From Courtesy to Civility

*Changing Codes of Conduct
in Early Modern England*

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texts give colour and local context to a long-standing and increasing anti-court trend in European culture. The political conflict between court and country which erupted into civil war and revolution in the reign of Charles I threw up a more violent polemic and satirical literature in which, as is clear from titles such as *A Gagge for Long-hair'd Rattleheads who revile all Civill Roundheads* (*c.*1642), stereotypes of manners were used as weapons.

This sketch of sources has moved outwards from the core of texts which are explicitly and exclusively concerned with the teaching of codes of manners to a varied educational and satirical literature which suggests the intellectual and social context of those codes. This study will move in the same direction, but it must be noted that the movement has no obvious limits. Concern with the life and meaning of codes of manners can be traced in a mass of writings; memoirs and anecdote, poetry, courtly fiction, and above all drama, in which social values are often drawn and debated with more subtlety and power than in strictly didactic literature. My use of evidence drawn from this larger field of writing is inevitably highly selective and impressionistic, yet it will serve, I hope, to indicate the complexity and ambivalence of the concepts of 'courtesy' and 'civility' to which didactic writers gave what was often a very schematic and one-sided formulation.

Francis Briant (London, 1548); Philibert de Vienne, *Le Philosophe de Court* (1547) tr. George North as *The Philosopher of the Court* (London, 1575). For the anti-court tradition see Claus Uhlig, *Hofkritik im England des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Berlin, 1973) and P. M. Smith, *The Anti-Courtier Trend in Sixteenth Century French Literature* (Geneva, 1966).

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Civility in Manners: The Emergence of a Concept

'Manners', wrote Edmund Burke in 1780, 'are of more importance than laws . . . they aid morals, they supply them, or they totally destroy them.'[1] In recent years, historians of eighteenth-century political ideas have identified 'manners', in the sense of social codes and standards distinct from both laws and ethics, as a crucial concept in the political thought of the Enlightenment. Indeed, it has been suggested that concern with 'manners' in political writing was a development peculiar to the eighteenth century, and one which indicates a major reorientation of political discourse. According to this view, earlier thought on the forms, aims, and origins of human association lacked a distinct category of the 'social'. Its matrix was the polity, the commonwealth, the empire, or the state, with the individual conceived as citizen, ruler, or subject. During the eighteenth century, however, a new concern with 'manners' as distinct from laws and ethics signals the emergence of a concept of society, a sphere of social relationships related to but not identical with forms of law and government. Moreover, the obvious character of 'manners' as historical products, in contrast to ethics and law which could be discussed in abstract, universal terms, made the concept crucial in the development of Enlightenment theories of 'progress'. Recent reinterpretation of the 'Scottish Enlightenment' has shown how central was the notion of the 'softening' or 'refinement' of manners to the reconstruction of society's progress from the primitive to the modern which was undertaken by men like John Millar and Adam Smith.[2]

[1] Edmund Burke, *Letters on a Regicide Peace* (1796) in *The Works of the Right Honorable Edmund Burke* (London, 1826), vol. 8, 172.

[2] See J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce and History* (Cambridge 1985), pt. 1, 'Virtues, Rights, and Manners', for an overview of the debate; for the Scottish Enlightenment, 'civic humanism', and 'manners', see *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. I. Hont and M. Ignatieff (Cambridge, 1983), especially J. Robertson, 'The Scottish Enlightenment at the Limits of the Civic Tradition' (pp. 137–78) and J. G. A. Pocock, 'Cambridge Paradigms and Scotch Philosophers' (pp. 235–52). N. T. Phillipson, 'Culture and Society in the Eighteenth-century Province: The case of Edinburgh and the Scottish Enlightenment', in *The University and Society*, ed. L. Stone (Princeton, 1974), vol. 2, 407–48, suggests the social and political basis for Scottish development of concepts of manners.

Debate among historians of ideas on the significance of 'manners' in eighteenth-century political discourse has been largely orientated towards the nineteenth century; it is geared to explaining the origins of political economy, modern social science, and the modern liberalism which depends on a distinction between politics and society. Yet the debate also raises questions about pre-Enlightenment concepts of 'manners'. On the one hand it underlines what has been suggested in the previous chapter—the instability of the concept as well as the content of manners, and its links with overall images of order in polity and society. On the other hand, in identifying concern with 'manners' as peculiar to eighteenth-century political discourse, it implies that such concern was absent in the thought of the earlier period. This implication stands out very clearly in J. G. A. Pocock's essay, 'Virtues, Rights and Manners', in which he briefly rehearses the state of studies. The emergence and the 'ideological loading' of 'manners' in the writing of Scottish Enlightenment philosophers was, he argues, an aspect of the controversy surrounding the new concept and increasing reality of a 'commercial' society. Critics of this society and the oligarchic Whig rule which fostered commercial development attacked it from within the traditional paradigm of 'civic humanism'. This was the established political discourse in which 'virtue' was a function of active citizenship and conscious pursuit of the common good by those whom birth and property had fitted for rule. The pursuit of private gain and the cultivation of relationships outside the sphere of civic activity were, from this point of view, corrupt and destructive of the body politic. The defenders of 'commerce', however, responded with analysis of the 'natural' development of commercial society and with a redefinition of 'virtue' as the civilized social mores or 'manners' accompanying this development. The concept of 'manners' in political debate thus seems absolutely specific to a later eighteenth-century controversy surrounding 'commerce'.[3]

Pocock does, however, suggest that 'manners' had some antecedents in an earlier tradition of thought. He argues that the 'civic humanist' paradigm of political thought had always been parallelled by an alternative approach to political association based on jurisprudence. This stressed 'rights' and 'customs' rather than the use of law to establish political

[3] The concept of 'civic humanism' in the Italian Renaissance was developed by Hans Baron, in *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (2nd edn., Princeton, 1966) and by Quentin Skinner in *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 1: *The Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1978). J. G. A. Pocock, in *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, 1975) has explored the adaptation of 'civic humanism' in early modern England. See also Markus Peltanen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought 1570–1640* (Cambridge, 1995).

'virtue'. For Pocock, the eighteenth-century concept of 'manners' represented a fusion between the ethical concept of 'mores' or 'morals' and a concept of 'custom' drawn from this tradition.[4] Yet while this may be a plausible interpretation as far as it goes, it still leaves wide open the question of the political understanding of 'manners' in the earlier period. The eighteenth-century conception of 'manners' may well be lineally related to a jurisprudential concept of 'custom', but is it not also likely to be related, rather more directly, to antecedent conceptions of 'manners'? Neglect of this possibility arises, I think, from the tendency of historians of political theory to pre-define a canon of sources as 'political thought' and then to search for the origins of emergent concepts purely within the canon. This ignores the way in which social and political concepts and values were articulated at different periods in shifting literary forms and *genres*. As I shall show, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writing on social conduct gives ample evidence of 'ideologically loaded' conceptions of manners, conceptions which were an integral part of larger visions of social and political order.

A much-discussed element in the vocabulary of eighteenth-century political and social thought provides the most obvious signpost to the exploration of earlier conceptions of manners, polity, and society. Writers from David Hume to Adam Smith did not only speak of the 'softening of manners' or the passage from 'rudeness to refinement' which society had experienced in the long course of its development. They also expressed the same process as a passage from the 'savage' to the 'civil' condition of mankind, and used the term 'civil society' to define human association in its social and economic, not merely political aspects. Thus Adam Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society* dealt not with the origins of government but with the moral and social relations which characterized first 'barbarous' and then 'civil' or 'commercial' society.[5] For Pocock and others, the connotations of the word 'civil', evoking 'civilization' of manners, taste, and material life, make it almost shorthand for the newly sociological approach of the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers. In contrast, the older vision of association had been 'civic', concerned simply with the definition and defence of purely public, political values. Pocock writes that in late eighteenth-century Scotland, where 'manners seemed no unimportant part of morality . . . (the) locus of virtue shifted decisively from the civic to the civil, from the political and military to that

[4] Pocock, 'Virtues, Rights, and Manners', in *Virtue, Commerce and History*, 49–50.
[5] Adam Ferguson, *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, ed. D. Forbes (Edinburgh, 1967). See also John Millar, *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* in *John Millar of Glasgow 1735–1801*, ed. W. C. Lehmann (Cambridge, 1960).

blend of the economic, cultural and moral which we call the social for short.'[6]

From the point of view of the canon of political theory, the later eighteenth-century concept of 'civil society' had been foreshadowed in the writings of John Locke, for whom some form of 'civil' association could exist in the absence of political authority. Yet Locke's notion of 'civil society' was thin and abstract, related more to the unhistorical theory of the transformation of man from a 'natural' to a 'civil' state by an 'original' contract than to the theory of a gradual civilization of morals and manners.[7] It might then seem plausible to regard the later thinkers as solely responsible for attaching to the term 'civil' a conception of society informed by the category of 'manners'. Laurence Klein, in his study of the concept of 'politeness' in the thought of the third Earl of Shaftesbury, argues persuasively that Locke's great Whig contemporary formulated a 'politics of culture' which used the concept of manners to escape the straitjacket of 'civic' discourse. However, in so far as he identifies Shaftesbury as the first to do so, he retains the sense of an earlier neglect of 'manners' in social and political discourse.[8] Yet the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature which deals directly with the codes of conduct which we would now define as 'social' presents a very different picture. More than two centuries before the Scottish Enlightenment, the term 'civil' was increasingly being used to define 'good manners'. Moreover, far from being simply borrowed at a later stage by political theorists seeking to enlarge the terms of their debates, the term and its variants were from the outset employed to link manners both to ethics and to overall conceptions of the structure and identity of the community. This chapter will trace the emergence and development of the concept of 'civility' in manners.

