

ETIQUETTE BOOKS AND EMOTION MANAGEMENT IN THE 20TH CENTURY: PART
ONE - THE INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL CLASSES

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INTRODUCTION

This is a first report on a larger comparative study of changes in twentieth-century American, Dutch, English and German etiquette books. A central hypothesis is that major directional trends in dominant codes and ideals of behaviour and feeling, as reflected by changes in etiquette books, are closely connected with trends in power relationships and emotion management.

In this century, an important common trend in all four countries has been the diminishing of differences in power and behaviour between all social groups; workers and women came to be represented in the centres of power and further integrated into society as national states became welfare states. This expansion and further integration of interdependency networks implied a diminishing of institutionalized as well as internalized power differences - that is, in social stratification and ranking. Inequalities, together with more extreme forms of social and psychic distance between people, have diminished, without losing importance. In the course of the twentieth century, direct references to differences in class, status and gender have diminished or even vanished from the codes and ideals of behaviour and feeling. Extremes in these codes and ideals, expressing large differences in power and respect, came to provoke moral indignation and were eliminated; within the subsequent narrower limits the codes have become more lenient, more differentiated and varied for a wider and more differentiated public: a process of informalization.¹

To what extent can this overall twentieth-century trend be specified for the relationships between the classes and the sexes in the four countries under consideration? This has been the leading question for this study of etiquette books, which focuses on connections between changes in ranking and formality, especially with regard to classes and sexes, and changes in emotion management, particularly with regard to feelings of superiority and inferiority.

My reading and collecting of Dutch etiquette books began in the late 1960s, but for this international study I have had to develop an overview of the literature with the help of existing bibliographies, bringing them up-to-date where necessary.² I then selected my sample of etiquette

books, the main criterion being whether a book had gained wider recognition, that is, whether it was reprinted. From these and other books,³ I compared what was written on relationships between people of different rank (or class) and sex. The first two parts of this study will focus mainly on similarities since their central hypothesis covers broad developments and common trends, leaving a fuller description of differences between countries and periods to a later date. Questions regarding national and temporal differences, for instance why the English are more formal in informal situations and more informal in formal ones, or when and why the pace of integration and informalization processes increased or decreased, will be dealt with subsequently. However, for understanding and explaining both differences and similarities, what is illuminating is the theoretical connection between processes of integration between states, classes, sexes and generations, including inherent integration conflicts, and changes in the dominant social and psychic dividing lines, including those between formal and informal, public and private.

After a preliminary section on etiquette and etiquette books as a source of evidence, this article concentrates on the diminishing social and psychic distance between people of different class and rank, interpreted in terms of expanding social integration and identification processes. It presents examples of changes in what was written on the 'dangers' of social mixing, familiarity, the use of Christian names and 'social kissing'. Taken together, these examples indicate a process of significant directional change in the regimes of power and emotions, expressing the continuing social and inner conflicts that accompanied the rise of outsider groups to positions of social proximity in relation to established groups. In the first two examples, warnings against social mixing and familiarity, the tone is still set by established groups attempting to maintain their superior social distance; whereas in the latter two, the use of Christian names and 'social kissing', the tone is set by the now more established, (former) outsider groups and their demand for as well as their demonstration of social acceptance and proximity, which can be taken as a symptom of widened circles of identification. In this way, the examples also present an historical sequence. Around the turn of the century, when groups with 'new money' were expanding and rising, creating strong pressures on 'old money' establishments toward democratization, the 'dangers' of social mixing loomed large. Warnings against familiarity intensified and multiplied well into the 1930s when the use of Christian names became an additional issue, particularly in the USA. And ever since the 1950s, when it was first discussed by British authors, 'social kissing' remained a topic for discussion. This trend as a whole is interpreted here as an increasing social constraint toward 'unconstrained self-restraint'.

In the next issue of this journal, a following instalment will concentrate on the diminishing social and psychic distance between the sexes, and on changes in the demands on emotion management in the process of women's social integration and emancipation.

THE JANUS-HEAD OF ETIQUETTE

One of the functions of etiquette is to draw and maintain social dividing lines, to include new groups that have 'the necessary qualifications' and to exclude the 'rude' - that is, all others lower down the social ladder. In this way, changes in etiquette convey changes in established-outsider relationships, that is, in power relationships. Another function of etiquette is, within an environment protected by exclusion, to develop forms of behaviour and feeling that are considered and experienced as 'tactful', 'kind', 'considerate' and 'civilized'. The social definitions presented in etiquette books are dominated by the established, those who are 'included'. From expressions which exclude, like 'They are not nice people', it is clear that both functions are highly interconnected. Etiquette is a weapon of defence as well as a weapon of attack. Rules of etiquette function to define the boundaries between those who belong and those who do not belong to the group; they function to hold outsiders at bay *and* to set standards of sensitivity and consideration which preserve the (feeling of) purity and integrity of the group, group-identity and group-charisma. This paradoxical function of etiquette, as an instrument of exclusion or rejection on the one hand, and on the other as an instrument of inclusion or group-charisma, I call the Janus-Head of etiquette.⁴

Since etiquette symbolizes and reinforces social (and also sexual) dividing lines, as well as serving to protect and stress the sensibilities and composure of the established classes and sexes, changes in etiquette are therefore indicative of changing regimes of power *and* of emotions. The two are closely linked:

...higher status requires for its maintenance higher resources of power as well as distinction of conduct and belief which can be handed on... civilising differentials can be an important factor in the making and perpetuation of power differentials.⁵

Although this connection - between changes in class, status and power relationships, changes in mutual expectations within these relationships and changes in demands on emotion management - may be well understood in everyday life, it has not attracted much attention from social scientists. Most studies of etiquette books⁶ contain extensive descriptions of the class and status aspects of etiquette, but the question of what these changes mean in terms of self-regulation and

personality structure has received much less attention. Exceptions are to be found to a greater or lesser degree, but only in the work of Norbert Elias is the relationship between social structure and personality structure, or, with a slightly different emphasis, between social status and identity, a dominant theme. Following Elias, my own study of twentieth-century etiquette books focuses on changes in social hierarchy and emotion management, taking feelings and gestures of superiority and inferiority into special consideration. The connection between the two has become more embarrassing and difficult to discuss. A study of changes in the dominant code of behaviour and feeling, documented through changes in etiquette, may help in understanding this development more fully.

