival to be confronted – at least for the time being. In 2002 the USA, with about 5 per cent of the world's population, created and consumed about 30 per cent of Gross World Product; and it accounted for more than 40 per cent of all the world's expenditure on defence, its

military expenditure being roughly equal to that of the next twenty highest defence-spending nations combined (see Center for Defense Information, <http://www.cdi.org>, U.S. Military Budget, 29 March 2003). This degree of predominance is without precedent in world history.

Max Weber famously defined a state as 'an organisation which successfully upholds a claim to binding rule-making over a territory, by virtue of commanding a monopoly of the legitimate use of violence'. Godfried van Benthem van den Bergh argued (in a friendly disagreement with Elias) that during the Cold War MAD – Mutually Assured Destruction – served as a *functional equivalent* to a world monopoly of violence. But are we now perhaps witnessing the beginnings of an attempt to embark on the establishment of an *actual* world state, exercising an effective claim to a monopoly of the means of violence, under the auspices of the USA rather than under the Charter of the United Nations?

After the terrible events of 11 September 2001, President G.W. Bush announced what we may call the Dubya Addendum to the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, extending the USA's self-proclaimed right to intervene in other states in the western hemisphere (which Monroe had enunciated and Theodore Roosevelt strengthened) to the rest of the world. In his speech at West Point on 1 June 2002, he stated that 'our security will require all Americans to be ... ready for pre-emptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and defend our lives'. The 'Big Stick' was now to be used against any state anywhere.

But Weber spoke of a monopoly of the *legitimate* use of the means of violence. While the final internal pacification of the world is an attractive dream, the unilateral exercise of a monopoly by the USA is deeply problematic. The objections that Mark Twain and other anti-imperialists raised to America's acquisition of its first colonies a century ago apply *pari passu* today. How are the 95 per cent of the world's population who are not US citizens to exercise any democratic constraint upon American policy? Will that come about in an unplanned way, through what Elias called 'functional democratisation'

and 'the transformation of private into public monopolies'? And if it does not, how long will an effective US monopoly survive?

Stephen Mennell

The Disobedient King/ President

After World War II there were plans to create a military force under the rule of the United Nations. These plans stood no chance of being implemented, because the USA soon afterwards began to create a military system for the western world against the threat of communism. With the Suez crisis in 1956 the British (Sterling) Empire lost its world power position. Like the earlier territorial princes in France, whose transformation from knights to courtiers Elias described, the European middle powers lost their military autonomy and were transformed into bureaucrats of an interdependent new military system, NATO, which was dominated by the western superpower.

Now we can see that the head of such a system is not absolutely free to do what he wants – freedom has its limits when faced by the opposition of others. Neither French kings nor American presidents as heads of more or less hierarchical networks are unbound by rules and protocols. There are fetters of legitimacy and credibility with their fellows and followers – fetters that the present head of the system seems not to realise and which he is obviously overstretching. The French king would have lost authority and weakened his position if he had forgotten to abide by the protocol which was accepted by the princes and courtiers as the basis of their co-operation, and involved more than mere obedience. Any system of this sort needs more than just obedience; it needs intelligent co-operation. In this case, there are the rules of the UN which forbid a preventative war. But now the American president has claimed the right of the superpower to

lead a preventative war. If the courtiers/allies allow the head of the system to initiate preventative wars, the security of the system will be not just endangered but destroyed – because every state could be the next target of such a war, irrespective of the spheres of interest of the courtiers/middle powers.

In so far as this undermines the loyalties of the courtiers/allies, the position of the king/president is also at stake. When a king/president does not feel obliged to obey the rules by which the whole system of loyalties and soft constraints works, how can anyone else feel secure in the system? The king/president and his closest courtier/ally have tried to calm the European unrest by hinting at the military capacities of the evil state. This is the reason why they tried to find proof of the military threat posed by Iraq. But whether that is convincing or not, the system as a whole can work only when the holder of the central power feels himself obligated by the protocol. The great aristocratic rebellion of the Fronde occurred when King Louis XIV was a child and Mazarin was governing in his name. The court system survived the Fronde, but Louis XIV never forgot that it was his obligation to keep to the rules of law, the protocol, the base of his power, to prevent any unrest among his courtiers. We shall see whether the present king/president will survive the Fronde of his mighty European allies. It will be impossible for the US king/president to govern the world without the European courtiers/allies.

Reinhard Blomert

Columbia University Institute for
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[Reinhard Blomert's note was received on 18 February 2003, when France, Germany, Russia and other members of the Security Council were opposing Anglo-American military intervention. Have events already proved him wrong? We shall see ... *SJM*]

■ EDITORS' NOTES

• Aoife Rickard Diamond, Assistant Editor of *Figurations*, gave birth to daughter Emma – sister to David – on 16 May. Mother and baby are both fine.

• Aoife being otherwise occupied, Katie Liston has acted in her stead for this issue of *Figurations*. Katie, like Aoife, is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology at UCD, and is close to completing her thesis, on gender and sport, under the supervision of Stephen Mennell and Eric Dunning.



• Speaking of Eric Dunning, many readers of *Figurations* will by now have heard on the grapevine that, on a visit to Florence with Stephen Mennell and Steven Loyal in February, he was mugged. Although he held on to his

wallet, in giving chase he sustained a hip fracture. While convalescent, he completed his Sociology of Sport course at UCD by video-recording the last four lectures. He is now back on his feet, although walking with a stick – with a horse's head handle, to the delight of those old enough to recall Stanley Holloway's monologue *Albert and the Lion*.

• Tatiana Savoia Landini, whose review of John Pratt's book appears below, is spending January-September 2003 as Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of Sociology at UCD, with funding from CAPES, Brazil, to work on her PhD – on the cheerful subject of child sex abuse – for the University of São Paulo.

• Let us get our apologies in first: *Figurations* 19 will reach you very late. Other commitments, notably examinations at UCD, delayed our starting even to assemble the issue.

■ FROM THE NORBERT ELIAS FOUNDATION

Nikola Tietze wins Third Norbert Elias Prize

The Norbert Elias Amalfi Prize 2003 has been awarded to Dr Nikola Tietze for her book *Islamische Identitäten: Formen muslimischer Religiosität junger Männer in Deutschland und Frankreich* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2001, 276 pp.) which was adjudged the best first book by a European social scientist published in the years 2001–2.

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

human sciences to develop a long-term perspective on the patterns of interdependence which human beings weave together'.

The presentation was made to Dr Tietze by Hermann Korte at the Stuttgart conference on 'Court Society and Civilising Process' (see conference report in this issue). The book is based on her 1999 PhD thesis under the direction of Dirk Käsler submitted to the University of Marburg in association also with the Ecole des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris. In it she compares and contrasts forms of religiosity that have emerged among young Muslim men and the part that they have played in the formation of their sense of identity

within German and French society. One of its qualities that appealed to members of the jury for the Norbert Elias Prize was the way the study interweaves 'microsociological' observation with 'macrosociological' issues.

But, as Nikola Tietze said in her acceptance speech, she was astonished to win the prize because when she checked her index and bibliography she found that she had made only one passing reference to Elias. But she had then turned to her bookshelves to re-read Elias's works, and she wittily used typically Eliasian concepts in speculating on how her book had come to win: chains of interdependence, fluctuating tension-balances, unplanned social processes. And she also recast the differences between young French and German Muslims in terms of Elias's discussion of *civilisation* and *Kultur*.

The prize was previously been awarded in 1999 to David Lepoutre for his book *Coeur de Banlieue* (see *Figurations* 12) and in 2001 to Wilbert van Vree for *Meetings, Manners and Civilisation* (see *Figurations* 12 and 15; to everyone's pleasure, Wilbert was in Stuttgart for the presentation to Nikola Tietze). This year it proved impracticable to



Hermann Korte,

Nikola Tietze,

Stephen Mennell

Joop Goudsblom

award the prize at the Premio Europeo conference in Amalfi, and the jury consisted of the members of the board of the Norbert Elias Foundation, Professors Johan Goudsblom, Herman Korte and Stephen Mennell.

Norbert Elias Foundation Website

www.norberteliasfoundation.nl

The new website of the Foundation, which was announced in the last issue of *Figurations*, can be best viewed with an 800 × 600 resolution, the standard setting of 15 in. monitors. Computer users having a monitor with a lower standard resolution will not be able to view the entire page and are advised to adjust their settings.