For Norbert Elias, the appearance of Erasmus's *De Civilitate Morum Puerilium*, first published in Latin in 1530 and rapidly translated into High German, English, Czech, Dutch, and French, was a crucial event in the history of manners and, indeed, in European cultural history. It represented, he writes, 'the elevation of [a] title word to a central expression

of the self-interpretation of European society.'[9] The French historian Roger Chartier accords the small manual of manners no less significance, asserting that 'it offered all of learned Europe a unified code of conduct, the realization of which was to produce *civilité* in its new definition . . . [and], by means of its translations and adaptations, it acclimated in vernacular languages a word and a notion that from that moment on designated an essential component in the upbringing of children.'[10] Erasmus's work was indeed the first to prescribe a code of manners under the heading of 'civility' and, in England as elsewhere, it was highly influential. However, the historian should not succumb to the tyranny of a word to a greater extent than did the society that he or she studies. The vocabulary of English writing on manners suggests that the adoption of the new term was gradual and partial, if nevertheless an index of major conceptual change.

Writers and translators of didactic texts on manners used a variety of 'title words' to define the behaviour which they taught. During the sixteenth century the word 'civility' appeared in their work with increasing frequency but did not achieve the immediate pre-eminence which it did, for example, in France, where a special typeface known as *civilité* was invented for the printing of courtesy manuals.[11] When Erasmus's *De Civilitate* was first translated into English in the 1530s it was entitled *A Lytell Booke of Good Manners for Chyldren*, the translator perhaps deciding that a direct Anglicization of the Latin would not adequately advertise the content to an English audience. Twenty-five years later a version of Erasmus's text appeared as *The Civility of Childehode*, but 'Goode Manners' returned as the preferred title term in William Fiston's version of a French translation of Erasmus in the 1590s.[12] The older English terms which had been used in late medieval courtesy books, mainly 'courtesy' itself, but also 'nurture' and, in a specialized sense, 'virtue', persisted through the sixteenth century, as in Seager's *The Schoole of Vertue, and booke of good Nourture for Chyldren*. In fact, although 'nurture' and 'virtue' disappear in the sense of good manners during the early seventeenth century,[13] they occur more frequently than 'civility' in texts written for children before that time. In

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[6] Pocock, 'Cambridge Paradigms and Scotch Philosophers', in *Wealth and Virtue*, ed. Hont and Ignatieff, 240.

[7] See J. W. Burrow, *Whigs and Liberals: Continuity and Change in English Political Thought*, (Oxford, 1988), ch. 2, for discussion of the origins of 'civil society' in political thought.

[8] Lawrence Klein, 'Liberty, Manners, and Politeness in Early Eighteenth-century England', *Historical Journal*, 32 (1987), 583–605. Klein's arguments have been expanded in his subsequent book, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness; Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1994).

[9] Elias, *Civilizing Process*, vol. 1, 55.

[10] Roger Chartier, 'From Texts to Manners. A Concept and Its Books: *Civilité* between Aristocratic Distinction and Popular Appropriation', in *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, tr. L. Cochrane (Princeton, 1987), 77.

[11] See A. Franklin, *La Civilité, l'etiquette, la mode, le bon ton du XIIIe au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1908), vol. 1 preface, p. xxi n.

[12] See above Ch. 1, p. 31.

[13] Thomas Gainsford, *The Rich Cabinet* (1616) is the latest work I have found to use 'nurture' extensively as a synonym for 'good manners' (pp. 91–101)

sixteenth-century courtesy books for young adults, 'civility' is similarly far from the dominant term. The first translator of Giovanni Della Casa's *Il Galateo* gives his prose as the description of 'courteous behaviour and entertaynment with good manners and words'. His often rather free translation of the Italian, in which words such as *piacevole, di bella maniera,* and *graziosa* predominate over *civile,* refers more often to 'good manners and fashions' than to 'civility'. Despite its title, S. R.'s *Court of Civill Courtesie* of 1592 generally uses 'courtesy' rather than 'civility' in the text.

It was during the seventeenth century that 'civil' and 'civility' really gained the edge over their rivals in the vocabulary of manners. In James Cleland's *Hero-Paideia; or the Institution of a Young Nobleman* (1607), the chapter devoted to manners is entitled 'civil conversation' rather than 'courtesy', and the translation of the French manual *Youth's Behaviour* in the mid-century starts with a chapter 'touching Civility among men'.[14] The translation of Antoine de Courtin's *The Rules of Civility* in 1671, in which the term is central and constantly repeated indicates and no doubt encouraged its greater currency. This was not an original English work, but Obadiah Walker's *Of Education,* published in the same year, included a chapter entitled 'On Civility' which is a miniature courtesy book. Walker admitted his debt to Della Casa as 'the great master of civility'[15] when the original English translation of the *Galateo* rarely employed the word. Even late in the seventeenth century, however, 'civility' remained only one of several words defining correct social behaviour, with new terms, particularly 'politeness' and 'good breeding', emerging beside it.[16] It was possible, as is shown by the seventeenth-century literature of parental advice, to write on matters of social conduct without mentioning 'civility'. William Higford advises on social conduct only under the general heading of 'Company and Converse'; Francis Osborne does not use the word 'civility' at all when discussing dress, facial expression, and demeanour; Sir Matthew Hale offers advice on manners under the neutral heading of 'Carriage to your inferiors, superiors and equals.'[17] 'Civility', then, entered the vocabulary of manners during the sixteenth century and gradually gained wide currency, but it was always only one of a shifting set of keywords, constantly described and justified in terms of each other. The loose and slippery inter-usage of these terms throughout the period is very striking. Della Casa's translator, Peterson, associates 'courtesy and civility'

as a man's 'skill to put himselfe forth comely and seemely in his fashions, gestures and manners', and he flatters the dedicatee of his translation, the Earl of Leicester, with the compliment that he is 'so civil, so courteous'.[18] An earlier anonymous writer on gentlemanly education talks of conduct to strangers whom men 'ought by all civilitie courteously to receive'.[19] Thomas Gainsford, in a book of moralistic 'character' sketches and advice on conduct of 1616, puts together 'civilitie, good manners and courtesie'. In John Reynolds's translation of *A Treatise of the Court* by Eustache du Refuge (1622) 'Civilitie' is defined in terms of 'a decency, or gracefulnesse'. The anonymous author of *The Art of Complaisance* of 1673 equates 'courtesie', 'civilitie', 'decent affability', and 'a certain decency or sweet behaviour'. Even Courtin, whose *Rules of Civility* strives unusually hard for a rigorous definition of subject matter, falls back on equivalent terms. Civility is 'politeness and concinnity of behaviour' and conformity to 'rules of decency'.[20] To assign precise definitions to each term is clearly very difficult, but it does not follow that there was no differentiation of meaning at all. Individually the words and phrases had differing resonances and they formed a set in which the meaning of each penetrated the others. Hence the appearance of the term 'civility' in the vocabulary of manners signals not the sudden replacement of one social value by another, but the gradual coloration of a set of words and values by meanings peculiarly associated with the notion of the 'civil'. The word 'civility' was not originally or exclusively applied to manners; indeed, the use of the term to define correct social behaviour developed out of and alongside some larger and less specialized meanings of the term. These larger meanings, which have as lineal descendants the modern concepts of 'civil society' and 'civilization', are the key to understanding the significance of 'civility' in the field of manners.

The word 'civility' had its origins in Roman discourse on political organization and obligation. In classical Latin, *civilitas* was usually understood as 'the art of government' or 'politics', *civilis* meaning 'pertaining to citizens, to citizen rights and the law'; only in a very few late Roman instances is *civilis* able to be translated as 'courteous' or 'affable'.[21] In medieval Latin *civilitas* retained primarily political connotations, denoting 'statesmanship' or 'citizenship'.[22] During the early sixteenth century it appeared in an Anglicized form with rather more elaborate political

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[14] See above Ch. 1, p. 31. [15] Obadiah Walker, *Of Education* (1673), pt. 2, ch. 1, 228.
[16] For the use of 'politeness' in a modern sense see *The Art of Complaisance* (1673), 121; for an early use of 'well-bred' see Faret, *The Honest Man,* tr. Grimstone (1632), 256.
[17] Higford, *Institutions* (1658), pt. 2, 22; Osborne, *Advice to a Son* (1656); Hale, 'Advice to his Grandchildren', in *Practical Wisdom* (1824), 205.