As etiquette books were never written for sociologists or social researchers, they are necessarily 'unobtrusive measures'. The codes expressed in these books may reveal a mixture of actual and ideal behaviour, but these ideals are 'real'; that is, they are not constructed by social scientists. In the world of publishers and booksellers, these books are called ephemera, which means they soon become out-dated: they very much exude the spirit of the times. Precisely for this reason, etiquette books are an extremely rich source for sociological research.

DIMINISHING SOCIAL AND PSYCHIC DISTANCE BETWEEN CLASSES:
INCREASING SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND MUTUAL IDENTIFICATION.

In this century, almost every etiquette book contains comments on the ongoing processes of democratization and social integration, in the course of which ideals of equality and feelings of embarrassment about inequalities have intensified and expanded. Here are some examples of how German comments on the fading social dividing lines have become more emphatic; the first is from the 1930s:

In recent times these differences [between the aristocracy and bourgeoisie] have largely vanished... and today everyone feels equally subject to the laws of propriety and morality.⁷

Similar remarks are made in the 1960s:

The dividing lines between classes, still very much present a generation ago, have disappeared... That, of course, requires relating face-to-face to completely different people from those with whom one before restricted oneself... People of the most simple descent have, by a change in comparative wealth, been enabled to lead a life in which they are also forcefully confronted with more demanding codes of behaviour... In this

process, the groups willing to attune to the dominant behavioural codes have extended and become numerically stronger than ever before...⁸

And from a recent etiquette book:

Today, good manners do not distinguish any longer between 'the best people' and 'other people'; they function to enhance the understanding between all people. Away with all phrases and platitudes.⁹

These examples are both indicative of a diminishing social and psychic distance, involving traditionally accepted avoidance behaviour becoming increasingly unacceptable, and an ongoing, more inclusive process of social integration: more people came to direct themselves to the same code of behaviour and feeling. A rather unexpected illustration of this interpretation is presented in the preface to *Debrett's Etiquette and Modern Manners*, published in 1981. The author says that in his youth he was told that 'the good fairy Do-As-You-Would-Be-Done-By should be emulated', but that he later discovered that 'the true spirit to emulate is that of Do-As-They-Would-Be-Done-By, whether one agrees with them or not.' This 'discovery' would have been unthinkable at a time in which social and psychic distance was strongly emphasized, and advocated, as in the next quotation:

Etiquette is the form or law of society enacted and upheld by the more refined classes as a protection and a shield against the intrusion of the vulgar and impertinent, who, having neither worth to recommend them nor discernment to discover their deficiencies, would, unless restrained by some barrier, be continually thrusting themselves into the society of those to whom their presence would be not only unwelcome, but, from difference of sentiment, manners, education, and habits, perfectly hateful and intolerable¹⁰.

Even to think of the possibility to 'Do-As-They-Would-Be-Done-By, whether one agrees with them or not' seems to presuppose a society in which social groups or classes are highly integrated and a correspondingly high level of self-restraint is taken for granted, or, in other words, mutually expected.

In the nineteenth century, especially in cities and towards strangers in particular, keeping one's distance, that is, reserve, was a firm requirement, because, as Curtin comments, Strangers might not only be demeaning social inferiors; their uncertain moral character - perhaps repulsive or, worse, tempting - was a danger to the respectable in a way that associations with social inferiors alone were not.¹¹

The 'Dangers' of Social Mixing

Attempts at keeping the ranks closed as much as possible can be found in descriptions of the 'dangers' of social mixing. The dangers of crossing established social and psychic dividing lines - 'letting the side down', 'not knowing one's place' and thus becoming too informal and too close - were avoided with the help of various formal rules. Particularly in Britain, but also in the other countries, an elaborate and complicated system of introductions, leaving cards, calls, 'at homes', dinners, etc. served this function.¹² This code of avoidance behaviour displayed and maintained the social dividing lines, and protected the sensibilities and composure of the established classes in the face of offences that endangered their self-control: such were the dangers of social mixing.

As some 'social mixing' became less and less avoidable, these rules became less formal and rigid, while demands on self-restraint increased, especially constraining expressions of superiority.¹³ Particularly around the turn of the century, however, social dividing lines were 'on the move': the social definition of the spectrum between the extremes of keeping too great a distance and coming too close was changing. More and more people from different social classes had become interdependent to the point where they could no longer avoid immediate contact with each other. Especially in the expanding cities, at work and on the streets, in public conveyances and entertainment facilities such as dance halls, cinemas and ice-skating rinks, people who once used to avoid each other were now forced either to try and maintain or recover social distance under conditions of rising physical, social and psychic proximity, or to accommodate and become accustomed to more and more social mixing and 'venting of feelings.' At the turn of the century, a new spurt in emancipation processes made the old avoidance behaviour and other expressions of superiority and inferiority so problematic that it was dealt with openly in American, Dutch and German etiquette books, and somewhat less openly in the English ones. (In England at that time, equally open discussions of lower classes and 'lower' impulses, including references to the body and hygiene, were already largely excluded and experienced as embarrassing.) The importance of maintaining a distance and avoiding familiarity was emphasized more strongly, while at the same time, the requirement to show mutual respect was also underlined more strongly - another symptom of the Janus-Head of etiquette.

Writers of etiquette books advised showing more mutual respect, especially in face-to-face contacts, by strongly attacking old, traditional expressions of superiority. In 1908, an English author wrote:

Let us never assert our superiority obnoxiously before those who are not as well dowered

by fortune as ourselves; they already know it but too well... Do not let us look down on those who are just one set beneath us in the social scale. So many find it easier to act the Lady Bountiful than to fraternise with those whose income and family connections are but little separated from our own. We must also remember, in dealing with servants, to temper firmness with kindness.