The website contains four sections: the *Norbert Elias Foundation*, *Norbert Elias*, *Figurational Studies*, and *News and Discussion*.

The section on the *Norbert Elias Foundation*, which has been available on Internet since January, gives an overview of Foundation's activities.

The part on *Norbert Elias* contains a biographical sketch, bibliographies of published works by Elias and grey literature, lists of published interviews and reviews, and the inventory of the archive, part 1. Because of its deep structure, the web pages of the inventory have been designed slightly differently, using orange instead of ochre. The inventory will be the last item to appear on the website and may not function properly until the end of June.

The section on *Figurational Studies* provides information on concepts and principles, contains Willem Kranendonk's *Bibliography of Figurational Studies in the Netherlands up to 1989* in full, and includes links to related websites.

Finally, the section on *News and Discussion* will keep you up-to-date by listing new publications, forthcoming conferences, announcements concerning the Norbert Elias Prize, the Marbach Stipend and other subjects of interest. This section also contains back issues of *Figurations* and provides information on

how to join the Elias-I Internet discussion list and consult the archive of its postings, as well as how to get access to the closed PhD discussion list.

It had been planned that the Foundation's website would eventually also make available a worldwide bibliography of Figurational Studies, but we are delighted to note that Ingo Mörth and his colleagues have in effect achieved this already in their HyperElias site.

HyperElias@WorldCatalogue

www.kuwi.uni-linz.ac.at/hyperelias/z-elias/

The aim of this website, constructed by Ingo Mörth, Gerhard Fröhlich and Werner Höbart at the University of Linz, is to make available the most comprehensive listing not only of all Norbert Elias's own works, but also of secondary literature (including research reports and oral communications) relating to his work. It includes many references to material in the Norbert Elias Archive, now at Marbach an der Neckar. The authors of HyperElias state that the advantages of their bibliography include: the incorporation of all reprints and translations; reference to on-line versions of any material by Elias; an elaborated on-line cross-reference to all items and texts; and the inclusion of 'grey literature' and interviews in all media by Elias.

The listings of secondary literature – that is, of the Figurational research tradition are astonishingly complete. In order that the HyperElias site remains thoroughly comprehensive and up to date, readers of *Figurations* are urged to check whether the listing of their own publications is complete, and to e-mail references to new publications to Ingo Mörth (ingo.z@jku.at) as they appear. (Don't forget that the editors of *Figurations* also want to know about new publications, so copy the e-mail to us too.)

■ NORBERT ELIAS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Norbert Elias maintained it was impossible to understand the civilising process in modern Europe without taking account of international politics and

long-term patterns of change affecting humanity as a whole. Global politics have been marginal to the Elias School notwithstanding Godfried van Benthem van den Bergh's application of Elias's perspective to international relations. The relative neglect of international relations reflects a larger problem, namely the paucity of approaches which bring the achievements of sociology and international relations within in a synoptic analysis of society and politics.

For its part, the study of international relations, which has often borrowed from sociology, has frequently explored long-term patterns of global change, but there has been no discussion of the importance of Elias's analysis of long-term civilising processes for this endeavour. Several attempts to build connections between international relations and historical sociology have appeared in recent years, but none has responded to Elias's writings.

I contend that the sociology of international states-systems can derive important lessons from Elias's study of the civilising process, but it can also contribute to the further development of that perspective. In particular, a sociology of civilising (and decivilising) processes in different multi-state systems can build on and extend Elias's account of the modern world.

Important parallels between Elias's occasional comments on relations between states and Martin Wight's vision of a sociology of states-systems which was set out in essays published posthumously in the 1970s warrant attention. Wight claimed that all known states-systems followed the same evolutionary course – the gradual elimination of small states was followed by recurrent wars between an ever-diminishing number of great powers until the states-system was replaced by a universal empire. Elias believed that 'elimination contests' between 'survival units', and the drift towards a global monopoly of power, were the dominant historical tendencies in international relations. Wight's approach breaks with Elias's more Hobbesian perspective, however, by stressing the importance of civilising processes in all states-systems. His

argument was that common interests in international order and stability have been the main reason for the emergence of global civilising processes, but cosmopolitan moral commitments have also had a civilising effect. Neither was powerful enough to prevent the violent collapse of the Ancient Chinese and Hellenic–Hellenistic multi-state systems. In Elias’s terms, neither was able to prevent global decivilising processes which destroyed those states-systems.

Wight’s analysis can be linked with Elias’s notion of the ‘duality of nation-states’ normative codes’ (see *The Germans*, chapter II). Elias used this term to describe one of the recurrent features of human societies: the existence of various taboos against violence between members of the same social group and the simultaneous acceptance, and at times active encouragement, of violence against the members of other societies. For Wight, civilising phenomena in different systems of states moderated the ‘duality’ of normative codes. Some taboos against violence and some forms of emotional identification between the members of different societies have appeared in all states-systems.

Conceptions of the just war have been important influences on global civilising processes. They have encouraged what Abram de Swaan calls ‘the widening of emotional identification’ between the members of independent political communities; in the modern world, specifically, they have influenced the development of international legal conventions which stress global responsibilities to avoid ‘superfluous injury’ or ‘unnecessary suffering’ to human beings everywhere.

Sociology and international relations can find common purpose in searching for examples of civilising processes in different states-systems. The analysis can focus, *inter alia*, on:

- the extent to which all states-systems developed conventions which were designed to protect warriors and civilian populations from unnecessary suffering in war
- the extent to which these systems developed a global moral responsibility to protect all members of the human

race from violent acts committed by those that govern them

- the extent to which different states-systems offered all human beings protection from pirates, mercenaries and other violent groups operating within the interstices of any global order

The central issue for this discussion is how far, if at all, ‘anxiety for the well-being of humankind’ – Hegel’s phrase to which Elias refers in *The Germans* – led to civilising processes in different states-systems. The main question is how far global civilising processes took the form of ‘cosmopolitan harm conventions’ (conventions designed to protect all human beings from serious mental or physical harm).

States-systems display different levels of anxiety for the welfare of humanity, and the same is true of different epochs in the evolution of any particular system. Elias made several observations about this matter that deserve further investigation. They include the argument that the threshold of repugnance against genocide was higher in Ancient Greece than in the relatively developed nation-states of the twentieth century. Similar contrasts were drawn between wars in the seventeenth century and modern international conflicts. The crucial question raised by those comparisons is whether long-term trends in the modern states-system reveal levels of anxiety about violence, cruelty and suffering which are unusual and might prove to be unique when viewed in the broadest historical context.

Elias thought the modern states-system could end in a global monopoly power, but his various comments on globalisation identified other possibilities. Globalisation might stretch emotional identification with distant strangers to the point where global poverty is no longer morally tolerable. Globalisation might also trigger powerful ‘decivilising counter thrusts’ in which human collectivities reacted violently to the uncertainties and insecurities that resulted from increasing interconnectedness with others. Elias noted that the expansion and contraction of emotional identification between different societies would be one of the crucial influences on the future evolution of the contem-

porary states-system. A key question for the study of global civilising processes is whether the widening of emotional identification will replace ‘elimination contests’ with cosmopolitan forms of political development.

In the study of international relations, the sociology of long-term patterns of global change should absorb Elias’s ideas, but a comparison of civilising processes in different international states-systems can also bring new insights and possibilities to his sociological perspective. A comparative sociology of states-systems which builds on Elias’s legacy can examine long-term trends regarding levels of emotional identification and varying commitments to reduce cruelty, suffering and harm. Pernicious barriers between sociology and international relations can be eroded in this way.