[18] Della Casa, *Galateo,* tr. Peterson, 4 and prefatory epistle.
[19] *The Institucion of a Gentleman* (1555), sig. (A7)v.
[20] Gainsford, *The Rich Cabinet,* 'the Epitome of good manners', sig. A23v.; Du Refuge, *Treatise of the Court,* tr. Reynolds, 6; *Art of Complaisance,* 31; Courtin, *Rules of Civility* (1671), 1.
[21] C. T. Lewis and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1879), s.v. *civilitas* and *civilis.*
[22] R. E. Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word List* (London, 1965), s.v. *civilitas.*

meanings influenced by the Italian Renaissance concept of 'civil life' (*vivere civile*) which resuscitated and developed classical definitions of civic ethics and culture.[23] Some years in advance of its penetration into the vocabulary of manners, it emerges in English writing to define the principles of political order and the ethical value of conformity to these. Thus in the same decade as the first translation of Erasmus's *De Civilitate* under the title of a book of 'goode maners', Thomas Starkey was using the Anglicized 'civility' very freely in his discussion of reform of the commonwealth, *The Dialogue between Pole and Lupset* (1529–1532?). 'Cyvyle Lyfe' is defined as men 'lyving togydder in gud and polytyke ordur', and, according to Starkey, the first legislators persuaded men into a perception of their real human dignity and an abandonment of mere animal existence, encouraging them 'to forsake that rudnes and uncomly lyfe, and so to folow some ordur and cyvylyte'.[24] Now 'man ys borne to commyn cyvylyte', lives in 'cyvyle ordur' guaranteed by 'cyvylle law'.[25] This state is pictured as essentially a function of right political organization and at one point Starkey suggests the rough equivalence of the phrases 'pollycy', 'cyvyle order', and 'polytyke rule'.[26] In a late sixteenth-century translation of a French work on magistracy the same equivalence is quite explicit: 'Policie is derived from ΠΟΛΙΤΣΙΑ which in our tongue we may tearme Civilitie, and that which the Grecians did name politicke government, the Latines called, the government of a Commonwealth, or Civile Societie.'[27]

It should be noted that this definition of 'civile societie' seems to fall squarely within the political discourse of 'civic humanism' which, according to Pocock and others, was to be challenged during the eighteenth century by a new sociopolitical conception of 'civil society'. This reveals, at the least, a certain linguistic oddity about the opposition between the 'civic' and the 'civil' which is held to characterize political debate in the later Enlightenment. Given that 'civic' is in fact a modern label retrospectively attached to a political tradition while 'civil' was a word in extensive use within early modern political thought, there is no necessary contradiction in seeing pre-Enlightenment uses of the term 'civil' as essentially 'civic'.[28] Nevertheless, the emergence of the phrase 'civil soci-

[23] J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, ch. 3, discusses the Italian concept of *vivere civile* as a translation of the classical *vita activa*.

[24] Thomas Starkey, *The Dialogue between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset*, ed. J. M. Cowper (Early English Text Society, Extra Series, 12, 1871), 10, 52.

[25] Ibid. 9.   [26] Ibid. 53.

[27] Guillaume de La Perriere, *The Mirrour of Policie*, tr. Anon. (London, 1598), sig. Ar.

[28] The use made of the concept of 'civic humanism' by Quentin Skinner in *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* and by J. G. A. Pocock, in *The Machiavellian Moment* is illuminating. The problem is simply that 'civic humanism' is often identified too narrowly

ety' within a humanist tradition that may justifiably be defined as 'civic' in its debt to the values of the classical city state, should underline the possibility that later definitions of 'civil society' emerged as much from within as from outside that tradition.

This case for continuity can be made on conceptual rather than purely linguistic grounds, for sixteenth-century use of the term 'civility' in political discourse did not simply give a new lease of life to a classical concept in vernacular form. While referring back to the values of the classical polis, the concept was increasingly employed in a sense which prefigures the more modern notion of 'civilization'. If sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers only very rarely used the word 'civilization', the normative, historical, and anthropological connotations of 'civilization' were to a large extent already present in their use of the earlier word 'civility'. It was increasingly deployed as the discovery of non-European societies stimulated Europeans to define a collective superiority in their culture over others and to establish a historical perspective in which alien societies could be viewed as more or less developed according to a Western European standard.[29] An English version of a French translation of Aristotle's *Politics*, published in 1598, sharply illustrates the adaptation of classical discourse to modern discovery by making the introductory comment that:

The people which inhabited in old time the countrie where we dwell now, were as rude and uncivill three thousand years agoe, as are Savages that have lately been discovered by the Spaniards and Portingales towards the West and South parts of the world. They dwelt scattered here and there in caves or mountaines and in forests under cabines, without magistrates, without Religion, and without any forme of marriage.[30]

Not all the explorers or theorists took the view that the American Indians were 'savage' according to this definition, and sometimes Indians could be praised for the 'civility' of their customs and laws;[31] but it is

with one particular political tradition—that of 'classical republicanism'—and hence its larger cultural and social associations tend to be ignored.

[29] See P. Bénéton, *Histoire des mots: Culture et civilisation* (Paris, 1979) and Lucien Febvre, '*Civilisation*: evolution of a word and a group of ideas' in *A New Kind of History*, ed. P. Burke (London, 1973), 219–57.

[30] *Aristotle's Politiques or Discourses of Government*, tr. John Dickenson from the French of Loys Le Roy (London, 1598), sig. B2v–B3r. For a full treatment of sixteenth-century views on the historical development of societies see A. B. Ferguson, *Clio Unbound; Perceptions of the Social and Cultural Past in Renaissance England* (Durham, North Carolina, 1979), especially chs. x and xi.

[31] For the diversity of value judgements made on Indian society see K. O. Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1500–1640* (London, 1980). Bernard Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility: Indians and Englishmen in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge, 1980), chs. 2–3, discusses the English perception of Indians as 'savage', 'brutish', and 'bestial'.

important that the distinction between 'civility' and 'savagery' was well established and elaborated partly through the discovery of the New World. In any case, particularly for the English, a less controversial example of 'savagery' existed closer to home in Ireland. Edmund Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, written in the 1590s, is a close examination of Irish government and society which frequently uses the contrast between English civility and Irish barbarity. While not entirely unsympathetic to the Irish, Spenser's account starts from the premise that Ireland is 'now accounted the most barbarous nacion in Christendome'. The author describes the Irish 'savage bruttishness and (loathlie) fylthynes' in terms of endemic violence, barbaric customs ranging from wild dress to sordid living conditions, and a lawlessness curable only by compulsory education and stronger government.[32] By the end of the sixteenth century, the opposition between the 'civil' and the 'barbarous' clearly involved not only questions of political organization, but also a whole spectrum of what we would call social and cultural issues, such as forms of marriage, the level of arts and trade, and religious practice.

It is evident that well before the Enlightenment the notion of the 'civil' as against the 'savage' invoked a vision of society and not merely of polity. Writers did not, however, discriminate systematically between civil and political forms or levels of association. This was less because they ignored social organization than because they applied the same criteria of order to all areas of human activity, and for that very reason the value 'civility' could come to be employed in a range of contexts which to the modern mind resist conflation or even analogy. Hence the concept could not only be applied promiscuously to polity and society, but could rapidly cross over from the collective to the individual sphere of human behaviour. The political discourse of sixteenth-century England characteristically linked the macrocosm of the commonwealth with the microcosm of the household or individual. As is clear from the commonplace notion of the nation as a political 'body', the state was conceived as a moral and physical entity comparable to the individual. The government of a polity was thus analogous to the government of a family and to the self-government of a man. This proximity of political and personal values is emphasized in William Vaughan's moralistic work of advice of 1600, *The Golden-Grove . . . A worke very necessary for all such as would know how to governe themselves, their houses or their countrey*. The three spheres of conduct mentioned in the title are dealt with separately in three books all suffused with the same scriptural and Aristotelian influence. All spheres are subject to the same notion of 'gov-

[32] Edmund Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, ed. W. L. Renwick (London, 1934), 56, 70, and 204–5.

ernment' and the rightful exercise of authority along the lines of Christian piety and the classical virtues of justice, prudence, fortitude, and temperance. In the third book, devoted to 'Civility' in its political sense of 'Policy', Vaughan echoes a range of commonplace assumptions about the inseparability of public and private, individual and collective values. He gives an Aristotelian classification of constitutions, defending monarchy as the superior form, and comments on the duties of the prince; he describes the estates of the realm with their ideal characteristics and present faults, and he finally discusses the reform of the commonwealth by sumptuary laws and the suppression of vice and extravagance.[33]

Vaughan himself did not use the term 'civility' to describe an ideal of individual social behaviour, but his schema indicates the ease with which political concepts could inform ideas of personal conduct. It was clearly in the case of the political élite—the nobility and gentry—that this connection was most elaborate since, while the politically significant virtue of the lower orders was held to lie mainly in obedience and tranquillity, the élite had so to rule themselves that their government of others remained prudent and legitimate.[34] It is therefore easy to see why the appearance of 'civility' as a personal rather than a collective attribute should appear principally in literature devoted to the education and personal qualities of the nobility and gentry. In the very title of the dialogue of 1579—*The English Courtier, and the Cuntrey Gentleman. Of Cyville and Uncyville Life: Wherein is discoursed, what order of lyfe best beseemeth a gentleman (as well, for education, as the course of his whole life) to make him a person fytte for the publique service of his Prince and Countrey*—it is evident that what is being discussed is a personal way of life, albeit one justified by public good arising from it. In fact, much of the matter of the dialogue involves the question of the cultural superiority and prestige of the courtier, stemming from his possession of learning and polish, and only intermittently does the author return to the 'public' consideration of the state's need for educated administrators.[35]

This 'personalization' of the concept of civility goes even further in the work of Lodowick Bryskett, a poet, translator, and an official in the Elizabethan administration in Ireland. His treatise, *A Discourse of Civill Life* was written during the 1580s and published in 1606. It is essentially a work of moral philosophy and, despite an initial discussion of the gentleman's duty to engage in public service, prompted by the author's decision

[33] William Vaughan, *The Golden-Grove, Moralised in three parts* (London, 1600), bk. 2.
[34] See Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1978), vol. 2, 228–36, for the Northern humanist emphasis on moral qualities of leadership.
[35] See Ch. 4 for a full discussion of this dialogue.

to leave office, attention is devoted to fortitude, temperance, liberality, and justice as individual virtues expressed in a social, even a private setting. Bryskett's purpose is 'to discourse upon the morall vertues, yet not omitting the intellectual, to the end to frame a gentleman fit for civill conversation, and to set him in the direct way that leadeth him to his civill felicitie'.[36] 'Civill Life' emerges from the book both as the setting for the pursuit of active virtue and as a normative model of active virtue. Bryskett in fact uses 'civility' in other senses as well; for example, he gives it the meanings familiar to Starkey when he inveighs against duelling as a custom which 'destroyeth all civill societie' and breeds contempt for 'civil government' and 'country, parents, friends and kindred, to all which men are bound by reason naturall and civill'.[37] He also recognizes the usage of the term for polite actions and forms, observing that 'all sorts of benevolence or mutuall offices of courtesie and civilitie, or every shew of love maketh not up a friendship'.[38] In few works is the elasticity of the word so apparent.