In the same year, a woman from New Zealand is reported to have said:

It is considered bad taste now to use the terms 'upper' and 'lower' classes or 'superior' and 'inferior'; but it is no offence against taste to keep up irreconcilable class separation, and to assume all the superiority that was once frankly claimed.¹⁴

Another significant example of the increasing pressure to curb expressions of superiority is the change in the meaning of the word *snob*:

In the terminology of the 1860s a 'snob' was a businessman trying to become a gentleman... Within two generations the meaning of 'snob' was completely inverted. A 'snob' was now any social superior who on 'false' basis of wealth *or* breeding rather than achievement or inherent human qualities, held himself to be better than those socially below him.¹⁵

The pressure to control expressions of superiority continued. Until the 1930s, whole groups or classes were outspokenly deemed unacceptable as people to associate with, and some etiquette books still contained separate sections on 'good behaviour' toward social superiors and inferiors. Later, these sections disappeared. Ideals about 'good behaviour' developed in the direction of being totally unrelated to superior and inferior social position or rank. An example of this process is the change in the introduction to America's most famous etiquette book by Emily Post. In the editions published from 1922 to 1937, this introduction still referred to superior groups of people and their advanced 'cultivation':

Best Society abroad is always the oldest aristocracy... those families and communities who have for the longest period of time known highest cultivation. Our own Best Society is represented by social groups which have had, since this is America, widest rather than longest association with old world cultivation. Cultivation is always the basic attribute of Best Society, much as we hear in this country of an 'Aristocracy of wealth' (p.1).

By 1937, the author had changed this into

In the general picture of this modern day the smart and the near-smart, the distinguished and the merely conspicuous, the real and the sham, and the unknown general public are

all mixed up together. The walls that used to enclose the world that was fashionable are all down... We've all heard the term 'nature's nobleman', meaning a man of innately beautiful character who, never having even heard of the code, follows it by instinct. In other words, the code of a thoroughbred... is the code of instinctive decency, ethical integrity, self-respect and loyalty (p.xi/2) (This does not prevent her from writing lines that would grade the sensibility of an English audience, like 'The hall-mark of so-called "vulgar people" is unrestricted display of uncontrolled emotions', p.307).

This kind of change is indicative of social integration and identification: increasing numbers of people directing their feelings and behaviour to the same national standard. Etiquette books were written for - and sold to - an expanding public, to a rising number of people experiencing both the expectations and responsibilities attached to their elevated positions and accumulated wealth. At the same time, as they gained access to the centres of power (through representatives) and differences in income between the classes on the whole diminished,¹⁶ aspects of their codes of behaviour and feeling 'trickled up' and were incorporated within the dominant codes. Thus, in expanding networks of interdependency, more and more people pressured each other via these codes increasingly to draw dividing lines on the basis of certain kinds of behaviour, not certain kinds of people. Whereas people of inferior status were once avoided, today behaviour that betrays feelings of superiority and inferiority is avoided: avoidance behaviour has been internalized; tensions *between* people have become tensions within people. This implies that social superiors are less automatically taken to be better people: superior and inferior behaviour is increasingly thought to be found in all classes. In the early 1960s this was made explicit: 'Bad behaviour is prevalent in all walks of life from the highest to the lowest; it is not confined to one class of person nor to one section of the community'.¹⁷

These examples may help to understand why, in increasingly egalitarian societies, Elias's theme of the importance of class position and social status for personality and identity has become more embarrassing and difficult to discuss: as subordinate social groups were emancipated, references to 'better' and 'inferior' kinds of people, to hierarchical group differences, were increasingly tabooed. In the 1950s, the once automatic equation of superior in power and superior as a human being had declined to the point of embarrassment, and the new sensitivity to this difference urged one social arbiter to write in the introduction:

In this book, there occasionally crop up the words 'superior' and 'inferior'. These words are not used in the social sense, in any way, but are used merely to indicate difference in

rank. Thus, it may be assumed that an older person is `superior' to a younger person; that a child is `inferior' to its parents and so on. The words imply no slur on the character of the person concerned, whatsoever.¹⁸

To repeat the theoretical connection¹⁹: as bonds of cooperation and competition between people expanded and intensified, and hierarchical differences between individuals and groups diminished, more people pressured each other to take more of each other into account more often. Thus, the dynamics of increasing interdependencies in Western societies contained a strong pressure toward increased sensitivity towards each other's emotional life, allowing a wider social acceptance of all kinds of behaviour and emotions, with the exception of expressing feelings of superiority and inferiority. In this way, changes in the spectrum of accepted ways of keeping a distance and of becoming more intimate correspond to changes in dominant patterns of emotion management; in particular to changes in the management of superiority and inferiority feelings like shame, embarrassment and repulsion.

Other related changes in the spectrum of accepted ways of becoming more intimate and keeping a distance are also related to changes in dominant patterns of emotion management. Next to direct attacks on traditional ways of keeping a distance (avoidance behaviour) as an expression of superiority, there were also attacks on being too open and becoming too close. I shall sketch the line of developments in this sphere by focusing on direct warnings against psychic proximity or familiarity, on the spread of using Christian names, and on that of 'social kissing'.

Dangers of Familiarity: 1. Direct Warnings

At the turn of the century, the danger of not keeping enough distance was often mentioned. It was described as endangering even relationships with friends and acquaintances. The following example comes from a book which appeared in both Germany and the Netherlands:

It quite often happens that befriended families become enemies after having spent some time together in a summer resort; or, if they succeed in avoiding enmity, that they lose some respect for each other because of having become too intimate. Indeed, 'No man is great in the eyes of his valet'. The Great Wall of China that every sensitive person should raise around himself and also around his house, would be quite appropriate here: a certain reserved distinction that no one dares to touch.²⁰

Here are two American examples:

Discretionary civility does not in any way include familiarity. We doubt whether it is not the best of all armor against it. Familiarity is "bad style".