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■ GLOBALISED CONFIGURATIONS OF ‘THE ESTABLISHED’ AND ‘THE OUTSIDER’

The Winston Parva study by Norbert Elias and John L. Scotson focuses on the relationship between already established inhabitants and migrant newcomers. The proposed universal scheme of exclusion has been applied in recent research at the Bauhaus University of Weimar. The question was whether urban sociology can still refer to this basic distinction while examining the new relationships in an age of globalisation. In the case of Weimar, we could understand the perceptual order of the ‘established East Germans’ as the grounding principle for cohesion excluding the ‘newcomers’: tourists, West Germans and foreigners. The defence against the perception of the outside world leaves its mark on the relationship of the East Germans with the ‘other’. Many people repeat clichés attributing negative qualities to

the 'westerner'. This leads to a dualistic order of imaginary orientation, arising out of the attempt to prevent the chaos of ambiguity. There is a limit to the relevance of the 'outside world' for the conceptual construction of identity. Disturbances are generated as soon as the 'faraway' is no longer exotic and comes too close, with challenging demands on personal life. This communication with the outside is only successful when there is an acceptable framework for the encounter that keeps up the perception of the 'other' as serving the idealistic expectations of the stable identity generated by the GDR. Daily life has not been disturbed by this influx of the exterior. There is a continuum between the highest and lowest degrees of defence to the 'global', the integration of the 'outside' into personal life. Analysis of the more unbound linkages has underlined the rigidity of the 'established' cognitive communities. The shaping of insider–outsider cleavages is also varied by the different cognitive communities that inhabit the city. The cognitive order of the inhabitants allows changes in their perception of the outside world only when regulatory institutions are transmitting them. Relational contacts generate the strongest point of social and cognitive formation. Considering the intensified interaction between the 'Global' and the 'Local', the new configurations of 'The Established' and 'The Outsider' could be understood as a self-construction of identity, inventing meaning for a relationship that has been without any meaning before. Hybridisation of cultural patterns is overriding the traditional architecture of urban life. It creates a new frontier and what Roberston calls a 'glocalised' interpretation of the inside and the outside. As a concomitant of the emergence of the urban reconfiguration, the appearance of new socioscapescapes with specifically generated images of life requires the concept of a post-city society. The analysis of identity construction still has to find terms to ensure the incorporation of its very processual character. When considering the new divide between the 'Established' and the 'Outsider' in Weimar, we have to think of important differences in new urban spaces regarding the way identities are expressed on both a meso- and a micro-level of society.

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■ ANOTHER BIOGRAPHICAL FOOTNOTE: ELIAS AND ST EDITH STEIN

While an undergraduate in Breslau, Norbert Elias interpolated a semester at Freiburg University, and attended Edmund Husserl's 'Goethe Seminar'. In chapter 4 of his *Über Norbert Elias* (1988, rev. ed. 1997), Hermann Korte mentioned that Edith Stein, a fellow member of the Breslau Jewish community, had written to recommend Elias. Her correspondence has now been published in English, and is worth quoting.

On 30 April 1920, Edith Stein wrote from Breslau to Husserl's assistant Fritz Kaufman in Freiburg as follows:



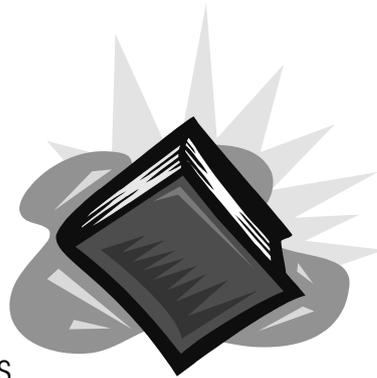
'A young man from here has gone to Freiburg in order to attend Husserl's lectures, and I promised him an introduction to you that, actually, I should have sent long ago. His name is Norbert Elias (recognisable by a blue-white [lapel] pin). Medicine is his main pre-occupation – or sideline; he has been drilled philosophically by Höningwald, but was instructed by me that he has to curb his criticism if he is to get the gist of some phenomenology. I also gave him a card for Herr Thust, but I do not know whether he is back in Freiburg.'

In her next letter to Kaufman, dated 31 May 1920, Stein further remarks: 'There is no need to apologise about Herr Elias. I believe it would do him a great deal of good if he were to come into the "kiddies' circle". For, as you obviously have already observed, he has the usual critic's arrogance. However, I do believe that, if he could be shorn of that, something useful would surface. I would be sorry, too, if he were not satisfied in Freiburg, for he went there with the best intention of learning something.'

Edith Stein (1891–1942) was born, like Elias, to a Jewish family in Breslau. She gained her doctorate *summa cum laude* under Husserl in 1916, but as a woman was unable to persuade any professor to accept her as a *Habilitation* candidate. In 1922 she converted to Catholicism and began interpreting phenomenology from a Thomistic point of view. In 1934, she entered a Carmelite convent in Cologne, taking the name of Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. For safety she transferred in 1938 to the Carmelite house in Echt in Holland, where she wrote *Knowledge of the Cross*, a phenomenological study of St John of the Cross. She was executed in Auschwitz, together with other priests and nuns with Jewish connections who had been arrested in retaliation for the Catholic bishops' criticism of anti-Semitism. By awful chance, the last recorded sighting of her was at Breslau railway station, in a cattle truck *en route* from Holland to Auschwitz. She was sanctified by Pope John Paul II in 1998.

I am grateful to my friend and colleague Dermot Moran, Professor of Philosophy at UCD, for drawing my attention to the translation of Edith Stein's letters, which are published in Edith Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters, 1916–1942*, in *The Collected Works of Edith Stein*, v, pp. 42–3, Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1993. For the note on Stein's life, I have drawn upon *Chambers Biographical Dictionary* and *Microcosm: Portrait of a Central European City* by Norman Davies and Roger Moorhouse (see *Figurations* 18), pp. 350–1, 394–5, 482.

SJM



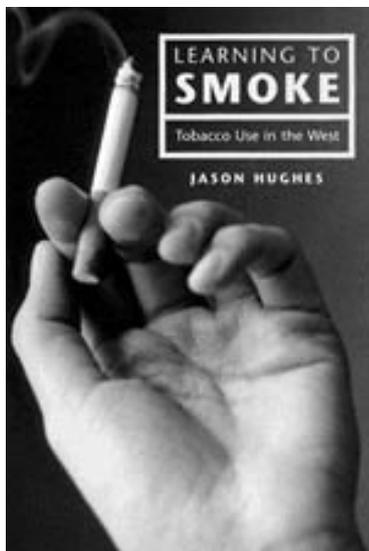
■ RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Jason Hughes, *Learning to Smoke: Tobacco Use in the West*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003. xiv + 201 pp. ISBN: 0-226-35910-7 (hbk)

Chicago University Press, no less, have now published a shorter and rewritten version of Jason Hughes's notable 1997 PhD thesis from Leicester (see *Figurations* 9), where the author is lecturer in the Centre for Labour Market Studies.

Why do people smoke? Taking a figurational approach to this question, Jason Hughes moves beyond the usual focus on biological addiction that dominates news coverage and public health studies and invites us to reconsider how social and personal understandings of smoking crucially affect the way people experience it. *Learning to Smoke* examines the diverse sociological and cultural processes that have compelled people to smoke since the practice was first introduced to the West during the sixteenth century.

Hughes traces the transformations of tobacco and its use over time, from



its role as a hallucinogen in Native American shamanistic ritual to its use as a supposed prophylactic against the plague and a cure for cancer by early Europeans, and finally to the current view of smoking as a global pandemic. Such processes are explored in relation to major sociological theories, most centrally those of Norbert Elias, Howard Becker, and Michel Foucault. Hughes then analyses tobacco from the perspective of the individual user, exploring how its consumption relates to issues of identity and life changes. Comparing sociocultural and personal experiences, he ultimately asks what the patterns of tobacco use mean for the clinical treatment of smokers and for public policy on smoking. Pointing the way, then, to a more sophisticated understanding of tobacco use, this study will prove to be essential reading for anyone interested in the history of smoking and the sociology of addiction.

John Pratt *Punishment and Civilisation: Penal Tolerance and Intolerance in Modern Society*. London: Sage, 2002. 213pp.

This is a very well documented book on the relationship between prison, punishment and civilising processes in English speaking countries of the so-called civilised world – England, New Zealand, Australia, the United States and Canada. It is not only a history of the penal system in these places, as the interesting first four chapters – *Carnival, execution and civilisation*, *The disappearance of prison*, *The amelioration of prison life* and *The sanitization of penal language* – may lead one to think. It is a good contribution to the discussion of civilising processes and their consequences, applied to a subject not studied by Elias.