Bryskett, who may have been half-Italian, admitted a heavy debt to the then recent but untranslated *Tre Dialoghi della Vita Civile* by Giraldi, and Piccolomini's *De la Institutione di tutta la Vita de L'Homo nato nobile in citta libera*.[39] Indeed, it was often plagiarized or directly translated Italian texts on the nature of gentility and *la vita civile* which transmitted new concepts of civility into English culture. Stefano Guazzo's *Civile Conversation*,[40] cited by Bryskett in the 1570s and actually translated in 1586, was so influential in this respect that it deserves special mention. Guazzo's treatise was in fact more interesting than Bryskett's in encouraging and reflecting the conceptual development which could make 'civility' a criterion of individual social conduct as well as of political order. Guazzo's concept of 'conversation' signifies far more than polite verbal exchange and refers to all social as opposed to solitary human behaviour; 'conversation,' he writes, can be 'of our tongue, and of our behaviour'.[41] As in Bryskett's work, 'civil' denotes a value more extensive than that of correct attention to social form, and involves the broad application of virtue and reason rather than simply the social skills covered in the manuals of Erasmus and Della Casa; it is 'an honest, commendable and vertuous kind of living in the world'.[42] The first three books of the treatise are written in the form of an extended dialogue between two well-read Italians who discuss, in

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[36] Lodowick Bryskett, *A Discourse of Civill Life containing the Ethike part of Morall Philosophie* (London, 1606), 5.

[37] Ibid. 77.   [38] Ibid. 230.   [39] Ibid. 24.   [40] See above Ch. 1, pp. 32–3.

[41] Guazzo, *The Civile Conversation*, tr. Pettie and Young (1586), bk. 2.

[42] Ibid., bk.1, 10.

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the first book, the question of whether a solitary is preferable to a social life, in the second, the principles of conduct which should govern life outside the individual's household, and in the third, the right ordering of domestic and familial relations inside the household. The fourth book takes the more elaborate form of an illustration of principles previously discussed, in a dramatized social gathering of intimate friends.

Guazzo was original neither in using the phrase 'civill conversation' nor in the form and tone of his work—a dialogue full of classical and proverbial allusion, fable and anecdote.[43] Much of his subject-matter—the merits and demerits of solitude, the right basis of nobility, the prudent choice of wife, the definition of wit—was already the staple of Renaissance conduct literature and entertainment. Nevertheless, his approach crystallized and popularized not only the sense of 'civility' as a personal value, but the notion that 'civility' involved a particular level or field of human experience to which neither a purely political nor a purely ethical discourse was appropriate. While, as I have suggested, the concept of 'civility' could unite the principles of political order with those of the government of the household and the self, 'civil conversation' in Guazzo's treatise involves a sense of a social world separable from the world of civic responsibility and larger than the sphere of the household, to which principles of civility particularly apply. Between the *vita contemplativa,* the life of philosophic retirement, and the *vita activa*, the life of virtuous citizenship, there was emerging a more clearly defined intermediary ideal. In Guazzo's work, the notion of the 'civil' as the 'social' seems to have been born out of, rather than in spite of, the 'civic humanism' which dealt primarily with ethics and politics.

In the first place, Guazzo's vision of his reader in Book II of *The Civile Conversation* is of a man who has to navigate his way through a series of different, essentially social encounters, each governed by different social rules, in such a way as to gain popularity while retaining prestige and self-esteem. His purpose in Book II is to determine

The manner of Conversation, meete for all persons, which shall come in anie companie, out of their owne houses, and then of the particular pointes, which ought to be observed in companie betweene young men, and old, Gentlemen and Yomen, Princes, and private persons, learned and unlearned, citizens and straungers, religious and secular, men and women.[44]

Correct behaviour is not directly justified in terms of the necessity to recognize and reinforce the political order inherent in this list of

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[43] See J. L. Lievsay, *Stephano Guazzo and the English Renaissance 1525–1675* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1961), ch. 1.

[44] Guazzo, *The Civile Conversation*, tr. Pettie and Young (1586), bk. 2, fol. 49r.

relationships. Instead, the political order is assumed and attention directed to the individual 'perfection' which results from skill and experience in obeying the social imperatives dictated by differences of status. In the second place, Guazzo recognizes that this skill does not reside simply in the abstractions of moral philosophy. One of his two disputants is described as casting 'a golden net into the Large Sea of Morall Philosophie',[45] but this exercise, unlike Bryskett's, is not presented as the only one necessary for civil conversation. Guazzo boldly asserts that the classical ideals of conduct are no longer entirely appropriate and that 'we must treade out of the ancient path, and take the waye which is beaten at this daie'.[46] In Guazzo's view, modern custom may legitimately enjoin behaviour which while not positively vicious, is yet not precisely virtuous; on this basis he defends a degree of flattery and hypocrisy in 'civil' social intercourse.[47] It will by now be obvious that he identifies 'civil conversation' neither with the political life of the community nor with the ethical life of the individual. It might be thought that when Guazzo argues that 'conversation is not onelie profitable, but moreover necessarie to the perfection of man'[48] he is doing no more than reiterating the Aristotelian commonplace that man is a social animal. Yet Aristotle's original Greek adjective, often and somewhat misleadingly translated into modern English as 'social', was in fact *politikos*, a word asserting the classical indivisibility of political and social life. This indivisibility persisted when Starkey, for example, spoke of man as 'borne to common cyvylyte'. But in Guazzo there is apparent more than a hint of differentiation between what later came to be regarded as the political and social aspects of human association.

Guazzo's influence in Elizabethan and Stuart literature was extensive, and J. L. Lievsay has discovered many allusions to and filchings from *The Civile Conversation* after the appearance of the translation by Pettie and Young during the 1580s. Robert Greene, in *Mamilia; A Mirour or Looking Glasse for the Ladies of England* (1583), Daniel Tuvill, in his treatise on conversation and negotiation of 1614, and Barnaby Rich, both in his book of advice, *The Frutes of Long Experience*, and his work on gentility, *Roome for a Gentleman* (1609), had obviously borrowed from Guazzo.[49] But more important than such direct literary influence is the fact that the concept of 'civil conversation' had become well established within the English phraseology of conduct by the early seventeenth century. James Cleland's

fifth and penultimate book in his treatise on noble education discusses the young nobleman's duty in 'Civill Conversation',[50] and uses that term in Guazzo's sense, covering social behaviour 'toward all men', social virtues of prudence, discretion, gratitude and reverence, socially conspicuous aspects of noble obligation such as hospitality and correct apparel, moderation and tact in speech, and appropriate recreations and sports. William Martyn defined his purpose in writing a book of prudential and moral advice for his son in 1612 as, 'to enrich your understanding and behaviour with selected virtues and . . . order your manners, generally towards all men, and your civill behaviour more particularly towards those with whom you do mutually converse.'[51]

He thus distinguishes between his concern with scriptural and moral virtue as an end in itself and his interest in improving his son's social behaviour within his immediate circle of acquaintance. Francis Bacon sketched 'Short Notes for Civill Conversation' among his essays, commenting in two pages on principles of tact, prudence, and acceptable self-presentation in social intercourse.[52] Sir Francis Kynaston's *Constitutions of the Musaeum Minervae* (1636), one of several blueprints for academies for young gentlemen, suggests that every candidate 'be approved by the Regent and the major part of the Professors . . . for his civill conversation',[53] presumably to ascertain whether his level of social skill and acceptability fits him for participation in a community dedicated to gentlemanly perfection of conduct and intellect. In 1663 a new translation of the *Galateo* was subtitled, 'A Correction of several Indecencies crept into Civil Conversation', although neither Della Casa nor his original English translator had employed the phrase.[54] The preceding examples in fact suggest that the notion of 'civil conversation' was narrowed down in English usage. Guazzo's conception of 'an honest, commendable and vertuous kind of living in the world', involving a full range of prudential and moral considerations, has become a conception of an area of life governed principally by rules of social form and technique—the sphere of 'civility' in its most restricted sense of 'good manners'.

This short and by no means exhaustive survey of the larger meanings of 'civility' and the 'civil' in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writings shows how the notion of 'civility' in manners emerged within a shifting pattern of concepts which were established and invoked by the word. It

[45] Guazzo, *The Civile Conversation*, tr. Pettie and Young (1586), bk. 2, fol. 49r.

[46] Ibid., bk. 2, fol. 49v.   [47] Ibid., bk. 1, fol. 32v–34r; and see below Ch. 6 p. 221.

[48] Ibid., bk. 1, fol. 12r.

[49] See Lievsay, *Stephano Guazzo*, chs. 1–3 for a full account of the English writings which exhibit Guazzo's influence.

[50] James Cleland, *Hero-Paideia* (1607), bk. 5.

[51] William Martyn, *Youth's Instruction* (London 1612), prefatory epistle.

[52] *Lord Bacon's Works*, ed. J. Spedding, R. L. Ellis and D. D. Heath (London, 1857–9), vol. 7, 105–10.

[53] Sir Francis Kynaston, *Constitutions of the Museum Minervae* (London, 1636), 1.

[54] N[athaniel] W[aker], *The Refined Courtier* (1663), subtitle.

must be emphasized that we are dealing here with a continuum of meanings rather than a fixed hierarchy, for the keywords in the vocabulary by which a society orders and evaluates itself tend to resist encapsulation in dictionary definitions. Applied in any one context, they retain the connotations and resonances which derive from their use in others. In the remainder of this chapter I shall therefore explore the way in which the appearance of the word 'civility' in manners seems to have imported into codes of personal conduct values and constructions of social order associated with the larger meanings of the term. Moreover, since words are not a changing currency distributed among a fixed range of contexts, but actually serve to establish and relate those contexts, I shall explore what seems to have been a concurrent shift in the perceived relationship between good manners and social order. In early modern England, order was overwhelmingly identified with hierarchy and with the definition and maintenance of 'rank' and 'degree'. How, then, was the value of 'civility' in manners related to the hierarchic vision of society?