-Friendship does not mean familiarity. Indeed familiarity is the greatest foe. When a young girl allows a young man to call her by her first name, unless engaged to him, she cheapens his regard for her by just so much.²¹

In England, the necessity of maintaining a distance was not emphasized as strongly. At that time, the Great Wall of 'reserve' had already become more of an integral part of the social habitus of the English establishment; the dangers of familiarity had come to be taken much more for granted. In order to find references to these dangers that are comparably open and direct, one has to look to books which appeared a few decades earlier. For instance, this quotation from 1861: Indiscriminate familiarity either offends your superiors, or else dubs you their dependent. It gives your inferiors just but troublesome and improper claims of equality.²²

In nineteenth-century England, more than in the other countries studied, it had already become taken for granted that

The proud... disdained all kinds of familiarity... because they interpreted aloofness as a sign of strength, independence, and self-sufficiency... The well-mannered individual was not 'familiar'; he did not intrude on others; he did not ask personal questions; he did not thrust information about himself onto others; he kept his knowledge of others to himself; he did not talk to strangers; he did not snoop or eavesdrop; and he did not stand closely to his interlocutor, talk loudly, or gesticulate wildly.²³

Reserve was a particular requirement in cities, and English society was very much London-oriented. Whereas the dangers of familiarity were still a major theme in the German and Dutch etiquette books until the 1960s, in England reserve was taken for granted, to the extent that emphasizing the need for both social and psychic distance, even with friends and relatives, would most probably have been embarrassing. In contrast, the best known Dutch etiquette book between 1939 and the 1960s advised:

Under all conditions, we would do well to keep some distance. Keeping one's distance means avoiding excessive familiarity. We all know that this danger exists in dealing with subordinates, but... is there such a thing as excessive familiarity with our friends and relatives?

Yes! ...

Anyone who gets too close to us sees too much, too much of the petty, too much of the not so nice side of us, and the glimpse that we thus give others into our innermost regions can be a surprisingly unpleasant one that can never ever be eradicated.²⁴

In present-day German books, in certain contexts, keeping a 'healthy distance' is still advocated, whereas in the Dutch literature this advice has been succeeded by an emphasis on privacy.²⁵

Dangers of Familiarity: 2. Christian Names

Another example of diminishing social and psychic distance, and a way of avoiding feelings of superiority and inferiority, is the spread of the use of Christian names. In 1937, in the revised edition of her book, Emily Post strongly advised against it:

Surely there is little to be said in favor of present-day familiarity in the use of first names - because those at the upper end of the social scale voluntarily choose to do the very thing by which those at the lower end of the social scale are hall-marked. The sole reason why so many men and women who work prefer jobs in factories or stores to those of domestic employ is that the latter carries the opprobrium of being addressed by one's first name. It will be interesting to see whether the reversal will be complete.

And:

We know very well that there are countless people of middle age, and even older too, who seem to think that being called Tilly or Tommy by Dora Debutante and Sammy Freshman is to be presented with a cup of the elixir of youth.²⁶

Considering Americans' reputedly informal ways of addressing each other, it may seem surprising that these quotations can also be found in the 'completely revised' 1950 edition, and that, in the 1965 edition of this book, revised by the author's daughter-in-law, the same stance is taken, and even italicized: '*It is in flagrant violation of good manners for children to call their natural parents by their first names*'.²⁷ In the 1975 edition, the italics were removed, but now the sentence continued: '...and furthermore, it undermines the respect that every child should have for his mother and father' (p.18). However, italics did not help to halt the trend, nor did anything else. Increasingly informal adult manners and mentality did find its roots in more informal parent-child relationships, and were, in turn, reinforced by them. As Letitia Baldrige had it in the 1970s:

The parent's own attitude toward people in authority determines the mind-set of their children... Side by side with respect for those in authority should go respect for those who serve us... Harping parents make harping children who grow into harping parents.²⁸

Although the debate about the issue continues throughout the century until the present day, with hindsight, the direction of change is unmistakable:

The widespread use of first names, sports clothing, audio recreation, and other attributes

of 'informality' in the work world has assisted in the illusion that no-one really needs to perform a service for anyone else.²⁹

In England, etiquette books show less resistance to this trend. In 1939, Lady Troubridge clearly welcomed the new informality by calling a first chapter 'The New Etiquette is Informal' and a paragraph 'Accept the New Spirit!':

Friendships are made far quicker now that the barrier of undue formality has been lifted, and Christian names follow swiftly on mutual liking in a way which would make old-fashioned people aghast. [She advises her readers] ...to steer a course nicely blended between old-fashioned courtesy and new-fashioned informality, so that we shall always be right.³⁰

After the 1960s and 1970s, comments tend towards matter-of-fact-acceptance:

Once, using someone's first name was a sign of family links, acceptance or long acquaintance, a goal for the would-be suitor, a mark of best-friendship, let alone a social signal that you yourself came from the same or a superior rank. In closed societies where interdependence had to combine with hierarchy, nicknames achieved the necessary closeness without overstepping the bounds of proper formality... Today, all such criteria are largely obsolete. The use of first names is no longer a benchmark of intimacy but the norm [especially among 'media folk']...³¹

And, from 1988:

Most people today are introduced by their christian and surnames, in very informal situations by christian names alone...³²

In Germany, this process of diminishing social and psychic distance has been lagging behind. *Duzen* (the use of the informal you) and the use of Christian names have remained relatively restricted. Yet, repeated complaints about too hastily crossing these important borderlines signify the presence of the informalizing trend. Recently, a return to formality and *Siezen* (the formal you) is reported: "Today, the motto in addressing is again "Distance and Difference".³³ A variety of subtle differentiations of proximity and distance still prevails, as the next remarks on 'social kissing' may show:

The social kiss is not to be considered a step towards saying *Du* to each other... Such little kisses on cheeks have no other significance than 'We like you and you are now recognized as one of our acquaintances!' In these cases one might use Christian names, but they are certainly no indication that one may automatically start to *duzen*.³⁴

Dangers of Familiarity: 3. Social Kissing

From this warning it follows that social kissing is accepted, even in Germany. In 1988, when this was published, this warning was new, but the social kiss was not. In 1973, for instance, one could read:

In circles of artists this way of greeting each other is very popular - something one should know. If one doesn't, a thus tempestuously greeted person will stand there a little silly and shy.³⁵

In 1977, in a new edition of the same book, this passage is revised as follows:

In circles of artists this way of greeting each other *was* very popular [italics CW] In the meantime this social kiss has also become endemic at the better kind of party. In general, there seems to be a wide disposition and willingness to kiss and be kissed. The stars on stage and television show how to do it, and even football players... give their emotions free reign, when they want to express their completely uninhibited joy. What once gave offence to the highest degree, has for a long time already belonged among the things taken for granted in our 'permissive society'³⁶.

Social kissing has spread in all the countries studied:

In the Netherlands too, men and women nowadays exchange more kisses than ever in a thousand years of civilization... The custom originated in the world of fashion, went across to the theatre, was taken up by the world of television, and has established itself today in almost every layer of society... The number of kisses is also on the way up: twenty years ago, one kiss would do, ten years ago, kissing twice was on its way up, and today, it has become fashionable to kiss three times - a custom that spread from the south of the Netherlands. If the present inflation continues, it is hard to predict where this all will end.³⁷

The origin of social kissing is invariably seen in what is called 'the world of fashion': among actors and other artists. These people were also the first to be accepted in Society, despite lacking any 'old family' connection or possessing wealth. As Terry wrote in 1925:

Notice the easy way in which the Stage has joined with the Peerage - obviously because the essential Stage training teaches good manners, correct speech and social actions, and also a careful toilet and a graceful walk.³⁸

The acceptance and success of the Stage in Society depended mostly on what today may be called 'personality,' that is, their command of a 'presentation of self' that is experienced as at least

attractive, and as irresistible as possible.³⁹ In order to do this, these people had to overcome the existing social and psychic distance by behaving as similarly as possible to those in Society and other centres of power. Therefore, in this world, competition in self-regulation, in aristocratic ease and confidence, has most probably been relatively fierce, and awareness of self-regulation may have been stronger. The continuation of this kind of competition makes it plausible that 'social kissing' originated within these circles.

Comments upon 'social kissing' can also be read as clear examples of an increasing pressure to avoid expressions of social and psychic distance. A quotation from 1859 in defence of kissing in public, apparently on its way out, will serve to introduce:

As a general rule, this act of affection is excluded from public eyes in this country, and there are people who are ashamed even to kiss a brother or father on board the steamer which is to take him away for some ten or twenty years. But then there are people in England who are ashamed of showing any feeling, however natural, however pure.⁴⁰

In the 1950s, kissing in public had returned, but perhaps it had become less an act of affection than a demonstration of social and psychic equality:

Oddly enough, although the English are rather reticent about shaking hands, certain of them are growing tremendously keen on saying 'Hello' and 'Goodbye' with a social kiss. Affectionate though this is, the gesture we are speaking of is no more than a peck on the cheek...⁴¹

In the 1980s, social kissing was reported to be

...now the rule rather than the exception... In most major metropolitan centres, the kiss has virtually replaced the handshake as the social *ave atque vale* of our times... Most favoured embrace today is the double kiss... although in some circles it is already being replaced by the triple kiss. In Manhattan they kiss on the lips - turning the other cheek to a New Yorker could be interpreted as a snub...⁴²

From the following quotations from English and American etiquette books, it seems clear that social kissing is only half-heartedly accepted, if at all. They show an ambivalence which can also be interpreted as a fear of snubbing: the fear of rejecting others by refusing them social and psychic proximity, that is, equality:

-(in a chapter called *Lip Service*) Social kissing has arrived. It didn't have to wait for the Channel Tunnel to open.⁴³ ...Nowadays few ask themselves 'Do we?' The question today is: 'One cheek or two?' ...In my youth unnecessary kissing suggested theatrical leanings,

or a flaw in the Anglo-Saxon pedigree.⁴⁴

-Miss Manners heartily joins you in deploring the debasement of both the dignified American greeting of the handshake and the intimacy of the kiss.⁴⁵

-Q. What is the correct sound to emit when kissing a friend by way of greeting or farewell? ... A. It seems that 'Mwa!' has recently been superceded by 'Mwu!'. 'Mmm!' is currently not acceptable.⁴⁶

This mocking, half-hearted attitude toward social kissing may be contrasted to the positive attitude of a German author who took the ascent of social kissing as evidence for his view that 'relationships between people are moulded in ways that are essentially more natural and less uptight...'⁴⁷ Notwithstanding the reported return to formality, this evaluation is in line with that of most other recent German authors, who sincerely invite their readers to do away with uptight formalities:

We are against empty formalities as a substitute for humane behaviour... Let us learn having conversations with each other without having to know who and what we are! This only requires trust in all possible participants in a conversation, all fellow men, whatever their occupation or education!⁴⁸

However, no matter how one evaluates this process, both English and German social arbiters seem to realize that more informal codes of behaviour and feeling cannot be equated with easier codes. Some authors seem to be aware of this connection:

Every authoritarian abuse of power is evil. We loathe constraint and drill, and with endurance and patience we consciously choose the *difficult road*. ... Today's manners include a freedom for all to proceed in various ways, as far as tactfulness allows. This risk of choosing is better than being fossilized in yesterdays formalities. Formality is inhibiting. Smooth manners require a sense of togetherness between the generations and an understanding of fellow human beings.⁴⁹

Here, it is stated explicitly that abolishing formalities does give rise to the 'risk of choosing', and that the chances of making the wrong choice increase if a sense of togetherness is lacking, that is, when there is insufficient identification with others, regardless of age, sex or class. Therefore, no matter how strongly one may 'loathe constraint'; the constraint to chose 'the difficult road' has intensified.

