

Learning Good Manners in Europe Through the Ages

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Abstract

Eurobarometer surveys show that culture is an important value for the vast majority of Europeans. Culture is understood here as participation in artistic culture, but also as *savoir-vivre*. The importance of good manners for Europeans is also evidenced by the multitude of handbooks published, courses organised and requirements in public places for appropriate behaviour. In my presentation, I will show how Europeans learned good manners from the Middle Ages (mnemonic poems concerning, among other things, behaviour at the table), through the Renaissance and Enlightenment models, including the role of Erasmus of Rotterdam, to the 20th century full of class divisions and the times of contemporary globalisation. I will draw attention to the change that has occurred in the perception of good manners in recent times. Namely, it is now less about distinction and more about respecting the dignity of each individual. It is also less rigid and more about general human kindness.

Keywords: education; guides; kindness; *savoir-vivre*; values