The 'civic' associations of the term 'civility', especially as it was employed and popularized in the urban culture of Renaissance Italy, have led some commentators to see the value which it denoted as fundamentally anti-aristocratic. A modern French bibliographer of sixteenth-century manuals of civility has asserted that: 'Civilité est un terme qui désigne l'urbanité des moeurs, l'exacte observation des convenances sociales. C'est la politesse, succédant a la courtoisie. La courtoisie avait un tour médiéval et chevaleresque, la civilité a un air antique et bourgeois.'[55] The implication is clear: the gradual supersession of the term 'courtesy' by the term 'civility' in early modern writing on manners indicates a 'bourgeoisification' of codes of conduct. The same implication is present in L. B. Wright's *Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England*, in which Guazzo's *Civile Conversation* is presented as a middle-class text, in contrast, for example, to Castiglione's aristocratic *Booke of the Courtyer*.[56] Even if we ignore the enormous difficulties of establishing the existence of a peculiarly 'middle-class' mentality or culture in sixteenth-century England, the notion of a radical shift from aristocratic to bourgeois manners coincident with the appearance of the word 'civility' cannot easily be sustained.

The aristocratic connotations of the word 'courtesy' are obvious enough. The word 'courtesy' and its Latin equivalent *curialis* appeared during the twelfth century, the very terms indicating patterns of conduct evolving in the courts of kings or noble magnates. In so far as it was an

[55] *Dictionaire des lettres françaises, XVIe siècle*, ed. C. Grante (Paris, 1951), 182.

[56] L. B. Wright, *Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1935), ch. 5.

integral part of the medieval ideal of chivalry, the code could not easily be detached from the self-image of the European aristocracy. Chaucer's Knight and Esquire in *The Canterbury Tales* are both immediately identified as 'curteis', the Knight possessing 'courtesy' as an overall virtue of mind and conduct and the Esquire being adept at service at table, the technical aspect of 'courtesy' most emphasized by late medieval courtesy writers.[57] It is interesting to see that it is the Prioress who is most precise and even exaggeratedly delicate in table manners, Chaucer humorously describing how:

> She leet no morsel from her lippes falle
> Ne wetter hir fingers in hir sauce deepe.[58]

The well-educated and well-connected cleric could be satirized for a particular refinement of manners. This is not surprising, since clerics had played a major role in elaborating the less military aspects of medieval aristocratic culture. Medieval monastic Rules, as has been noted, sometimes contained a detailed prescription for good manners, from table manners to general deportment and demeanour, and the influence of clerics within medieval courts and royal administration may well have helped to refine the manners of the lay aristocracy. It should be noted, however, that the perceived relation of the church to courtly manners was never unambiguous. Fifteenth-century courtesy manuals associate courtesy precepts with Christian virtue, for example, in referring to the 'courtesy' of the Angel at the Annunciation,[59] but they do not identify the church as the exclusive source of courtesy. Also, while certain monastic rules enjoined a level of cleanliness above that of much of society, extreme practitioners of Christian asceticism regarded washing and other refinements as a worldly indulgence to be avoided.[60] The precise balance between religious and secular elements in the formation of medieval courtesy is hard to gauge and lies outside the scope of this study. What can be said is that in England the whole vocabulary of manners before the introduction of the more directly Latin-derived 'civility' was of French

[57] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, prologue, 45–6 and 99–100, in *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. W. W. Skeat (Oxford, 1923), 420.

[58] Ibid., prologue, 127–30 in *Works*, ed. Skeat, 240. For an excellent account of class distinctions in Chaucer's prologue see J. Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire* (Cambridge, 1973).

[59] 'The Young Children's Book' in *Meals and Manners*, ed. Furnivall, 226.

[60] Nicholls, *The Matter of Courtesy*, 22–44 considers courtesy and the religious orders; Franklin, *La Civilité, l'etiquette etc.*, vol. 1, 1–5, describes medieval monastic suspicion of cleanliness. Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry*, 136 stresses clerical influence on medieval courtesy literature, but Georges Duby, 'The Diffusion of Cultural Patterns in Feudal Society', *Past and Present*, 39 (1968) sees courtesy as essentially a knightly rather than a clerical virtue.

origin, transmitted through the aristocracy, both lay and clerical: hence 'courtesy', 'nurture', 'dignity', 'gracious', 'gentilesse', etc. Edith Rickert, in her introduction to a collection of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century courtesy books, can identify only three words of Saxon origin: 'thew', 'churlish', and 'wanton'.[61] The first signifies simply 'custom' and the others denote lack of manners.

Nothing in the courtesy literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries supports the notion that 'civility' represents a bourgeois standard of behaviour at odds with the previously established aristocratic ideals of 'courtesy'. From the outset, the word 'civility' was, as I have shown, happily coupled with the older term in writing on manners. Erasmus, although, as Elias has noted, he does not stress the aristocratic associations of good manners as much as many later authors, starts *De Civilitate* with a dedication to a royal child and a comment on the particular necessity of good manners for the nobleman.[62] Della Casa's *Galateo* is always expressly concerned with the behaviour of gentlemen; S.R.'s *Courte of Civill Courtesie* and Courtin's *Rules of Civility* make outright appeals to snobbery in their subtitles.[63] Cleland's *Hero-Paideia*, obviously inspired by a mid-sixteenth century treatise, *The Institucion of a Gentleman*, aims at the even higher social level of the 'young nobleman' and finds no incompatibility between his subject and the extended use of the phrase 'civil conversation'. One of Guazzo's disputants asks rhetorically, 'If [men] bee uncivile, how are they Gentlemen? And if they bee Gentlemen, how are they uncivile?'[64] and English authors clearly agreed. 'Gentility,' asserted the English pedagogue Mulcaster, 'argueth a courteous, civill, well disposed, sociable constitution of minde in a superior degree.'[65] The misconception which sees in 'civility' a peculiarly bourgeois value rests in part on the association between 'civility', the 'citizen', and 'cities'. For Italian writers in the Renaissance this association was wholly natural, since the classical model of social and political organization which they inherited fitted easily enough with the predominantly urban context of their own culture. Yet both ancient and Renaissance Italian images of the polity scarcely pitted the 'civic' or the 'citizen' against the 'aristocratic' or the 'nobleman'. From Plato and Aristotle onward, the categories were integrated or even conflated, and the highest degree of civic 'virtue' was attributed to the aristocrat whose birth, courage, education, and leisure fitted him to rule over

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[61] Rickert, *The Babees Book: Medieval Manners for the Young*, introduction, p. xiv.
[62] Erasmus, *De Civilitate*, tr. Whytyngton (1540), sig. A2v.
[63] See above, Ch. 1, p. 33.
[64] Guazzo, *Civile Conversation*, tr. Pettie and Young, bk. 2, fol. 82, and similar sentiments on fol. 56. See also *The Institucion of a Gentleman* (2nd edn., 1568), sig. (F5)v.
[65] Mulcaster, *Positions* (1581), 200.

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the tradesman or slave. If the medieval development of chivalry seems to be based in feudal structures and to be at variance with civic and classical traditions, it must nevertheless be pointed out that chivalric and civic themes and values had long coexisted in Italian culture before the sixteenth century.[66] It is therefore no surprise that Della Casa regarded his textbook of manners as a guide for those who lived in cities, but it is also no surprise that he addresses his audience as 'gentlemen', and more often exhorts them to courtesy than to 'civility'. In contrast to Italy, England, like France, was a country dominated by a rural aristocracy. In England, therefore, the use of classical and Italian models of 'civil' organization and virtue was at first determined more by the intellectual prestige of these models than by their relevance to native conditions. Notions of the 'civil' were simply mapped onto a social order which could not, in any concrete sense, be defined as 'civic', still less as 'bourgeois'. Starkey associated urban life with political development, writing that men had originally come 'from rude lyfe in feldys and wodys, to thys cyvylyte, whych you now se stablyshed and set in al wel rulyd cytes and townys',[67] but when he wrote, the majority of the governing class lived, not in those towns and cities, but on country estates.

As I shall argue at a later stage, the development of the court and of London as social centres increasingly provided the English gentry and nobility with an urban experience which was crucial for the development of codes of conduct. At this point, however, it is important to note that the English upper classes took up ideals of 'civility' and 'urbanity' despite their relative inexperience of towns and cities, a point reflected in the fact that even in modern English, the terms 'civil' and 'urbane' defy their etymological origins by having few 'city' connotations. English writers in fact tended to be quite explicit in excluding from their definitions of 'civility' those civic elements which might identify the value as 'civic' in the sense of 'bourgeois'—pertaining to merchants and tradesmen. In the dialogue *Of Cyvile and Uncyvile Life*, the courtier, who seems to have the author's sympathy, suggests that civil life is only to be lived under urban conditions and therefore the gentry, who cannot be 'continually to court, nor London . . . (should) . . . make cheefe abode in . . . shiretownes, as places to keep [them] in that civilitie [which] is behooveful'.[68] He clearly does not mean that the gentry should take up the customs of the original citizens, but that they should create their own civic culture. The shire towns

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[66] Crane, *Italian Social Customs*, ch. 5, discusses the city–court milieu of Italian polite culture.
[67] Starkey, *Dialogue between Pole and Lupset*, ed. Cowper, 53.
[68] *Cyvile and Uncyvile Life*, in *Inedited Tracts*, ed. Hazlitt (1868), 53.

were not to become significant centres of gentlemanly social life until at least a century after the publication of the dialogue, but when they did so, it was not in such a way as to assimilate gentlemanly to tradesmen's customs. Rather, as had happened in the capital a considerable time before, citizens were generally inspired to imitate gentlemanly urbanity.

