THE FORMATION OF »NATIONAL CHARACTERS«
State-Development and Authority in Austria and Britain

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First Publication

1 Cf. Elias, Norbert: The Civilizing Process. Vol.I: The History of Manners. Oxford: Blackwell 1978. Vol.II: State Formation and Civilization. Oxford: Blackwell 1982.

2 Cf. Magris, Claudio: Der habsburgische Mythos in der Literatur. Salzburg: Otto Müller ²1988, p. 112.

3 A good summary of the ›hedonist‹ stereotype of Austrian character is given by Bruckmüller, Ernst: Nation Österreich. Kulturelles Bewußtsein und gesellschaftlich-politische Prozesse. Wien, Köln, Graz: Böhlau ²1996, pp. 119-120. – Its origins can be traced back to the late middle-ages; it was shared by foreigners and natives as well.

4 Cf. Anderson, Perry: Lineages of the Absolutist State. London: New Left Books 1974. The so-called »legenda negra« referred originally to the Habsburgs of Spain and was created by the Protestant Dutch in the 16th century; regarding its further history see Heer, Friedrich: Der Kampf um die österreichische Identität. Wien, Köln, Graz: Böhlau 1981, p. 73 and Bruckmüller 1996, pp. 132-135.

5 Cf. Lasch, Christopher: The Culture of Narcissism. London: Abacus 1980.

6 Cf. Robertson, Roland: Mapping the Global Condition. In: Theory Culture and Society. Vol. 7, Nr.2-3 (1990) [Special Issue on ›Global Culture‹], pp. 15-30, here p. 25.

1. The Problem

This paper deals with the formation of »national characters« in long-term civilizing processes. The expression »long-term« is here intended to cover a period stretching from early modernity to the 19th century – including even some aspects of the »feudal« pre-history of the European system of states and ending with the Industrial Revolution and the nation-state. »Civilizing processes«[1] refer to all the fundamental structural changes that, at the same time, result in relatively stable institutions and personality structures, without any normative implications. The basic model of a civilizing process comprises the development of courtly manners towards more refinement, pacification and inhibition of affective expression. Why compare »England« (or later: Britain) with »Austria« (here: the core countries of the Habsburg Monarchy in Central Europe)? Besides the practical reasons – European integration gives a lot of them – there are also some more remote theoretical ones. While England was one of the birth-places of ›modernity‹, with a developed, industrialized market economy, parliamentary democracy and, since the middle of the 18th century, a global hegemonial power, the Habsburg Monarchy seemed to lag behind in nearly all respects.

To many observers, its people and institutions appeared also very strange. As Claudio Magris in his book on the Habsburg myth in Austrian literature mentions[2], foreign observers were often baffled by the Byzantine character of the late monarchy, by the politeness of their bureaucrats and the Chinese fixedness of its order. Like China, it sometimes regarded itself as a kind of centre of the world. Things have changed since then, but the shadow of the monarchy is still looming large on »Mitteleuropa« – particularly if one compares the violent present of the Balkan-wars with the quiet-orderly past before 1914. Others, most of them Austrians themselves, saw a baroque irreality in the whole construction of the monarchy. The Austrian official was one characteristic figure, the other was the pleasure-seeking, music-loving, wine-drinking and chicken-eating hedonist[3]. But many saw the monarchy as a »*Völkerkerker*«, a prison of the peoples, and until recently it has been regarded as a variant of Eastern Absolutism (from Marx and Engels to modern theorists like Perry Anderson[4]). The characters from English civil society: the gentleman-politician from the landed classes who appears in the world of Trollope, but also English utilitarianism, the figure of the merchant and banker formed models also for the Austrians themselves. To many observers, the typically English character was the gentleman with his reserve, his self-control, sense of fairness (male qualities dominate!) and self-assuredness. The new millenium sees both societies reduced. The successor-states of the Habsburg empire are small and powerless; and Britain's status is no longer that of a great power. Economically, a globalization process has occurred – large multinational enterprises and a dramatic new kind of technological revolution have transformed the world of commerce and the shape of the industrial landscape. Modern personality structures, shaped by anonymous market or state-bureaucracies have been said to dominate now – the market-character, the narcissistic personality[5]. Is convergence to modernity irresistible? Is surveillance everywhere the same? Or do different societies still rely on their different forms of ›habitus‹? How do they cope with the new pressures from modernity? One of these consists in a relative loss of power experienced by the ruling classes of formerly hegemonial states as a consequence of lost wars, relative defeat in economic competition and the formation of new, supra-national units. What theorists of globalization perceive as the plain termination of the historical anomaly of a unified, ethnically homogeneous nation-state[6], may be felt by members of the once powerful nations as a terrible, paralyzing disaster. The necessary adaptations range from accepting a more modest role in the international political system, even to the point of giving up significant »national symbols« like the German Mark or the British Sterling. Other challenges are posed by new mechanisms in the global market-place that mean a threat to the national economic culture and mentality. National mentalities or »characters« may be said to represent those forces which, sometimes, and unexpectedly, resist most strongly and emotionally to such adaptations even if they are seen as necessary and sensible by all. The Habsburg Monarchy was not a nation-state; therefore, we refer, in the Austrian case, better to a »state-character« than a ›national‹ one; but nevertheless, also the modern, young nation-state Austria like