Interpretation 1: The Constraint To Be Unrestrained

A similar paradox can be perceived both in the increase in the use of Christian names and in

social kissing. Both can be taken as examples of intimate and private forms of behaviour 'going public', of increasing confidentiality, openness or familiarity, intimacy or 'instant intimacy'⁵⁰ - the choice of concept depending on one's evaluation of this development. However, whether evaluated positively or negatively, no one is able to ignore this development completely or withdraw from its inherent constraints. On the other hand, many people may not even experience or recognize any constraint, as it is a constraint to be unconstrained. As status competition intensified and the art of obliging and being obliged became more important as a power resource, demonstrations of being intimately trustworthy while perfectly at ease also gained in importance. In this sense, processes of democratization, integration and informalization ran in parallel with an increasing constraint towards developing 'smooth manners'. Thus, the rise in public or anonymous intimacy - part of increasing emotional and behavioural alternatives - ran in tandem with rising demands on emotion management. The expression 'a constraint to be unconstrained' seems to capture this paradoxical development.

This expression resembles one used by Norbert Elias: the social constraint toward self-constraint. Indeed, both constraints are closely related. A quotation from the German Höflinger writing in 1885 may illustrate this point:

Beware not to clean your nose with anything else but a handkerchief... Indeed, courage and mastery over oneself is demanded in order to be able to control oneself so constantly and persistently, but only in this way one accustoms oneself to an uninterrupted decent demeanor.⁵¹

From these lines it is clear that the constraint towards 'becoming accustomed to' self-restraint is at the same time a constraint to be unconstrained, to be confident and at ease. Almost every etiquette book emphasizes the importance of tactful rather than demonstrative deference, and of 'natural' rather than mannered behaviour. However, in processes of emancipation and informalization, some ways of behaving, experienced previously as tactful deference, again and again came to be seen as too hierarchical and demonstrative, just as what was once defined and recommended as natural came to be experienced more or less as stiff and phoney, and branded as mannered. Thus, new forms of relaxed, 'loose' and 'natural' behaviour had been developed. Some writers of etiquette books seem to be at least vaguely aware of this process, if only because they took it for granted that 'natural behaviour' had to be learned. Full awareness was prevented, however, most probably because of their 'hodiecentrism'⁵²: their glorification of the actual definition of tactful and natural behaviour as the ultimate outcome, the end of the history of learning to act naturally. An example from 1923:

It is essential to *learn* to appear just as much at ease in one's dress suit in the presence of Royalty as one does in one's crêpe de chine pyjamas in one's dressing room in the presence of a Persian cat. And it is necessary to *learn* to walk as if in sandals and not as if in tight boots on soft corns.

Be natural.

Go to a good tailor, even though he may seem a little more expensive...⁵³

In all countries considered here, this emphasis on ease and easy-goingness has tempered the emphasis on 'reserve' or avoidance of familiarity. In Britain, both sides of this tension-balance were highly developed. As Michael Curtin noted: '...anything that smacked of effort, awkwardness, or forethought was itself bad manners: above all things, one must be self-confident and at ease.'⁵⁴ This demand is clearly derived from the aristocratic tradition. The Germans may have lots of reserve, for example in the formal dividing lines of *duzen*, but here it is hardly if at all tempered by an aristocratic ease. According to Heinz Dietrich (p. 6), Freiherr von Knigge's famous courtesy book (1788) was revolutionary because he did not restrict himself to the manners of the nobility, but also added those of the bourgeoisie. Dietrich commented: 'Yet he considered it necessary to write down other rules for them than for the aristocracy.' Indeed, the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie in Germany had rather separate centres of power: the universities and the noble courts, and their aristocracy had kept more of the warrior code. English society was more integrated, more London-oriented, and their blend between a code of good manners and a code of morals show, according to Elias, 'the gradualness of the resolution of conflicts between upper and middle classes.'⁵⁵ Lord Chesterfield referred to 'ease' as 'the last stage of perfection of politeness.' At present, and not only in England but all over the Western world, this still remains the case, only more so.

Interpretation 2: Ease and Authenticity

As 'ease' and 'naturalness' gained in importance, increasing numbers of people pressured each other to develop more differentiated and flexible patterns of self-regulation, triggering further impetus towards higher levels of social knowledge and higher levels of self-knowledge and reflexivity. Pressure to develop a keen eye for 'the latent meaning of apparently insignificant details', for instance by examining 'the most trivial details... involuntary gestures, slips of the tongue',⁵⁶ was also accompanied by heated discussions about the distinction between a 'false self' and a 'real self', or between 'phoney' and 'natural' or 'authentic' behaviour and feelings. There is a whole body of literature, from physiognomy to its modern form of semiotics, from Freud,

Simmel, Veblen and Weber to Goffman and Foucault, demonstrating a growing awareness of (and pressure towards) impression management. Some embarked upon the quest for universal and eternal realities *behind* all these changing and changeable appearances, a quest as old as religion and metaphysics. Others came to take what might be called a zero-sum perspective on emotion management, a perspective which also has a long tradition; for instance, as outlined by Georg Simmel at the beginning of the twentieth century:

...punctuality, calculability and exactness become part of modern personalities *to the exclusion of* those irrational, instinctive, sovereign traits and impulses which aim at determining the mode of life from within.⁵⁷

The 'mode of life' was seen as more and more determined or even dictated from without. However, as the management of appearance has become increasingly important, *both* inward and outward signals and signs have become scrutinized more severely and in ways more sensitive to shades and nuances. From this perspective, the zero-sum view may be interpreted as an expression of a nostalgic kind of 'moral masochism' which still blinds many people to the controlled intensification of both sides of this tension balance in social and psychic processes.⁵⁸

I am grateful to Jonathan Fletcher and Stephen Mennell for correcting my English.