In any case the idea of the city, in literature dealing with civility and good manners, tends to be connected with that of the court and hence detached from the merchant community. In late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy, the rise of princely government had largely destroyed the republican traditions of the city states and had added the court to the city as the centre and context of political and cultural life. Della Casa identifies 'courts and citties'[69] as the milieux of sophisticated manners. While the development of ideals of 'courtliness' in the Italian Renaissance has often been seen as the decadence or perversion of the 'civic humanist' tradition, it certainly rendered Italian texts more palatable in England, where the court had long been regarded as the source and centre of aristocratic culture. English writers happily related 'civility' to the 'court' as well as to the 'city', thus underlining the continuity between the values of 'courtesy' and those of 'civility'. The puzzled country gentleman in the dialogue, *Of Cyvile and Uncyvile Life* summarizes the courtier's argument thus: 'then it seemeth that the Cittie, the Court, and other places of assembly, (I mean of Nobility) doth occasion men to learne the customes of curtesy and pointes of honour.'[70] The parenthesis is highly significant, excluding as it does citizens whose involvement in commerce clearly contravenes the standard of 'Cyvile Life' put forward in the pamphlet. Even an anti-court dialogue of 1618 allows that the court is, in theory, the home of 'civil behaviour'.[71] In the 1671 translation of Courtin's *Rules of Civility* we find the court characterized as the 'proper school' of the 'rudiments of civility'[72] and although the majority of its readers were unlikely to have been *habitués* of the court, French or English, it is clear that the value of 'civility' in manners was loaded with the 'allure' of gentlemanly courtliness and positively detached from the explicitly bourgeois. In the anonymous courtesy manual of 1673, *The Art of Complaisance*, a work permeated with reference to 'civility', the author deals with social relations at court, at the Inns of Court, with 'Great Men' and with 'Ladies', but he states firmly, 'I shall omit the Conversation of the City, which consisting of Merchants,

[69] Della Casa, *Galateo*, tr. Peterson, 4.
[70] *Cyvile and Uncyvile Life*, in *Inedited Tracts*, ed. Hazlitt (1868), 84.
[71] Breton, *The Court and the Country* (1618), in *Works of Breton*, ed. Grosart, 1.
[72] Courtin, *The Rules of Civility* (1671), the advertisement, sig. (A4)r.

and Tradesmen, use no discourse but what tends to Traffick, and accumulating Riches.'[73]

There is a certain ambiguity in the term 'civility' which allows occasional shifts of meaning away from an exclusive connection with gentility. Thomas Gainsford's catholic employment of the word in his *The Rich Cabinet* of 1616 shows an elasticity of meaning to the point of debasement. First, he uses it as an attribute of gentry, declaring that 'we must fashion ourselves like Gentlemen, and professors of civilitie.' Then he appears to reverse this definition by characterizing the ideal 'citizen' in the sense of merchant as a 'professor of civilitie'. While at this point he is apparently using a primarily political rather than social meaning of 'civility', explaining that the citizen promotes good order and prosperity through trade, he follows this with the comment that 'a Citizen is a master of Dellicacie and neatnesse, for what in other men we sometimes call pride, in him is but a native handsomeness, and profession of cleanlinesse . . . [he is] Delicate in apparell, dainty in diet.'[74] Yet immediately he goes on to imply that this personal refinement is in no way the standard by which to judge the manners of a 'civil' gentleman, since he observes that:

> they are never so out of countenance as in the imitation of Gentlemen, for eyther they must alter habite, maner of life, conversation. and even the phrase of speech which will be but a wrested compulsion; or intermingle their manners and attire in part garish, and in other part comelie, which can be but a foppish mockery.[75]

Last, Gainsford at one point assigns 'civilitie' to the educational academic context in which Erasmus originally placed it. Taking a grand sweeping view of social virtues appropriate to the various members of society, Gainsford declares that: 'Nurture teacheth a Nobleman Affabilitie, a Gentleman Curtesie, an Officer Comeliness, a Judge Uprightnesse, a Courtier Hansomnesse, a Citizen Cleanlinesse, a Merchant Finenesse a Countreyman Sobernesse and a Scholler Civilitie.'[76]

Gainsford also makes use of the collective sociopolitical meaning of 'civility' as a concept of order informing a whole society rather than characterizing one class alone. 'Nurture,' he says, 'the Mistresse of Civilitie . . . is such a jewell in the nation, that all others, where it is not, are called barbarous, for lack of civilitie . . . and eate one another in necessitie, or rather wantonly or wilfully.'[77] Such usage indicates that the concept of civility is not wholly locked into the notion of gentlemanly status.

[73] *The Art of Complaisance* (1673), 73–4.
[74] Gainsford, *Rich Cabinet*, 'Epitome of good manners', sig. A23v.; Gainsford, *Rich Cabinet*, 27 and 28.
[75] Ibid. 28–9.   [76] Ibid. 99.   [77] Ibid.

Nevertheless, the participation of the common man in customs perceived as differentiating his nation from the absolutely barbarous and alien, the cannibal and the pagan, does not involve his full participation in a code of manners established by his superiors, in terms of which he is perceived as relatively barbarous. Guazzo voices this tendency to exclude the lower classes from civil life in the same way as alien societies are excluded when he suggests that it is a waste of labour to try to instruct 'the base people . . . by nature uncivil, rude, untoward, discurteous, rough, savage, as it were barbarous'.[78] The 'middling sort' of people in early modern England would not, of course, have perceived themselves as 'the base people' of Guazzo's definition and could attempt to associate themselves with the élite, distinguishing themselves from the uncivil classes beneath them. Yet bourgeois imitation of the codes associated with the gentleman could not make 'civility' an essentially middle-class value.

It is perhaps moving too fast to consider the values or ideology of status expressed in the new term 'civility' before examining more closely the social implications of the late medieval concepts of 'courtesy' or 'nurture'. Even now, in a modern democratic climate where snobbery of opinion or manners is officially disclaimed, dress, address, and demeanour play a major part in strategies of social exclusion. Conversely, even in the more stratified society of fifteenth-century England, the rules of 'courtesy' were not, in all aspects, instruments of social differentiation. In late medieval courtesy books, precepts governing matters of social form—modes of eating, serving, salutation, etc. which we might regard as purely technical—are embedded in simple moral and prudential admonitions to obey parents, avoid swearing, lying, and quarrelling, to be discreet and cheerful in company and devout in religious observance. The tradition of simple proverbial maxims for virtuous and profitable life expressed in *The Distiches of Cato*, *The ABC of Aristotell*, and many fragments of anonymous parental advice through the later medieval period informed courtesy texts as much as did the self-consciously aristocratic tradition of chivalry, thus making sense of one author's comprehensive claim,

> Quo so wylle of curtesy lere
> In this boke he may hit here!
> Yf thow be gentleman, yomon, or knave,
> The nedis nurture for to have.[79]

Courtesy, through association with 'vertue' of a general kind, is not always perceived as immediately specific to one rank or class of people.

[78] Guazzo, *Civile Conversation*, bk. 2, 81–2.
[79] *The Boke of Curtasye*, 1–4, in *Meals and Manners*, ed. Furnivall, 177.

Even where the rules presented in late medieval courtesy books are closely related to the rituals of the noble household, they nevertheless retain a certain ambiguity in their relation to status. The major social classification apparent in these texts is not that of adult and child or host and guest but of 'mayster and servaunt'. Rules concerning correct salutation and demeanour are given in the context of the presence of one's 'lord' and particular emphasis is placed upon the ritual of service at table—in carving and in offering washing bowls for example. Such techniques, together with an accurate knowledge and application of the rules of precedence, constituted what are termed in the *Household Ordinances* of Edward IV 'the rules of goings and sittings'[80] and formed the core of the teachings of courtesy writers. Within a household regulated by this 'courtesy', children were neither excluded from social occasions nor given peculiar duties deemed appropriate to their age. The sons of the family and those of other aristocratic or gentry families were sent to a noble's court precisely to learn such skills as 'courtesy' and were required to perform the same acts of symbolic deference, and many of the same table duties, towards their elders of the same rank as a gentleman-servitor was compelled to perform before his social superior of the same age. Thus *The Babees Book*, dedicated to pages of 'Bloode Royalle' at the court of Edward IV, resembles that section of Russell's *Boke of Nurture* which is concerned with good manners, even though the latter is explicitly directed at the social aspirant—an ambitious but 'unlearned' young man who wishes to become a steward in a great household.[81] Excluding the genuinely menial posts, all but the most junior positions in a noble household conferred some degree of formal gentlemanly rank; and good service could be rewarded with substantial gratuities. Thus, to the extent that 'courtesy' was part of the 'science' of the household, it could be as much a means of advancement as a symbol of exclusion.[82]

This aspect of good manners as an aid to advancement was not, however, such as to extend the code of 'courtesy' far down the social hierarchy. It is interesting that Sylvia Thrupp, in her study of the medieval London merchant class, can find only one instance of the word 'courtesy' in the records of the livery companies: the grocers' apprentices are instructed to be 'lowly and curteis' whenever they meet a liveryman of their company, a situation in which there is an obvious analogy with

[80] *The Household of Edward IV: The Black Book and the Ordinances of 1498*, ed. A. R. Myers (Manchester, 1959), 126–7.
[81] John Russell's *Boke of Nurture* in *Meals and Manners*, ed. Furnivall, 1–4.
[82] For a description of rank carried by household office see S. Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London* (Chicago, 1948), ch. 6.