Its sources of information are quite diverse: penal commentaries, official reports, memoirs, literature and photographs. This allows the author to trace back both the official history of the penal system and the experiences of those actually going through it. The first tells us how prisons came to function as they should in a civilised society: how penal language was sanitized, diet, clothing and hygiene were improved, gratuitous and barbaric punishments disappeared, and the like. The second rewards us with a collection of charming descriptions detailing prison life, such as : *'I could have eaten rats and mice if they had come my way, but there wasn't a spare crumb in any of those cells to induce a rat or mouse to visit it'* (p. 98); that the clothes made them appear so degrading and humiliating, *'I heartily thanked God there was no looking glass near'* (p. 104); finally, regarding the high standard hygiene proclaimed by official records, *'I staggered out of my peter [cell] still dopey from sleep, with my piss pot in my hand and walked to the other side of the landing. There was about 50 men there already with their pots queuing up to empty them. The stink was enough to turn my guts over'* (p. 109).

Having set this scene on the first chapters of the book, the question posed by the author is what allowed the authorities' account to be accepted as the more or less unchallenged truth, letting the prisoners' suffering lie invisible behind prison walls up to the 1970s. The answer is found on two main points, both consequences of the civilising process: the centralization and strengthening of the bureaucratic management of the prisons, and a sense of moral indifference to what happened within the prisons on the part of the public.

Even though it is presented in separate chapters, moral indifference has to be understood in relation to at least two other changes: the first in prison architecture, from imposing, luxurious and extravagant buildings in the early nineteenth century, either neo-classical or gothic, to the anonymous, invisible building designs created in the post-war period; and secondly a shift away from public to private punishment.

The question of the balance between public and private spheres, of whether something was 'pushed behind the scenes' or was made more public along the civilising processes is an intriguing one and permeates the entire book. To what extent can 'hiding' be considered as part of the civilising processes or as a decivilising pressure? John Pratt's book brings some interesting elements to this discussion; he contends that there has been a long-term process of splitting prison reality from public knowledge. The most uncivilised actions, which were indeed happening but were covered up in the official reports, can be understood as an unwanted consequence of the civilising process, therefore contributing to a discussion started by Elias in *The Civilising Process*, in which he shows how violence has been pushed behind the scenes of social life. But, if I may add to this discussion, in Elias's view of civilising processes, there is also a decrease in the distance between the public and private spheres, what happens in private becoming as close as possible to what happens in public – Elias refers to this as behavioural standards becoming 'more all-round'. Still another point of discussion to be added is about the third level of civilising processes, that of the humankind as a whole, in which in recent decades the ideology of human rights has played an important part and from where derives a great part of the lobbies for prisoners' rights and the like. From this point of view, can we consider the hiding of prison reality behind the scene part of the third-level civilising process? Perhaps an interesting point would be a discussion about these two levels of social processes, that of a specific group or society and that of humankind.

This takes us to the second part of Pratt's argument, in a chapter called

'*The Breakdown of Civilisation*'. A break in the process of separation of prison reality and what was known about it was to happen around the 1960s and 1970s, when the existing configuration of penal power became unsustainable. From there on, there was a shift and prison/punishment became a public issue. What had been concealed behind walls became a public matter and prison management became more permeable to public opinion. The issue of crime and security also contributed to the subsequent electoral success of the so-called neo-liberal parties.

The influence of public opinion in punishment policies and laws in the last two decades or so has led to some reversals: for example to the use of shameful punishments and the death penalty in the USA, a higher ratio of imprisonment, an increase of the demand for punishment and so on. Unfortunately, at this point, Pratt does not show us the other side of the coin, what prisoners had to say about this. He would benefit from some ethnographic studies of contemporary prison life and criminological studies on changes in the justice system.

Despite the strengthening of positions identified as right-wing, in the last chapter of the book – significantly named *The Gulag and Beyond* – Pratt allows himself to speculate on further developments concerning punishment which, in a consciously optimistic way, may not prove to be the Western-style Gulag. May the dream come true!

I recommend this book to many groups of people: those interested in social theory, figurational studies, penal policies, law, prisoners rights, crime and punishment, and violence as a whole – despite being mostly about prison and punishment, it has some pages of great interest on informal sanctioning practices such as vigilantism and lynching and several more pages on sexual crimes as a moral issue.

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Michael Hinz, *Der Zivilisationsprozess: Mythos oder Realität? Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zur Elias-Duerr-Kontroverse*. Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2002. [Band 4 *Figurationen: Schriften zur Zivilisations- und Prozess-theorie*] 430 pp. ISBN: 3-8100-3398-7

This is a very conscientious and thorough piece of work and in fact worthy of a more dignified 'cause' than Hans-Peter Duerr's attack on Elias's work. And yet, as the book summarises much of the literature and the debates that have been going on in Germany, this calm and elaborate polemic gives a good occasion to become familiar with the principal views and central issues in and on process sociology. It is an open question why the Elias–Duerr debate has been largely confined to Germany, but the fact is that it has remained a German affair. In addition to his extensive representation and discussion of Duerr's critique of Elias, Hinz also provides a detailed account of the discussion it provoked in Germany (pp. 349–67).

This book has its emotional mainspring, I believe, in Hinz's appreciation of *Traumzeit* (Dreamtime), an earlier book by Duerr, in which the latter still writes positively about Elias and uses his work constructively. It was only in the late 1980s that Duerr vehemently attacked Elias for merely creating a myth. Partly on the basis of a correspondence between Elias and Duerr, quoted in his book, Hinz supposes that the failure of Duerr's attempts at getting closer to Elias – who kept a distance in responding – is at the basis of Duerr's large-scale attack comprising – so far – five volumes on Elias's work. Duerr's



reaction to Hinz's supposition certainly contributes to its credibility. In *Der Spiegel* (40/2002: 184), Duerr is quoted as having said: 'It was Elias who took pains in getting into contact with me and who later proceeded against me, not the other way around.' The anonymous *Spiegel* journalist allowed Duerr to get away with this claim. Apparently, he had failed to look into Hinz's book, for the correspondence between the two men unambiguously proves Duerr to lie outrageously on this point.

Hinz's book is a product of what could be called the Hannover School in German sociology; that is, it stems from a circle of people around the sociologist Peter Gleichmann, all characterized by doing more justice than any other group (in or outside of Germany) to the relationship between sociology and psychoanalysis, and to the relationship between changes in personality structures and changes in social structures. This means that the 'Hannover School' really focuses on the connection between psychogenesis and sociogenesis, on changes in relationships *between* individuals and groups (social classes, sexes, and generations – *sociogenesis*), as these are connected to psychic processes *within* people, that is, to changes in how individuals manage their emotions and 'relate to themselves' (*psychogenesis*). The centrality of this perspective may also explain why the works of Michael Schröter, sociologist and editor of many of Elias's books, here receive respectful attention. In comparison, although providing a wealth of details, Duerr's perspective is quite narrow. Hinz formulates this criticism early in his book (p. 26) by writing that Duerr concentrates only on certain parts of Elias's work, and that his anachronistic, curtailed, and one-sided reading is exemplified by his extreme neglect of Part Three of *The Civilising Process* (the whole treatment of state formation and the sociogenesis of civilising processes). Indeed, Duerr has two projects: to come up with an unchanging 'essence' or 'nature' of human beings – constants such as the 'essence of shame' – and with foregrounding decivilising processes such as the increase and spread of obscenity and violence. Because of this combination, Duerr shows no sensitiv-

ity whatsoever to changes and developments in his attempts at describing the essence of shame, whereas he does select examples of change if they suggest a decivilising process.

Hinz takes Duerr's critique very seriously. He recognises it to be an inversion of Elias's theory, an attempt at conveying city- and state-building processes as decivilising processes, and, consequently, he writes a chapter on the balance of external and internal (psychic) social controls and feelings of shame and embarrassment among the Inuit/Eskimo, and another chapter on Duerr's contention that in the course of urbanisation processes ever since the late Middle Ages demands on behaviour and emotion management have loosened. This discussion leads to a theoretical consideration of changes in the balance of external and internal social controls and constraints in civilising processes. In the final chapter of this book, the Elias–Duerr controversy is viewed from the perspectives of the sociology of knowledge and of science.