NOTES

1 Cf. Cas Wouters, 'Social Stratification and Informalisation in Global Perspective', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 7/4 (1990): 69-90; and 'On Status Competition and Emotion Management', *Journal of Social History* 24/4 (1990): 699-718.

2 With regard to England, I have profited from a bibliography and a number of excerpts of nineteenth- and twentieth-century etiquette books compiled by Stephen Mennell, who very kindly supplied me with copies. The studies of etiquette books by Davidoff, Curtin and Porter (see note 6) served as an introduction into the early period of research. In order to find my way into the world of German etiquette books, the study by Horst-Volker Krumrey (see note 6) has been of great help. It reports changes in etiquette books between 1870 and 1970. When my research took me to Berlin, I also benefited from discussions with him. On the American etiquette books of the twentieth century, Deborah Robertson Hodges has published an annotated bibliography (see note 6). Both this book and conversations with its author have been helpful for studying the American sources. In addition, my research project and I owe a lot to Michael Schröter, Berlin, Jonathan Fletcher and Lisa Driver-Davidson, Cambridge, and Irwin and Verda Deutscher, Washington. Not only as hosts but also as partners in discussing problems and data they have been most helpful, particularly Michael Schröter.

3 For instance, all etiquette books for sale in the main, large bookshops in Berlin, London and Washington at the time of my visit.

4 The paradox of exclusion or rejection and consideration is not, of course, equally strong everywhere. In

England, for example, this Janus-Head of etiquette is particularly marked. To the present day, England is often described as a class ridden society, meaning that English society is still characterised by relatively sharp boundaries. At the same time, protected by these boundaries, the established classes in England have pressured each other to increasingly demanding levels of consideration and kindness, and in this respect too, the English have a reputation.

- 5 Norbert Elias and John L. Scotson, *The Established and the Outsiders* SAGE, London 1994 (1965): 148/153.
- 6 Compared with many other fields, this body of literature is rather small. Apparently the subject is not very popular. In particular I made use of the following books and articles: Esther B. Aresty, *The Best Behavior. The Course of Good Manners - from Antiquity to the Present - as Seen Through Courtesy and Etiquette Books* (New York, 1970); Gerald Carson, *The Polite Americans. A wide-angle view of our more or less good manners over 300 years* (New York, 1966); Sherri Cavan, (1970) 'The Etiquette of Youth', pp. 554-565 in: G.P. Stone and H.A. Farberman (eds), *Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction* (Waltham, 1970); Michael Curtin, *Propriety and Position. A Study of Victorian Manners* (New York, 1987); Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles. Society Etiquette and the Season* (London, 1973); Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization* (Cambridge USA, 1994); Joanne Finkelstein, *Dining Out. A Sociology of Modern Manners* (New York, 1989); Andrew St. George, *The Decent of Manners* (London 1993); Deborah Robertson Hodges, *Etiquette. An Annotated Bibliography of Literature Published in English in the United States, 1900 through 1987* (Jefferson etc., 1989); John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility. Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (New York 1990); Horst-Volker Krumrey, *Entwicklungsstrukturen von Verhaltensstandarden. Eine soziologische Prozeßanalyse auf der Grundlage deutscher Anstands- und Manierenbücher von 1870 bis 1970* (Frankfurt am Main, 1984); Judith Martin, *Common Courtesy. In Which Miss Manners Solves The Problem That Baffles Mr. Jefferson* (New York, 1985); Judith Martin and Gunther S. Stent, 'I Think; Therefore I Thank. A Philosophy of Etiquette', *The American Scholar* 59/2 (1990): 237-254; Harold Nicolson, *Good Behaviour, being a Study of Certain Types of Civility* (London, 1955); Cecil Porter, *Not Without A Chaperone. Modes and Manners from 1897 to 1914* (London, 1972); Arthur M. Schlesinger, *Learning How to Behave: A Historical Study of American Etiquette Books* (New York, 1946); Margaret Visser, *The Rituals of Dinner. The Origins, Evolution, Eccentricities, and Meaning of Table Manners* (New York, 1991); Hedwig Winter-Uedelhoven, *Zur Bedeutung der Etikette* (Frankfurt/M, 1991); Cas Wouters, 'Developments in Behavioural Codes Between the Sexes; Formalization of Informalization, The Netherlands 1930-1985', *Theory, Culture and Society*, (1987) 4(2-3): 405-429.
- 7 Heinz Dietrich, *Menschen miteinander* (Berlin und Darmstadt, 1934); quoted in Horst-Volker Krumrey, *Entwicklungsstrukturen von Verhaltensstandarden*, 710.
- 8 Dr. Hans-Otto Meissner and Isabella Burkhard, *Gute Manieren stets gefragt. Takt, Benehmen, Etiquette* (München, 1962): 26.
- 9 *Umgangsformen Heute, Die Empfehlungen des Fachausschusses für Umgangsformen*, (Niedernhausen, 1970, überarbeitete Neuauflage: 1988/1991): 18.
- 10 *Etiquette for Ladies* 1863, 5; quoted in Curtin, *Propriety and Position*, 130.
- 11 Curtin, *Propriety and Position*, 150.
- 12 For England, see Davidoff, *The Best Circles* and Curtin, *Propriety and Position*.
- 13 This trend, a concomitant of democratization and integration processes, is observed in earlier periods, for instance: 'Almost all books on manners in colonial America... contain an emphasis on 'superiors' and 'inferiors' that would dramatically lessen in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century...' Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, 12.
- 14 Quoted in Porter, *Not Without A Chaperone*, 72 and 73.
- 15 Davidoff, *The Best Circles*, 60.
- 16 Cf. Y.S. Brenner, H. Kaelble, M. Thomas (eds), *Income Distribution in Historical Perspective*, (Cambridge etc./Paris, 1991); thanks to Nico Wilterdink.