household master–servant relations.[83] There seems, therefore, to be a striking disjunction in late medieval courtesy literature between the comprehensive claims made for 'courtesy', such as 'Alle vertue is closid in curtesye,'[84] and the restricted aristocratic environment with its technicalities of service, which are then presented as the primary focus of the value. 'Courtesy' is in one sense the whole body of Christian virtues orientated towards sociability rather than directly towards salvation, but it is also a set of 'courtesies' appropriate principally to the court or noble household. This disjunction becomes intelligible if it is regarded as similar to the gap between courage or valour as a quality almost universally approved in medieval society amd military skill as the particular preserve of the nobility and gentry. Courage was not despicable in a churl and a low-born man could win credit, even advancement, by bravery in battle; lack of resources and training, however, would usually cut him off from the skills and paraphernalia of knighthood which could transform valour into a cultural value expressing élite status. Similarly, the goodwill and social sensitivity underpinning the notion of 'courtesy' were theoretically admirable in any man but only became active as values of status in milieux closed to the low-born. The late medieval aristocracy was not, despite the mystique of blood, a closed caste with values utterly divorced from those of other social orders, but it conveniently maintained a monopoly of the techniques whereby moral values could be clothed in social and cultural prestige. The techniques embodied images of virtue, enhanced by the social allure of élite culture and reinforcing the sense of moral superiority which was held to justify aristocratic rule. Thus an aura of martial glory could cling to the image of the armed knight and not to the image of the common soldier, and similarly, in the field of manners, aristocratic appropriation and development of the techniques of social virtue made the image of the gentleman a model of moral social behaviour recognized at lower levels of the hierarchy. The mid-sixteenth century *Institucion of a Gentleman* points to a long-established usage (still current in modern English) in the remark that 'in our tongue, we use a word called gentlemanly, as if a man do me a benefit or pleasure, we commonly say he dyd me a gentlemanly turne.'[85]

The appearance of the word 'civility' in the vocabulary of manners does not, as I have emphasized, directly undermine the connection between the gentleman and good manners. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts on courtesy and civility, there persists the old tension between exhorta-

[83] Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London* (Chicago, 1948), ch. 6, 240–1.
[84] *The Lytylle Childre's Lytil Boke in Meals and Manners*, ed. Furnivall, 265.
[85] *The Institucion of a Gentleman* (1568), sig. A1v.

tion to simple, universal social virtues, and the particular assignment of good manners to the image and world of the gentleman. One development tends to obscure and complicate this duality, and this was the increasing division between the world of the child and that of the adult. Phillipe Ariès has argued convincingly that it was during the sixteenth century that a clear concept of childhood, as an important stage in life with its own particular needs and characteristics, emerged in both England and France.[86] Educational theorists of the later sixteenth century, like Ascham and Mulcaster, displayed a new interest in child psychology and there was a new sensitivity to the distinction between the adult world and the segregated children's milieu of the school.[87] Erasmus's *De Civilitate*, Seager's *Schoole of Vertue*, Weste's *Booke of Demeanour*, and Fiston's *Schoole of Good Manners* were all directed at schoolboys and even used as school textbooks. Although late medieval courtesy books had also been directed at children, these later texts show a much greater preoccupation with the child *qua* child, rather than with the obligations of the child who is, as it were, an 'apprentice gentleman' within the noble household. This new emphasis means that immediate associations between good manners and social status recede. The academic conventions of equality between pupils and the authority of the master who may, in fact, be the social inferior of his boys, abstract good manners from the social hierarchy of the outside world. Moreover, the 'natural' relation of authority and deference existing between parent and child and between adult and child, which is the relation stressed by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century pedagogic authors when they move beyond the schoolroom, is theoretically a universal one, unrelated to social rank.

Pedagogic emphasis on the manners of the child does not really dissolve the linkage between courtesy, civility, and social rank. William Fiston's *Schoole of Good Manners* certainly detaches courtesy from the noble household and, as in *De Civilitate*, the master or parent replaces the ambiguous 'lord' of fifteenth-century texts as the primary object of reverence and the source of sanctions for breach of manners. Fiston insists that the child's duty is first to God, then to his parents, and then 'to thy Schoole-masters and Teachers, who are as spirituall parents'; he amply illustrates the chain of authority in the child's world when he advises,

In meeting with any person that is thy better (as thou art to esteeme all thine Elders thy betters) see thou give him the way, and putting off thy hat, use a reverent shew in countenance or manner of greeting to him. And if hee bee some man of Authority, a Minister of God's word, any of thy Parents thine Uncle or

[86] Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, tr. R. Baldick (London, 1973).
[87] R. O'Day, *Education and Society 1500–1800* (London, 1982), ch. 1.

Aunt, or thy Schoole master, look thou that thou bow also thy right knee somewhat in thy saluting of them.[88]

However, his dedicatory poem indicates that the child he has in mind is not a low-born one:

> Small boote to be of gentle bloud
> Or learned for to be
> Unlesse good manners deck thy mind
> And vertue shine in thee:
> Good Manners maketh the man,
> And gentle gentleth more.[89]

Clearly, many schoolboys encountering the precepts of Erasmus, Seager, Weste, or Fiston would not have been of gentry families and many of the simple maxims of prudence, piety, and elementary expressions of respect presented by such authors would be appropriate and current in the milieux of yeomen or tradesmen. Yet the pedagogic tradition of writing on manners for schoolboys must be seen within the context of an educational movement which associated all but the most rudimentary book-learning with gentility. Ideas of moral and social behaviour propounded within the grammar schools were made accessible to many of the 'middling sort' but continued to appeal through connotations of 'gentle' status; 'the Scholler (howesoever borne) deserves alwayes the name of gentleman,' wrote one Elizabethan author, somewhat optimistically.[90]

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century handbooks of manners for the young adult, the continuing identification of the 'courteous' and increasingly the 'civil' with the gentleman is even more explicit than in the child-centred texts. What occurs, however, is that the terms and context of that identification undergo a shift. The newly comprehensive range of social situations covered by sixteenth-century writers has already been noted in the survey of sources; the medieval focus on the meal or banquet disappears and gives place to ambitious claims to define good behaviour 'at all times and in all companies'.[91] The marked medieval preoccupation with the household and its relationships of lordship and service diminishes and there are increasingly ambitious attempts to present rules for conduct 'towards all sorts of men' and to characterize good manners 'to persons

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[88] Fiston, *Schoole of Good Manners*, ch. 1, sig. Br and sig. (A8)r. Seager in the *Schoole of Vertue* usually identifies parents as the most significant objects of deference.

[89] Fiston, *Schoole of Good Manners*, preface.

[90] Anon., *A Health to the Gentlemanly Profession of Serving Men* in *Inedited Tracts*, ed. Hazlitt (1868).

[91] S. R., *The Court of Civill Courtesie* (1577), subtitle.

of all humors, ages and conditions'.[92] The model practitioner of good manners is still envisaged as a gentleman but he is viewed in the totality of his social relationships or, to invoke Guazzo's term his 'civil conversation', and he is expected to learne 'how to treate and intertayne men of all degrees . . . and how he himselfe ought to be used of others'.[93] As a mid-seventeenth century work on the education of a gentleman puts it, a young man must 'know perfectly all the civilities, ceremonies, modes and customes, which men have invented, and do practise, according to the places, birth and dignities of everyone'.[94] There is therefore a new stress on the achievement of social versatility founded on an understanding of basic principles of sociability; manners have become what Courtin calls 'a science in instructing how to dispose all our words and actions in their proper and true places'.[95] This development is very obviously related to the importation of the term 'civility' into the vocabulary of manners, for it is best understood as a translation of the larger political discourse of 'civility' into a social mode.

In the political writings of the Renaissance, the concept of civility emerged as part and parcel of the broadly humanist vision of the polity informed by the classical model of the city state. While the concept of 'civility' could be held to define the unity and character of the entire community, thus being employed alongside other unifying notions such as that of the social and political 'body' or 'Christian commonwealth', no more than these did it democratize political thought or imply that 'civil' virtue was equally distributed throughout the nation. Rather, as in its original Aristotelian formulation, 'civil' virtue of the highest and most rational type was perceived as the prerogative of the élite, both as obligation and as justification of its authority. The political and ethical virtue which humanist writers like Erasmus, Vives, Starkey, and Thomas Elyot demanded of the élite was to be based less on blood and inheritance than on an education which would ensure that rulers understood and applied the principles of moral and political order.[96] 'Civil' virtue was not simply a quality, but a discipline and a science. On the superior 'civil' virtue and understanding of the élite, the 'civil' order of the whole polity depended. 'Nobility,' asserted the Elizabethan academic Laurence Humphrey, is that

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[92] Cleland, *Hero-Paideia* (1607), bk. 5, ch. 3, chapter heading; *The Art of Complaisance* (1673), ch. 14, 146.

[93] *The Institucion of a Gentleman* (1568), sig. (A8)v.

[94] I. B., *Heroick Education, or Choice Maxims and Instructions for the most sure and facile training up of Youth* (London, 1657), sig. (F6)v.

[95] Courtin, *Rules of Civility*, ch. 2, 6.

[96] See Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 1, 241–3, for a discussion of educational theory in the context of humanist political thought.

institution 'wherbye both civile societyes are mayntayned and the common life of man supported.'[97] Refracted into the field of manners, these assumptions retain their structure. Thus the practice of good manners is related less to the particular setting of the household than to the social order as a whole. One Jacobean adviser on personal conduct, for example, moralizes that 'By courtesie and humanitie, all societies among men are maintained and preserved.'[98] As others emphasize, gentlemen must exemplify and direct the manners of society: they must 'surpasse' others 'in civilitie of outward things' and 'should be masters of true civilitie, good manners and courtesie'.[99] Moreover, 'civility' in manners becomes, as has been noted, less a set of rules for use in a limited range of situations, but an extensive practical 'science' of sociability, analogous to (and overlapping with) the science of political behaviour also required of the 'civil' gentleman.

