



Civility and its Other. German, British, South Asian and African Perspectives, 17th – 19th centuries

**Conference organized by the German Historical Institute London and
the Max Planck Institute for Human Development Berlin**

London, 4 – 6 October 2010

History of emotions is fast becoming a fashionable topic; the first proclamations of an “emotional turn” have already been made. This would imply that emotions are not only studied for their own sake, as an interesting subject which changes throughout history, but that emotions provide a new view point from which to look at “general history” afresh: emotions are one of the moving forces of history, they are central category through which actors relate to the world and through which they give meaning to their actions.

Civility can be viewed as a set of rules governing comportment; this comportment, however, rests on an emotional underpinning, without which it is viewed as lacking in warmth, as affection, even as hypocrisy. Real civility thus is based on feeling rules and feeling practices, both of restraint of certain emotions (like anger or greed) and of cultivation of others (like honour, sensibility or devotion).

The feelings brought together by the notion of civility were not limited to either interiority or to the private sphere, but impacted important historical agendas, like for instance the creation of a middle class sensibility, the development of civil society, of which civility was regarded both as the fundament and the result, and the legitimatization of colonial rule.

However, it is not only the civilizing mission, which links the notions of civility in the metropolises and the colonies. From the early 18th century onwards, civility was viewed as the result of a historical process, leading from savagery and barbarity to the refinement of feelings, geographically distant regions providing the comparative material for the early stages of development.

The wide time frame helps avoid re-centering the development of ideas and practices of civility on Europe (even though it be a Europe aware of colonial influences). It permits to bring in the end of the pre-colonial period for both the metropolises and the colonies and thus to gauge the transformations effected by the colonial encounter.

Trying to avoid a homogenization of both Europe and non-Europe and the essentialisation of the dividing line between them, the conference brings in two European countries and two groups of colonies, which should permit both the tracing of entanglements as well as comparative perspectives.

Finally, civility can only be understood in relation to its other. Civility can only be defined with reference to non-civil feeling and behaviour. At the same time, these demarcations are not stable, as feelings and behaviour which generally are excluded from the concept (like anger and violence) may well be justified, implicitly or even explicitly, as being part of it under certain circumstances (righteous anger, violence in the colonies, war ...). Contributions to the panels may either take up the general topic or focus on one particular emotion.

Preliminary Program

Monday, 4 October

- 2 pm Registration
- 3:00 pm *Opening Talk* Prof. Dr. Jürgen Osterhammel
"The Idea of Civilisation before the Emotional Turn"
- 4:00-5:30 pm **Panel I (part 1) *Concepts and Stages of Civility***
Kerstin Brückweh (chair)
Margrit Pernau: "Emotion and the Creation of Global Order in the 19th century"
Tom Dixon: "The Education of the Feelings in Nineteenth-Century Britain"
- 6:00-7:30 pm **Panel I (part 2) *Concepts and Stages of Civility***
C.M. Naim: "*Waz'dari* of Lucknow: Individualism in the midst of Conformity."
Claudia Opitz:
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Tuesday, 5 October

- 9:30-11:00 am **Panel II (part 1) *Sources of Civility/ Religion***
Monica Juneja (chair)
Francesca Orsini:
Benno Gammerl: "Civility and Citizenship. On Markers for Legal Inclusion/Exclusion within the British Empire around 1900"
- 2:00-3:30 pm **Panel II (part 2) *Sources of Civility/ Religion***
Jan-Peter Hartung:
Monique Scheer:
Juliane Brauer: "Manfulness and Moral in German Songs of the Labour Movement"
- 4:00-6:30 pm **Panel III *Civility and the Body***
Silke Strickrodt (chair)
Fay Bound Alberti:
Stephanie Olsen: "Impure Bodies and Tainted Characters: the Reforming Impulse for Boys in late Nineteenth-century Britain"
Siobhan Lambert-Hurley (req.)
- 7:00 pm *Conference Dinner*
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Wednesday, 6 October

- 9:30-12:00 am **Panel IV *Legitimation of Violent Emotions***
Jonas Liliequist (chair)
Joanna Bourke: "'The Beast Within': Female Incivility and Biological Discourses in C19 and Early C20th Britain"
Ute Frevert: "The Civilising Mission of the Duel"
Christiane Eifert: "Avarice, Ambition and Civility. On the Transformation of a Dangerous Appetite into a Desirable Pursuit"