Duerr's claim that there has been a decivilising process implies a loosening of social and psychic controls and restraints. In this context, on one important point, Hinz seems to accept Duerr's view. He wrongly suggests that the trend towards informalisation (*Verhaltensinformalisierung*) coincides with a loosening of 'Verhaltensanforderungen', which means a loosening of demands on behaviour and emotion management (p. 206). However, later in his book (p. 281ff.), in dealing directly with the question of whether to interpret recent changes as decivilising or informalising processes, he clearly argues for the latter. Informalisation does indeed coincide with a loosening of manners, but predominantly in the sense of expanding behavioural and emotional alternatives. Informalisation does not imply or coincide with a loosening of demands on behaviour and emotion management. Having to decide which choices among the increased behavioural and emotional alternatives are to be made and how they are to be expressed is certainly more demanding than simply to follow a rather strict and, therefore, less complex code. What choices individuals make

and how they are fashioned is sharply scrutinized. This shift in the focus and locus of social controls has not made emotion management and self-regulation less demanding – on the contrary. Social controls and demands came to include developing self-assurance and an all-round composure of confidence and ease. This constraint to be unconstrained, at ease, authentic and natural comes in the guise of a strong but realistic ideal, and, therefore, the behaviour that results may impress as stemming from a loosening of demands, while, in fact, it represents a further shift from an external control of behaviour to an internal control of impulses and emotions.

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Carla van El, *Figuraties en verklaringen: Stijlgebonden schoolvorming in de Nederlandse sociologie na 1968*. (Figurations and Explanations: Style-bound School Formation in Dutch Sociology after 1968). Amsterdam: Aksant, 2002. ISBN: 90-6861-199-2

In 1968, Dutch universities, like universities in the western world, were in turmoil. Sociology, along with other social sciences, was affected more by this than other disciplines. The number of students exploded and academic departments grew accordingly. Heated debates arose about the functions of sociology; many students, as well as many young researchers, stressed the social and political relevance of sociology towards understanding ongoing processes of change in Dutch society. In Amsterdam, a group of young scholars who were looking for an alternative to Marxist sociology were inspired by the historical-sociological work of Elias. Led by the then young Professor Goudsblom, they called themselves 'figurational sociologists'. In Utrecht and Groningen, a different kind of sociology became dominant: a methodologically rigorous, quantitative sociology, originally led by the East German Wippler and the West German Lindenberg. They called themselves 'theoretical sociologists' and later changed this to 'explanatory sociology' to stress the theory-driven nature of their programmes.

In her dissertation 'Figurations and explanations' supervised by Joop Goudsblom and Abram De Swaan, Carla van El uses a wide variety of materials to examine this process of school formation. These include interviews with the main actors, official documents, minutes of meetings and an examination of published articles from both 'schools'. She also frequented the relevant institutes and parties of both groups. In her examination, she describes the process of school formation mainly in terms of style, which captures more than just the theoretical or methodological differences between the two groups of sociologists. In other words, there are more fundamental differences in attitude and habitus. While the process of school formation seems a fairly gentle procedure, her last chapter outlines the way members of the two schools talk about each other and portrays the emotional content of the relationships between actors. The publication of Van El's work coincides with a gradual decline in the social and political importance of sociology as well as decreasing numbers of students. In addition, relations between the two schools have developed and changed over time. In exploring this process of school formation, which was evidently fraught with emotional and intellectual tensions, Van El's work carefully portrays the power relations that emerged within Dutch social science after 1968, but chooses not to describe it in those terms.

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Gustavo Leyva, Héctor Vera and Gina Zabludovsky, eds, *Norbert Elias: Legado y perspectivas*. Puebla, Mexico: Universidad Iboamericana Puebla, 2002. 311 pp.

This edited book will prove a valuable teaching resource on Elias and his work for Spanish-speaking social scientists. Since my own command of the language is limited (officially it is zero), I can simply list its contents. After an Introduction by the editors, the book opens with three translations from the German: an article by Reinhard Blomert on Elias's years in Breslau, Hei-

delberg and Frankfurt; a long excerpt from Hermann Korte's *Über Norbert Elias*; and Dirk Käsler's oration on Elias's ninetieth birthday, 'Norbert Elias: A European Sociologist for the Twenty-First Century'. There follow articles by Gina Zabludovsky on the reception of Elias's work and the ideas of civilising and decivilising processes; by Rafael Montesinos on Elias's overall view of sociology; by Gustavo Leyva on civilising processes and 'the genealogy of the modern Western subject'; by Lidia Girola on the 'repressive hypothesis' in Elias's work; by Sergio Pérez Cortés on the rules of war in relation to the theory of civilising processes; by Jorge Galindo on Elias and Parsons; by Héctor Vera on Elias's theory of knowledge ('From Ideology and Utopia to Involvement and Detachment'); by Raymundo Mier and by Adriana Murguía Lores, both on Elias's symbol theory; and finally Fátima Fernández Christlieb discusses some of the basic themes of Elias's sociology in the light of *What is Sociology?*

SJM

Vadim Volkov 'The Concept of *Kul'turnost*: Notes on the Stalinist Civilising Process' in Fitzpatrick, Sheila (ed.) *Stalinism: New Directions*. London: Routledge, 2001, pp. 210–31.

In this essay, Volkov addresses the question of what 'being civilised' means with reference to the Soviet individual and society. He dissociates elements of Elias's theoretical model from its historical application and examines 'the process of inculcation of disciplines that proceeded without recourse to open violence and terror' (p. 211) in relation to the 'Stalinist civilising process'. The main protagonists in the Stalinist civilising process were former peasants who became urban dwellers and Soviet citizens. While *kul'tura* was widely adopted in Russia in connection with the idea of cultural policy, *kul'turnost* referred to the effects of this policy in everyday practice. The sphere of appearance and fashion was first associated with the structural dynamic of *kul'turnost* in 1933–4. The aesthetic ideal of military uniforms and their derivatives was gradually replaced by

smart 'civil' clothing, clean shaving for men and make-up for women. Care for one's appearance also came to include other aspects of the public self such as 'hygiene of facial and bodily skin', that is, personal hygiene. Volkov argues that as attention to bodily hygiene heightened, practices related to this kind of self-care were also changing towards individual bath–shower complexes (p. 218). Thus, cleanliness and self-discipline (*kul'turnost*) in private life corresponded to labour efficiency and discipline in the workplace, where the cultured individual was identified with the efficient worker.

In a similar way to Inglis's assertion that Irish mothers played a key role in the moral monopoly of the Catholic Church in Ireland and in an Irish civilising process (*Moral Monopoly: The Rise and Fall of the Catholic Church in Ireland*, UCD Press 1998), Volkov shows that the wives of industrial managers and engineers played a key role in introducing workers to the basic skills of *kul'turnost*. This group of wives engaged in voluntary and public activity as part of a movement for 'the all-out civilisation of everyday life' (p. 219). Both the material and social environments became instrumental in changing people's habits and attitudes. For example, army officers reported how barracks and canteens were equipped with curtains, tablecloths and portières made by 'caring women's hands' (p. 221). Curtains turned into a symbol for *kul'turnost* and served symbolically to constitute a cultured home dwelling. The tablecloth tied together diet, hygiene and manners, and its introduction in workers' canteens implied further material and psychological changes in group practices and habitus. Volkov also shows how the framework of *kul'turnost* extended to speech. 'Unlike material attributes, the culture of speech was naturally perceived as inalienable from the personality, related more to the internal rather than the external qualities' (p. 223). The mastery of correct speech required increased and more consistent self-monitoring and was derived from 'good' literature and reading. Thus urban public order was formed through the individual habituation of *kul'turnost*, without explicit external compulsion. Volkov's

essay successfully applies some of Elias's theoretical ideas to a non-Western European society. While he does not address state formation processes, the monopoly of the legitimate means of violence in the former Soviet Union nor their relationship to changes at the level of individual habitus, his work is a worthwhile example of how human affective moulding is changed through a transformation of constraint by others into the apparatus of self-restraint. More importantly, while the practices of *kul'turnost* did not derive from any explicitly formulated political or social project, 'their unity can be seen with reference to their social and individual effects [and] their long-term consequences, rather than from the point of view of intentional projects of political authorities' (p. 211).

KL

Johann P. Arnason, 'Psychoanalysis and Civilisational Analysis', *Thesis Eleven*, 71, 2002: 71–92.

This article is concerned not so much with civilising processes – although Elias is inevitably mentioned – as with civilisations in the plural, in the older sense of comparative historical sociology. Franz Borkenau, Benjamin Nelson and Cornelius Castoriadis are mentioned at greater length. Arnason seeks possible points of contact between psychoanalysis and civilisational analyses in this vaguer sense. They have to do with psychoanalytical perspectives on the human condition (and thus on the common background to civilisations in the plural), and with the psychoanalytical movement as a civilisational phenomenon. Although there has been no systematic attempt to synthesise the two traditions, writes Arnason, it can be shown that psychoanalytical influences have sometimes sensitised civilisational theorists to problems which call for further debate (much as the question of human mortality as a condition of culture); and it can be argued that a comprehensively hermeneutical approach would bring the two problematics closer to each other. In this regard, Castoriadis's theory of sublimation – as an encounter between the radical imagination and the socio-historical – is of particular impor-

tance. It links up with the most central issues of civilisational theory.