The political resonances of the term 'civility' also help to explain a new emphasis on values of social integration in sixteenth-century texts concerned with manners. Clearly, fifteenth-century concepts of 'courtesy' and 'nurture' involved notions of good fellowship and the obligation to avoid disruptive social occasions by aggressive or otherwise objectionable behaviour. The *Boke of Curtasye*, for example, forbids fighting at table and tale-bearing.[100] Nor did medieval writers fail to perceive a link between the right ordering of the self and the overall order of society.[101] But in the later period there is a much more elaborate, self-conscious connection made between good manners, 'courtesy', 'civility', and other virtues perceived to promote social harmony and the overall peace of the community. In Mulcaster's educational treatise *Positions*, he defines 'the chiefe signes of civilitie', in the general sense of fitness to hold authority, as 'quietnesse, concord, agreiment, fellowship and friendship' and this association of ideas is also apparent in Martyn's conduct book of 1612 in which he groups 'Courtesie/ Gentlenesse/ Affabilitie/ Clemencie/ Humanitie'.[102] I. B.'s *Heroick Education* of 1657 links 'modesty, pleasingness, complaisance, civility, discretion' and, for Courtin, 'civility' is closely bound to 'humility', 'modesty and pudor'.[103] Jean Gailhard makes the

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[97] Humphrey, *The Nobles* (1562), sig. A7v.   [98] Martyn, *Youth's Instruction*, 80.

[99] *Institucion of a Gentleman*, sig. (F5)r; Gainsford, *Rich Cabinet*, 'Epitome of Good Manners', sig. A23r.

[100] *The Boke of Curtasye* in *Meals and Manners*, ed. Furnivall, 178, ll. 53–4 and 180, ll.101–2.

[101] See Nicholls, *The Matter of Courtesy*, 1, or Jean-Claude Schmitt, 'The Rationale of Gestures in the West', in *A Cultural History of Gesture*, ed. Bremmer and Roodenburg, 59–70 on the relation of bodily gesture to society conceived as a body.

[102] Mulcaster, *Positions*, 138; Martyn, *Youth's Instruction*, 79.

[103] I. B., *Heroick Education*, sig. D7r.; Courtin, *Rules of Civility*, 5.

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point very forcibly, and in a way which strikingly illustrates the link between the discourse of manners and of politics, in his *The Compleat Gentleman* of 1678. Writing of the early training of children he asserts:

As children in their generation are to be members of a politick body, and of a civil society: I wish they were fitted to keep the bond of it, and therefore taught the practice of meekness, humility, civility etc. which qualities breeding a mutual respect and affection, do much contribute to keep peace in families, amongst neighbours and through whole nations.[104]

In later chapters I shall examine in detail the demand for adaptability, the avoidance of offence, and the accommodation of the self to the needs of others which is a major feature of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century prescriptions on manners. Here it is enough to point out how the word 'civility', with its associations of citizenship and conduct moulded by consciousness of membership of an extensive community, underpins formulations of manners which relate individual contact to an awareness of a whole social world, larger that the household, which is sustained by that conduct.

The new concern with overall sociability in sixteenth-century courtesy literature was accompanied by the emergence of what we might term a concept of 'socialization'. Medieval courtesy writers did, of course, make an implicit link between the acquisition of manners and the moral education of the child, as is clear from the use of the term 'nurture', with its connotations of growth and cultivation. But this implicit link is not used as an organizing principle or theme in their precepts. These were usually presented as equally appropriate for adults and children alike and were not systematically related to a scheme of the development of character or moulding of personality. In later literature on manners, however, despite much continuity of prescription, what is stressed is a discipline of the self which transforms the natural into the social being and an experience of the world which refines the character. These two elements—discipline and experience—are assigned to childhood and adulthood respectively. Hence there is a necessary division between manuals of manners for different age-groups and a differentiation of treatment within single educational treatises. Cleland's *Hero-Paideia* amply illustrates the change in conception. He deals with good manners at two points in his treatise. One chapter in the section devoted to the tutor's task in the education of the noble child is entitled 'of fashioning his Manners' and exhorts the tutor to instil in the boy the principle of accommodation of the self to others, to keep him from evil influences, and to iron out affectations in basic

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[104] Jean Gailhard, *The Compleat Gentleman*, bk. 1, 57.

deportment and speech. Later in the treatise several chapters are grouped under the heading of 'Civill Conversation' and are addressed directly to the young adult nobleman, who must acquire courtly graces, make himself popular and maintain his prestige on the basis of experience at court and in company in general, but with the aid of some pedagogic guidelines.

This division of stages in the individual's acquisition of good manners involves a view of the child informed by the opposition between the 'civil' and the 'savage' or 'barbaric' which has already been noted in relation to definitions of the polity. Just as 'civil' society was increasingly viewed as having developed out of an original, bestial, and anarchic state still visible in the Americas or even Ireland, so the child was seen as the embodiment of a lawless, 'natural' condition which had to be transformed into the 'civil' by discipline and education. The analogy is quite overt in a passage from Allestree's *The Gentleman's Calling* of 1660. He advises that parents should put children 'under such discipline as may break their natural rudeness and stubbornness, mould them into some form of civility, and teach them the first fundamental lessons of obedience, on which all future instructions must be built'.[105] The 'infant passions' are to be 'checked and bridled' so that 'they become more tame and governable ever after'.[106] Despite the rarity of the word, it is clear that a concept of 'civilization' is being employed. The same conceptual development, if less explicit, seems to underlie the great concern in Erasmus's *De Civilitate* and Weste's *Booke of Demeanour* with the consistent exercise of self-control over all aspects of facial expression, carriage, and address.[107] Late medieval codifiers of manners, although advocating generally cheerful and respectful behaviour, are much less interested in the notion of control and 'government' of the self; they do not categorize lack of manners as an absence of control over the passions. The 'courteous' child of fifteenth-century prescription has had the benefit of 'nurture' and understands the duties appropriate to his social and Christian role, but he is not so explicitly perceived as subject to an educative process which orders his mind and passions in accordance with the 'civil' order of society.

In advice on social conduct for the young adult, the very repressive tone of prescription for the moulding of the child gives place to exhortations to self-development and refinement. Despite their desire to systematize, rationalize, and draw up comprehensive rules of conduct, writers addressing the young adult stress the role of his own experience in developing his manners, not merely because experience gives practice and facility in applying the rules, but because rules alone cannot convey good

[105] Richard Allestree (?), *The Gentleman's Calling*, 21.   [106] Ibid.
[107] See below, Ch. 3, pp. 82–5.

manners. Della Casa writes that 'Reason without custome and use, cannot make an uncivile bodie, well taught and courtious.'[108] Although many technical rules can be given, and some aspects of courtesy are a matter of pure knowledge—for example, the rules of precedence—much of manners is presented as a matter of flexible, sensitive sociability perfected by observation, imitation and even intuition. Thus Walker asserts that 'civility . . . requires an early initiation and continual practice to arrive at a perfect habit of it' and

the young man himself, ought, as he grows in age, to observe the actions of others, especially of his equals, and such as are most reputed for Civility, and to note what becomes or misbecomes them. Also, what is practised by most, by persons of higher quality, and by persons of maturity and judgement. He must also watch over himself severely.[109]

The developmental conception of initiation into manners which starts with the basic disciplining of the child's passions is thus extended into the life of the adult who gradually refines his conduct, and his social personality, by observation and practice in the world of 'civil conversation'.

This chapter started from the work of historians of political ideas who have emphasized the novelty of the concern with 'manners' in the political thought of the later Enlightenment and have connected this with the emergence of a concept of 'civil society' larger than and distinct from the polity. In one sense, a survey of the earlier meanings of 'civility' in relation both to overall views of political and social order and to conceptions of 'manners' provides some support for the conclusions of Pocock and others. The systematic attempt to reconstruct the development of custom, habit, taste and material life in the passage from the 'rude' to the 'civil' condition of society which characterizes the work of Adam Ferguson or Adam Smith is absent from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writing on politics or manners. So too is a discrimination between the 'civil' in the sense of the social and the 'political' in the sense of the governmental, consistent enough to allow the historical or ideal relationship between these spheres to become a crucial matter of analysis and argument. The multiple uses of the term 'civil' served to integrate rather than differentiate what we might term the political and the social, the personal and the public within a common framework of order. The notion of 'government', for example, pervades all these areas. Nevertheless, the values and forms of conduct denoted by 'civility' were far from purely 'civic' in the sense of excluding any category of conduct other than those defined by politics and ethics. If early modern writers were unlikely to ask, with

[108] Della Casa, *Galateo*, tr. Peterson, 100.   [109] Walker, *Of Education*, pt. 2, ch.1, 214.

Burke, whether 'manners . . . are of more importance than laws', this was not because they regarded manners as unimportant. Indeed, the 'civic humanist' traditions which took root in England during the sixteenth century actually encouraged the definition of 'civil' manners and a social world of 'civil conversation' to which they were applicable. Furthermore, the term 'civility' linked conceptions of manners to a historical vision of the development of society from the 'savage' to the 'civil' which, if it was only to be fully systematized in the later Enlightenment, had been a commonplace of thought for some two hundred years before. From the point of view of the historian of political ideas, there is much that foreshadows the Enlightenment development of concepts of 'civil society' in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writings on manners. From the point of view of the historian of manners, however, the most important point is the way in which changing conceptions of social and political order were encoded in everyday rules of behaviour.