- 17 Mary Bolton, *The New Etiquette Book*, (London, 1961): 8.
- 18 *Etiquette for Everyone. Good Behaviour in Everyday Life*, London, 1956.
- 19 Cf. the literature mentioned in note 1.
- 20 Natalie Bruck-Auffenberg, *De vrouw 'comme il faut'*, (Leiden, 1897): 226).
- 21 Respectively: John Wesley Hanson, Jr., *Etiquette of To-Day* (Chicago 1896): 70, and Marion Harland and Virginia van de Water, *Everyday Etiquette* (Indianapolis, 1905): 143.
- 22 *Etiquette for All* 1861: 15; quoted in Curtin, *Propriety and Position*, 125.
- 23 Curtin, *Propriety and Position*, 126/7.
- 24 Amy Groskamp-ten Have, *Hoe hoort het eigenlijk?* (Amsterdam, 1939-1957): 26/7.
- 25 Wouters, Developments in Behavioural Codes... *TCS* 1987, 419ff.
- 26 Emily Post, *Etiquette in Society, in Business, in Politics and at Home*. New York: 1922, revised editions: 1923; 1927; 1931; 1934; 1937): 32 and 34.
- 27 Post, *Etiquette...*, 1965: 17. This is no idiosyncrasy; in Amy Vanderbilt's 1952 and 1963 editions of her *Complete Book of Etiquette* (p.553) one reads: 'In ultra-progressive educational circles parents and even teachers are often called by their first names... To me it seems self-conscious, if not in the case of parents, barbaric.'
- 28 Amy Vanderbilt, *The Amy Vanderbilt Complete Book of Etiquette*, Revised and Expanded by Letitia Baldrige, (Garden City, New York, 1978): 6/9.
- 29 Judith Martin, *Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior* (New York, 1979, reprinted 1980/1981/1982/1983...): 417.
- 30 Lady L. Troubridge, *Etiquette and Entertaining* (London, 1939): 10/11.
- 31 Anne de Courey, *A Guide to Modern Manners* (London, 1985): 19.
- 32 Barbara Gilgallon and Sue Seddon, *Modern Etiquette* (London, 1988): 25.
- 33 *Der Spiegel*, Gesellschaft, Manieren, 'Verbale Krawatten' 47/7(1993): 243.
- 34 *Umgangsformen heute* 1988/90: 94/95.
- 35 Joachim Wachtel, *1 x 1 des guten Tons heute* (München etc., 1973): 47.
- 36 Sebastian Schliff, *Gutes Benehmen - Kein Problem!* (München, 1977/81): 41.
- 37 H. F. van Loon, *Goede Manieren. Hoe Hoort Het Nu* (Amsterdam, 1983): 75.
- 38 Eileen Terry, *Etiquette for All, Man, Woman or Child* (London, 1925): 11.
- 39 Cf: 'The only identity one can still have as a person is as a personality, which seems to be something less than a person blown up to look like more' Judith Martin, *Common Courtesy*, 55.
- 40 *Habits of Good Society: A Handbook of Etiquette* (London, 1859): 184.
- 41 Anne Edwards and Drusilla Beyfus, *Lady Behave: A Guide to Modern Manners* (London, 1956): 199 (revised edition 1969).
- 42 Courey, *A Guide to Modern Manners*, 21/2.
- 43 The belief that social kissing originated on the Continent and from there came to England is quite commonplace. In 1992, for instance, Drusilla Beyfus wrote: 'Social kissing has made the leap over the Channel.' Beyfus, *Modern Manners*, 340. From the USA, Elisabeth Post believes social kissing originated in Europe; she write about 'the European custom of kissing (either in the air or with contact) both cheeks. Some people even utter "kiss kiss" as they perform this rite.' Elisabeth L. Post, *Emily Post's Etiquette* (New York, 1992): 4.
- 44 Laurie Graham, *Getting It Right. A Survival Guide to Modern Manners* (London, 1989): 15.
- 45 Judith Martin, *Miss Manners' Guide for the Turn-of-the-Millennium* (New York, 1983/1990): 65.
- 46 Mary Killen, *Best Behaviour. The Tatler Book of Alternative Etiquette* (London, 1990): 50.
- 47 Irmgard Wolter, *Der Gute Ton in Gesellschaft und Beruf* (Niedernhausen/Ts., 1990): 10.
- 48 *Umgangsformen Heute*, 1988/90: 10/19.
- 49 *Umgangsformen Heute*, 24 (my italics) and 16.
- 50 The other side of this coin, immediate verbal aggression, especially in city traffic, may be called 'instant enmity,' or even 'anonymous enmity'. Both instant intimacy and instant enmity can be interpreted as expressions of an ongoing 'emancipation of emotions' in the transient and volatile or

anonymous contacts between strangers.

51 Christoph Höflinger, *Anstandsregeln* (Regensburg, 1885-1905): 12.

52 Johan Goussblom, *Sociology in the Balance. A Critical Essay*, (Oxford, 1977).

53 *Etiquette for Gentlemen. A Guide to the Observances of Good Society*, (London, 1923/1950): 21.

54 Curtin, *Propriety and Position*, 56/7.

55 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 506. For Elias's observations on Germany, see his *Studien über die Deutschen*, edited by Michael Schröter, Frankfurt/M 1989.

56 Kassin, *Rudeness and Civility*, 94/95. Although Kassin also writes in praise of the search for a 'real self', it was not in this context that he used the words quoted here, but in contrasting the demands of city life to that of smaller communities.

57 Simmel, quoted in Robert van Krieken, 'The Organisation of the Soul: Elias and Foucault on Discipline and the Self', pp. 353-371 in *Arch. Europ. Sociol.* XXXI, 1990: 353-371 (my emphasis).

58 Cf. Wouters, 'On Status Competition and Emotion Management.' The term 'moral masochism' is taken from Peter N. Stearns, *Jealousy. The Evolution of an Emotion in American History* (New York and London, 1989).