

---

## SUMMARIES

### **Primitive and civilized**

by A. Blok

This paper explores the intellectual status of the widely-known and once widely-used terms 'primitive' and 'civilized'. Although the terminology has changed in recent decades, the underlying dichotomous concepts remain much the same. This problem can be dealt with only if we realize that the meaning of 'civilized' indeed greatly varies from place to place, while the distinction between more or less civilized is universal. All cultural variants of the primitive-civilized dichotomy resemble each other in the idiom in which they are phrased: the 'animalic' characteristics of human beings, especially control over bodily functions and organic processes.

### **Violence in tribal societies**

by R. Jagers

In the societies discussed in this paper, the use of physical force is mostly intratribal. Rather than an *ultima ratio* for total destruction, violence is here a relationship for creating order and distinction. The fragmentation of the means of violence, the small differences in physical force and the constant shift of those differences entail a carefully calculated and restrained use of violence.

### **On conflictmanagement in nomadic Inuit society**

by W. Rasing

The thesis that 'primitives' are subject to more 'passionate' forms of self-control, put forward by Elias in *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* (1969), is confronted here with ethnographic data on nomadic *Inuit* (Eskimos), inhabiting the central Canadian Arctic. Their small-scale communities lacked any external control of force, and their existence was insecure and fear-ridden. The management of conflicts is a main theme in this article. It is described how the specific natural surroundings create strong interdependencies: everyone must contribute to survival. A sharp social control results. On the other hand, in order to survive, gain prestige and live together in an ordered manner, the individual must control the expressions of his body and be guaranteed freedom of movement. Self-control and social control are emphasized, the first being the ideal form of the last. This is expressed in the way violence is handled in the management of conflict, in avoidance (withdrawal), in ritualized song- and butting duels and in the controlled, rational way most of the (known) murders were committed. If violence was used it was done in a way that one cannot call 'passionate'.

**The civilisation of a non-complex society: the Maroons of Suriname**

by H. U. E. Thoden van Velzen

The sociologist Elias, bij tracing the course of the civilizing process in Europe, has attempted to demonstrate, how a transformation in the web of social relations between people, can change their behaviour and emotional order. The bulk of his case material, dealing with courtly codes of behaviour, is derived from seventeenth and eighteenth century France. Elias suggests that ego-restraint and highly refined forms of etiquette are closely connected with, if not actually caused by, the process of state-formation and the concomittant growth of economic interdependencies.

This article documents the highly developed forms of etiquette and the marked value put on self-restraint in a society without a state apparatus: the Djuka (Bush Negroes or Maroons) of Suriname. It is argued, that the absence of fraternal interest groups and the necessity for men to cultivate their interests with various groups have contributed to this remarkable level of civilisation.

**Monks, knights and violence in eleventh-century Flanders**

by M. B. de Jong

A monk of Lobbes has left us a hagiographical account of a voyage to Flanders which he undertook in 1060 with a group of fellow monks from this abbey. They bore the relics of St. Ursmar and used them to constrain Flemish knights from their feuding, and thus forced them to make peace with their enemies. In their successfull mediations – seen bij the author as miracles – the monks exploited the fear of the saints and their miraculous powers, which was very much alive among Flemish warriors. The appearance of the travelling party caused an often dramatic confrontation between two codes of behaviour: military prowess and monastic humility. The miracles of St. Ursmar confirm our impression that the medieval regular clergy played a greater role in pacification and mediation than is ascribed to them bij Norbert Elias. They exported their ideals of peace to the world outside the monastery. However, one would also be mistaken in assuming with Elias that the conduct of eleventh century warriors was mainly dominated by passionate impulses to violence and by untempered affects. Not only in modern society, but also in this world without a stable monopoly of violence, self-restraint and foresight were often needed, in combat as well as in negotiations.

**Knightly courage and chevalric honor: transformations of aggressiveness in the late middle ages**

by B. Maso

Essential for Nobeit Elias's theory of civilization is the assumption that state formation processes and the monopolization of the means of violence they imply, are accompanied with a decrease of the level of aggressiveness. This assumption is largely based on a discussion of the behaviour of medieval knights as it is described bij the French historian Achille Luchaire. Examination of primary sources show however, that the manifestations of aggressiveness – pugnacity, courage and impetuosity – have in fact increased from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, notwithstanding the dramatic strengthening of central monopolies of violence. The explanation of this seeming anomaly is that for the nobles of about 1050 war was primarily a means to the increase or maintainance of their possessions, whereas for the knights of threehundred years later it had become a calling, a means to legitimate their weakened, but still privileged positions. Consequently, they were more or less obliged to give evidence of the supposedly innate qualities, that distinguished them from the common soldiers and were in accordance with their honour.