Jack Goody, 'Elias and the anthropological tradition', *Anthropological Theory* 2 (4) 2002: 401–12.

and

Eric Dunning, 'Some comments on Jack Goody's "Elias and the anthropological tradition"', *Anthropological Theory* 2 (4) 2002: 413–20.

Jack Goody, doyen of British social anthropology, West Africanist, and good personal friend of several of us in the figurational network, encountered Elias in Ghana in 1962–4. Although his own writings have a much larger historical component than was common among anthropologists of the late twentieth century, Jack has always had reservations about Elias's ideas and his research methods. The abstract of his article reads: The impressive work of Norbert Elias displays little knowledge of 'other cultures' nor of anthropology in general. But it does promote a comparative method along the lines of Marx and Weber, and this served to encourage such studies in the social sciences, methods which had been rejected by many anthropologists in the twentieth century. Elias was interested not only in comparison but in long-term historical change and in what he called 'sociogenesis'. The civilising process is described as having its genesis in the European Renaissance with the increased part played by the state and the disappearance of feudal structures. It is argued that he arbitrarily selects certain aspects of manners, neglects the growth (or continuation) of violence and fails to take account of the '*conscience collective*' operating in simpler societies, let alone developments in other post-Bronze Age societies. Manners he treats largely in psychological terms of the advance of the highly generalized notion of self-restraint, in which he tries to use Freud for historical purposes. But without precise measurements these questions of 'mentality' are too problematic to be examined by texts alone, without direct observation.

In his response, Eric Dunning begins by firmly rebutting Goody's notion that Elias ever thought of the people of Ghana as a *Naturvolk*, citing passages from Elias's *Reflections on a Life* to

show how completely incompatible that is with Elias's actual thinking. He then defends Elias from the charge of having ignored the British social anthropological tradition, making clear that the British social anthropological tradition – very much an academic establishment in the 1940s–1960s – also ignored Elias. Next, he refutes the charge that *The Civilising Process* is Eurocentric (*déjà vu!*), pointing out that just because it is *about* Europe that does not make it Eurocentric, and quoting from Elias's passing but insightful (and potentially empirically researchable) comments on China. Dunning observes that if Goody thinks that Elias accepted the emic notion of development from 'barbarism' to 'civilisation', he plainly has not studied Part 1 of *The Civilising Process*, where the sociogenesis of the ideas of *civilisation* and *Kultur* are discussed at length. Finally, he argues very convincingly that the problem of Nazism was very much at the forefront of Elias's thinking from the 1930s onwards, not something to which he finally turned with *The Germans* in the closing years of his life. Dunning concludes that he heard many of the same objections to Elias's theory from anthropologists and sociologists in the 1950s and 1960s, and that they appear to involve a wilful misinterpretation of Elias's work. But the ideology on which this wilful misunderstanding is based can at least in part be explained by the fact that that generation of social scientists lived through the Nazi era and the Second World War – Dunning does not mention this, but in fact Jack Goody was himself a prisoner of war in Germany – and their visceral reaction to anything smacking of a sense of racial superiority is understandable. But they are emphatically wrong to think that Elias's work is redolent of such ideas.

SJM

Robert van Krieken, 'Reshaping Civilisation: Liberalism between assimilation and cultural genocide', *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 29 (2) 2002: 215–47.

Abstract: This paper argues for a more nuanced understanding of different meanings of the concept of 'civilisa-

tion', through an examination of the relationships between processes of civilisation and settler-colonisation under liberal political regimes. The particular example used is that of the history of Australian 'stolen generations' – those Aboriginal children removed from their families in the course of the twentieth century – and its political and normative reassessment, which provides an important stimulus towards critical reflections on the nature of liberal politics and practices in a settler-colonial context. The paper focuses on the linkages between the historical development of liberalism and changes in what is understood and experienced as 'civilisation', beginning with the contrast between the reliance on the concept of 'civilisation' both to remove Aboriginal children families up until the 1970s, and to support the subsequent critique of removal policies and practices. Van Krieken observes that the concept of 'civilisation' has been used by social scientists in at least three different ways, and argues for the need to keep in view the relationship between civilisation and colonialism in order to support a more reflexive understanding of civilisation which can encompass all three meanings and pay due heed to the paradoxical possibilities of violence and barbarism coexisting alongside and within processes of civilisation.

Pieter Spierenburg, 'Theorising in Jurassic park: A Reply to Gerd Schwerhoff', *Crime, History and Societies* 6 (2) 2002: 127–8.

Pieter Spierenburg's article 'Violence and the Civilising Process: does it work?', published in the same journal in 2001 (see *Figurations* 17) provoked considerable controversy. Gerd Schwerhoff rejected the entire historical-sociological approach to explaining long-term trends in violence, calling the theory of civilising processes 'the last theoretical dinosaur of its kind'. Spierenburg's response is suitably vigorous.

Mieke Komen 'Dangerous children: Juvenile delinquency and judicial intervention in the Netherlands, 1960–1995', *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 37, 2002: 379–401.

Abstract: In the continuing controversy in academic circles over the rise in reported juvenile violent delinquency, some scholars attribute it largely to the increase in the actual number of offences while others emphasise changes in registration and intervention practices. This article reviews changes in the way justice workers tried to control the behaviour of delinquent juveniles in the Netherlands in the period 1960–95. The study is based on an analysis of files on adolescents and children placed in the Dutch juvenile justice system by judges during the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Comparing the older and recent files reveals that the interventions of juvenile justice workers became less harsh. This process has coincided with a rise in the severity of violence and crimes committed by the youngsters. As a result juvenile justice workers in fact intervene more frequently from the beginning of the 1980s, but still in a less punitive way. The external constraints in the Dutch judicial system are rather gentle and prudent, while the youngsters commit more severe violence and crimes, suggesting further inquiry into the degree of autonomy of, and interaction between, adult socialisation among professionals and youth socialisation.

Sarah Watters, 'Motor Vehicle Deaths in Developing versus Developed Countries'. Unpublished MSocSc thesis, University College Dublin, 2002.

Taking as its point of departure Norbert Elias's article 'Technisation and Civilisation' (*Theory, Culture and Society*, 12 (3) 1995: 7–42), this study examines car accident fatalities over the past fifty years in 21 countries worldwide. Data for car accident fatalities, numbers of registered vehicles, population statistics and Gross National Product *per capita* figures for the years 1948–98 were used to test Elias's idea that a reduction in car accident fatalities would equally reflect an advancement in 'technisation' and 'civilisation'. Comparisons of fatality rates demonstrated consistent parallel differences between First and Third World countries with the least number of fatalities in the former. Countries deemed to be 'less civilised' demonstrated much higher numbers of

deaths per unit of population, and higher numbers of deaths per registered vehicle. Overall, all countries, regardless of First or Third world status, demonstrated a reduction in fatalities over time, supporting Elias's contention of the continuance of the 'civilising process' over time.

Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830–67*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002. 556 pp. ISBN: 0-7456-1820-0

In the first part of *The Civilising Process*, Elias commented on the way that the sense of inherent superiority became associated with the notion of 'civilisation' as European empires expanded in the nineteenth century. There is now, of course, a huge 'post-colonial' literature about these matters, and Catherine Hall's new book may serve as a link between that and the interests of 'figurationists'. It focuses especially on Jamaica, a choice shaped – as Dr Hall points out – by the fact that she is the wife of the great Jamaican–British sociologist Stuart Hall. A long review essay by Edward Said about this book appeared in the *London Review of Books*, 20 March 2003.

Maurice Keen, *Origins of the English Gentleman: Heraldry, Chivalry and Gentility in Medieval England, c. 1300–c. 1500*. Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2002. 192 pp. ISBN: 0-7524-2558-7 and

Malcolm Vale, *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in North-West Europe, 1270–1380*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. 422 pp. ISBN: 0-19-820529-5

Despite Elias's comment that 'Nothing is more fruitless, when dealing with long-term processes, than to attempt to locate an absolute beginning', and despite his remarks in *The Civilising Process* on earlier medieval courts, *The Court Society* has perhaps led to excessive focus on the courts of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These two books by distinguished British medieval historians, reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement* on 21 February 2003 and 15 March 2003

respectively, provide a corrective. Keen is concerned with the emergence of the distinctively English hierarchy of knights, esquires and gentlemen. The esquires – originally mounted armed men – began to assume the right to an heraldic coat of arms in the fourteenth century; in the next century, the right to arms spread to gentlemen of diverse social origin: military experience already counted for less in acquiring a coat of arms, and many of the gentry were retainers, lawyers administrators and household officials. This is in line with Elias's emphasis on the reconstruction of a courtly class from people of varied origin.

Vale's more wide-ranging book covers the century before the rise of the Burgundian court. While acknowledging the cosmopolitanism of the courts, he stresses their centrality to the development of the nation state and government. He also emphasises – in this case in line with Peter Burke's *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* – that the courts were places where high and low cultures came together.

Eric Dunning, Patrick Murphy, Ivan Waddington and Antonios Astrinakis, eds, *Fighting Fans: Football Hooliganism as a World Phenomenon*, Dublin: UCD Press, 2002. 251pp., ISBN: 1 900621 73 8 (hardcover) 1 900621 74 6 (paperback).

Football hooliganism has generally been regarded as a primarily English 'disease' yet it has long existed as a worldwide phenomenon. This edited volume considers hooliganism in fourteen countries: eight soccer-playing European countries (including Northern Ireland); two in South America; one in Australia, South Africa and Japan and, North America generally. Though the authors adhere to a range of different sociological perspectives, their contributions focus on the theoretical framework devised by Eric Dunning and the Leicester School, in particular the working hypothesis that sports spectating is a 'quest for excitement' and the role that aggressive masculinity plays in this. Football (or soccer) is largely patriarchal and offers a context in which forms of largely, though not

exclusively, male violence occur. The contributors argue that this is because soccer involves intense emotional excitement, the idea of an enemy and a defence of territory.

Chapter One outlines the working hypothesis of the volume, that is that hooligans organise themselves around the structural 'fault lines' in a society. This helps account for common themes in soccer violence across national borders as well each country's unique expressions of this. For example, in the case of Spain, fans are organised around the Castilians, the Catalans and the Basques. In Argentina (Ch 2) the role of the security forces in the legitimate (and illegitimate) monopoly of violence is central to struggles for democracy, sporting justice and ideological supremacy. Hughson's chapter on Australian soccer (Ch 3) highlights that the expression of identity is a complex process rooted in historical antecedents as well as struggles for power. Ironic perhaps in this case, expatriate British males have claimed the club 'Perth Glory' as a vehicle for expressing ethnic identity in the Australian A-League. In the Czech case (Ch 4), Duke and Slepicka argue that football hooliganism is most likely to take place at games involving key inner-city rivalries as well as in cities reflecting long-standing regional enmities. Italian cases of spectator violence (Ch. 10) reflect city-based particularism (e.g. Genoa v. Milan) as well as the division between North and South as expressed by the formation of the 'Northern League', while sectarianism provides a social division in Northern Ireland (Ch 9). Young's chapter (Ch 15) on North American sports crowd disorder is a notable contribution which challenges the common belief that little or no sports spectator violence occurs there and it ultimately questions whether hooliganism is unique to football and to English culture.

While the working Leicester hypothesis on the roots of football hooliganism needs further research at an international level, the common themes of aggressive masculinity, a quest for excitement and social cleavages seem to hold firm in the contributions to this volume.

The overall balance of authors provides a timely international contribution to what is a growing worldwide phenomenon. The gender balance of authors also counteracts what has been a largely 'male domain', both in the actual practices of spectator violence as well as in academic contributions on this subject. This volume offers a critical sociological analysis of the underlying causes of spectator violence, why it seems to affect football in particular and the role of culture in this phenomenon. The publication is also a valuable addition to a growing body of international research in the sociology of sport generally. It highlights the value of a sociological understanding of sport as well as the necessity of critical research in tackling social phenomenon that are commonly regarded as 'social problems'. While the volume does not explicitly set out to explore the various ways in which national governments, local councils and social groups have tried to address and counteract spectator violence, it seems apparent that measures of control and intervention play a role in the production and reproduction of the types of contemporary spectator violence outlined in this volume. A policy-based analysis of these measures would seem worthwhile. In addition, I think all of the authors would agree that a narrow view of spectator violence that focuses solely on the underlying behaviours and attitudes of violent spectators ignores the consequences of intended and unintended individual and group behaviour in society generally and, in sport processes particularly. Reflected in this process are, for example, the ways in which societies idolise particular football players and generate expectations around their behaviour, on and off the field of play. Similarly, we need to further explore the social acceptance of physical confrontation in some sports (e.g. ice hockey, boxing and rugby) and their relationship to expectations of self-control and physical restraint in society generally (see for example Dunning, *Sport Matters* 1999).

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■ BOOKS AND ARTICLES RECEIVED

The following will be covered in the next issue of *Figurations*:

Anton Blok, *Honour and Violence*. Cambridge: Polity Press 2003.

Helmut Kuzmics and **Gerald Mozetic**, *Literatur als Soziologie: Zum Verhältnis von literarischer und gesellschaftlicher Wirklichkeit*. [Literature as Sociology: On the relationship between literary and social reality.] Konstanz: UVK, 2003. vi + 346 pp. ISBN 3-89669-781-1

René Moelker and **J. Soeters**, eds, *Krijgsmacht en Samenleving: Klassieke en eigenstijdse inzichten*. [Military Force and Society: Classical and contemporary views.] Amsterdam: Boom, 2003. 280 pp. ISBN: 90-5352-892-X

■ RECENT CONFERENCES

Contemporary Social Transformations in a Long-Term Perspective

Amsterdam School for Social Science Research, University of Amsterdam, 11 March, 2003

Nico Wilterdink began the day's events by welcoming the guests from near and far and pointing out that while historical and comparative research remained embedded in the ASSR's explicit research mission, during the last decade or so it had become much less clear how this intention should be put into practice. The goal of this one-day conference was, therefore, nothing

Randall Collins



less than demonstrating the continuing relevance of an historical, processual, developmental approach to understanding events and changes in contemporary societies. How, in other words, are present-day social facts explainable in the framework of long-term developments? How are these developments interconnected? To what extent, and how, are they patterned or structured? Can they be explained on the basis of general mechanisms of change? How does structured social change compare to randomness, coincidence, and unpredictability? Wilterdink challenged the participants and the audience critically to appraise the way they were integrating long-term perspectives into their work and balancing these perspectives with their empirical studies of contemporary issues. In closing Wilterdink made very clear that he believed the ideas and questions generated by Elias, as well as other first and second generation founders of comparative-historical sociology, could and indeed should be drawn from in efforts to revitalize research inside and outside the ASSR.

I think it can fairly be said that all of the various papers and participants successfully showed the strengths of analyzing contemporary issues with the aid of a long-term perspective. Rineke van Daalen and Ali de Regt illustrated that today's 'disciplinary techniques in elementary schools' could very fruitfully be seen in terms of changes set in motion in the nineteenth century. In my own paper, I argued that the habit researchers had acquired of focusing on skin color when examining 'segregated schools' needed to be problematised. Going back to the sugar plantations of the fifteenth-century Eastern Mediterranean, my perspective on race (re)making processes illustrated how the ancestors of the 'black' youth I am studying in supposedly 'black schools' have been (re)defined. In my account the emphasis shifted from what we can immediately see to the brutal power struggles between, in essence, established and outsider groups, which are less visible for the non-processual thinking ethnographer. Maarten van Bottenburg problematised the relatively insignificant spread of American Football in the Netherlands despite the best efforts of advertisers and the

National Football League of the USA. He illustrated that the present affinity, or, more accurately lack of affinity, that the Dutch target audience has with this sport could only adequately be seen in the light of longer-term processes. In what followed Ruud Stokvis analysed sports coverage in the Dutch media and argued that the present ways in which sporting events are covered are best seen in terms of an evolutionary path of successive and competing media forms (newspapers, radio, television). Similarly Anneke van Otterloo generated insights into the present 'slow' food movement which arose in opposition to 'fast' food consumption by showing links between the current patterns and long-term trends and countertrends.

After the break Wilterdink took a place in the audience and the afternoon sessions were chaired by Abram de Swaan.

Using what we might all agree is a truly long-term perspective, Johan Goudsblom analysed the expansion and transformations of what he calls the anthroposphere. In this paper Goudsblom outlined his current and extremely ambitious research program. Drawing from works by Goudsblom and de Swaan, Kaj Hofman followed with an examination of group sentiments, group discourses and group figurations in a long-term perspective. Johan Heilbron outlined his historical sociology research project on financial regimes and focused on specific questions related to the growing dominance of financial capital during the last few decades. Cas Wouters presented a paper on dating and American manners books, and tied his remarks to his research on comparable developments in courting and dating regimes in England, Germany and the Netherlands.

Randall Collins offered a provocative keynote lecture on the uses of counterfactual history. The generally question he asked was the following: Can there be a theory of historical turning points? He challenged the audience to think through a number of counterfactual scenarios and relentlessly pushed for what we might call a hard core sociological, rather than an even slightly individual or 'chance-related', analysis. For example, one of the ques-

tions was, what would have happened if the assassination attempt on Hitler had been successful? Collins argued that the social forces creating National Socialism in Germany at the time of the assassination attempt were so strong that 'another Hitler, with another name' would have been created. An early assassination would not, in other words, have created such a 'turning point'. This line of thinking, of course, led to a lively discussion, a discussion that spilled over into the post-conference discussions over drinks about a place for 'randomness', chance and agency in research and the proper space for 'charismatic' or powerful individuals in historical developments. What would have happened if the ballots in Florida had been more clear, or counted slightly differently, and Gore had been elected? Would there be a war on right now? Would that really matter for the development of the anthroposphere in the long run? What is a turning point? Whatever the answers the participants and guests devised it was clear to all that reports of the demise of figurational and processual thinking in Amsterdam have been greatly exaggerated!

Bowen Paulle

Amsterdam School for Social Science Research

Court Society and Civilising Process: Norbert Elias's Work in Inter-disciplinary Perspective

1–3 May 2003, Akademie der Diözese Rottenburg–Stuttgart, Stuttgart–Hohenheim

A new edition of *Die höfische Gesellschaft* was published at the end of 2002 as volume II of the *Norbert Elias Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 549 pp., ISBN: 3-518-58329-8). The text was edited on behalf of the Editorial Board by Professor Claudia Opitz of the University of Basel, and to mark its publication she organised a highly successful conference in Stuttgart. Our genial host was Professor Dieter Bauer, Director of the magnificent Academy of the Rottenburg–Stuttgart Diocese on the campus of the University of Stuttgart–Hohenheim.

The scene was set on the first evening by Reinhart Blomert's account of Elias's time in Frankfurt, when he wrote *Die höfische Gesellschaft* as his *Habilitationsschrift*, and by Claudia Opitz's discussion of the sources and influences that entered into its writing. That was followed by a presentation on the whole *Gesammelte Schriften* project, and of this latest volume in the series, by Professor Annette Treibel, chair of the Editorial Board. Hermann Korte then presented the 2003 Norbert Elias Prize to Dr Nikola Tietze (see the earlier article in this issue). Before, during and after these celebrations, the soprano Susan Eitrich, accompanied by Evelyn Laib playing a spinet, sang courtly music of the seventeenth century – Dowland, Purcell, Besard, Boësset, Caccini and Krieger; appropriately, considering the international character of the court as an institution, the songs were in English, French, Italian and German.

Friday morning was given over to 'critical appreciations'. Eric Dunning led off with a paper entitled 'Processes in Space–Time', a reappraisal of Elias's essay on 'History and Sociology' written for the first German edition of 1969. Ronald Asch (Osnabrück) then discussed the book in the light of more recent historical research, Renate Kroll (Siegen) reassessed Elias's views on aristocratic romanticism, and Wolfgang Schmale (Vienna) offered a reappraisal of Elias's thinking about the outbreak of the French Revolution.

The appropriateness of the conference venue became evident when participants were led just across the road for

Claudia Opitz



a guided tour of the gardens of Schloß Hohenheim, a surviving remnant of a small branch of European court society.



Evelyn Laib and Susan Eitrich

That made a natural transition to the final group of papers on Friday evening and Saturday morning, on aspects of court culture. Jeroen Duindam (Utrecht) compared the Valois/Bourbon and Habsburg courts between 1550 and 1780, bringing out many interesting differences in the structure and practices of the two. Jutta Held (Osnabrück) spoke about Elias's connections with the history of art, and Birgit Franke and Barbara Welzel (Dortmund) jointly made a slide presentation about the culture of the Burgundian court. Joop Goudsblom stirred up vigorous discussion with his remarks about court societies in human history – taking a *very* long-term perspective, as is his wont. Sophie Ruppel (Basel) presented a case study of sibling relationships in court society, using Elias's conception of power ratios, and Eckart Schörle (Erfurt) discussed the 'courtisation of laughter', drawing on Elias's unpublished 'Essay on Laughter'. Finally, I myself talked about 'food, courts and social emulation', comparing and contrasting the culinary cultures of French and English court society.

Over the three days of discussion among historians and sociologists one conclusion was evident: how remarkable it is that a book essentially written seventy years ago (although published only in 1969) continues to shape research on courts and court culture today. Our knowledge of courts as social institutions has grown considerably, and some of Elias's conclusions need to be qualified now, but his book continues to pose many of the key questions in the field.

SJM

■ FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

European Sociological Association

Murcia, Spain, 23–26 September 2003

Theme:

Ageing Societies, New Sociology

The sixth conference of the European Sociological Association will be held in Murcia in September 2003, and 'figurational' sessions may be proposed if there is sufficient interest. If you plan to be in Murcia, please contact Robert van Krieken (robertvk@mail.usyd.edu.au).

Website: www.um.es/ESA

E-mail: congress@viajescajamurcia.com

Third Annual Irish Postgraduate Sociology Conference: Sociological Imaginations

Saturday 13 September 2003, University College Dublin

CALL FOR PAPERS

Papers are invited from sociology postgraduates internationally in any field within sociology and related disciplines. Potential themes: Sociology of culture, ethnic relations, identity, health & medicine, social policy, education, consumerism, employment, development, social theory and research methods.

Deadline for submission of abstracts (max 250 words) is 15 July 2003

Conference fee is €15 to include conference pack, refreshments and lunch. Booking deadline is 15 August 2003.

Guest speaker is Dr David Inglis, University of Aberdeen.

For abstract submission and for further information contact:

Donncha.Marron@ucd.ie

Or, by post, Donncha Marron or Amie Hord O'Dowd, Department of Sociology, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland. Tel. +353-1-716-8673

Please visit our website at <http://www.ucd.ie/~sai/pgconference.htm>

■ STOP PRESS

Just as we are correcting the proofs of *Figurations* 19, the news reaches us that Katie Liston, Acting Assistant Editor for this issue, has been appointed Lecturer in the Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences at Chester College, a college of the University of Liverpool in the UK. Chester is emerging as a major center for the figurational sociology of sport, and we shall write more about those developments in *Figurations* 20. In the meantime, our congratulations to Katie.

■ OBITUARY – Rob du Mée

In May 2003 the Norbert Elias Foundation received a legacy of 20,000 guilders from the estate of Rob du Mée, who died in Amsterdam on 7 January 2003 from a cardiac arrest.



Rob du Mée was born in Amsterdam on March 28, 1935. He started his career as a film producer, but although several of his films were quite successful, he also suffered some serious disappointments which made him decide to break off that career. At the age of forty he registered as a student of sociology and anthropology at the University of Amsterdam. He soon developed a great interest in the work of Norbert Elias. When in March 1978 the English translation of the first volume of *The Civilising Process* was published, Rob paid his own way to New York to attend the conference that was staged in honour of Elias on that occasion – the first conference in the Americas about Elias's work.

With a lively and insatiably curious mind, Rob was erudite in many areas, including film, theatre, music, and literature. Although he never attained an academic degree, he remained highly knowledgeable in sociology and anthropology and continued to attend the meetings of Figurational sociologists in Amsterdam. His presence at those gatherings will be missed.

Johan Goudsblom

■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

The next issue of *Figurations* will be mailed in November 2003. News and notes should be sent to the Editors by 1 October 2003.

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

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