7 For the concept of ›habitus‹ as a result of state-history and state-biography see Elias, Norbert: The Germans. Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Ed. by Michael Schröter, transl. from the German and with a Preface by Eric Dunning and Stephen Mennell. Cambridge: Polity Pr. 1996, p. 2. – The term ›habitus‹ refers to the embodied aspects of expressive human behaviour.

8 Cf. Mann, Michael: States, War and Capitalism. Studies in Political Sociology. Oxford/UK, Cambridge/USA: Blackwell 1988, pp. 188-209.

9 Novelists are often better observers of the fine-print of human interaction and emotion than professional social scientists; for a more extensive discussion of the competition between (high) literature and the developing social sciences see Lepenies, Wolf: Die drei Kulturen. Soziologie zwischen Literatur und Wissenschaft. Reinbek: Rowohlt 1988. – He discusses the development of sociology as a third paradigm between Physicalism and ›Geisteswissenschaften‹. – Some methodological aspects of using literary language are treated in Brown, R.H.: A Poetic for Sociology. Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1977. – The criticism of quantitatively oriented empiricists and post-structuralist and post-modernist literary theorists can be overcome in my opinion by considering possible biases and distortions in a sociology-of-knowledge perspective. For the former see Laslett, Peter: The Wrong Way through the Telescope: A Note on Literary Evidence in Sociology and in Historical Sociology. In: British Journal of Sociology 27 (1976) 3, pp. 319-342; for the latter cf. Hodge, Robert: Literature as Discourse. Textual Strategies in English and History. Cambridge, Oxford: Polity Pr. 1990.

10 Cf. Peabody, Dean: National Characteristics. Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1985, pp. 95-108.

11 Cf. Hofmannsthal, Hugo von: Preusse und Österreicher. In: Ders.: Ausgewählte Werke, Erzählungen und Aufsätze. Frankfurt/M.: Fischer 1957, p. 615f.

12 Cf. Magris 1988, pp. 7-22; Lhotsky, Alphons: Das Problem des österreichischen Menschen. In: Ders.: Der österreichische Mensch. Aufsätze und Vorträge. Hg. v. H. Wagner u. H. Koller. Bd. 1. Wien 1974.

13 Seen from an English perspective cf. Bassett, Richard: Waldheim and Austria. Harmondsworth: Viking 1988, p. 37.

modern Croatia or Hungary is still partly influenced by the history of the dynastic state. Its biography, thus, creates central elements of the Austrian ›national habitus‹[7] of today – in the same way as in the Anglo-British case, where the Empire-period has also left its permanent imprint on the formation of a corresponding habitus.

One of the most important aspects of national character is its relation to state-authority or to any kind of authority as long as it is influenced by the state. The cliché of the Prusso-German subject with his fear of »Obrigkeit« and slavish obedience has become famous (from the writings of Heinrich Mann to the *Frankfurt School* and the Milgram-experiments). Is one leading historical sociologist, M. Mann, right if he juxtaposes British »liberalism« to German, Japanese and – Austrian authoritarian monarchy, all of these possibly turning to some sort of »Fascism« or »authoritarian socialism«[8]? What could this mean? The central question of this essay is, therefore, the following: What kind of emotions and inner experience corresponds to the different fates of state-formation in Austria and Britain and what does this mean for the way they have to cope with the present?

Comparing »Austria« with »Britain« might help us to trace out real contrasts, to grasp the peculiarities of these two societies, but also to find some stupefying commonalities which defy simple stereotypes. The argument is as follows. Firstly, I am going to compare the Anglo-British habitus of the »Gentleman« with that of the Austrian civil servant or »official«, both in their attitude towards their »states«. I will be doing this with the help of literary sources[9], quoting from English and Austrian fiction and drama of the 18th and 19th centuries. Secondly, I would like to reconstruct their ›sociogenesis‹ as a result of civilizing and state-formation processes since early modernity. Thirdly, I intend to discuss some aspects of imposing discipline through state and para-state agencies, including some remarks on capital punishment. Finally, I would like to ask, to what extent should we correct our views of the two civilizing processes (Anglo-Protestant vs. Habsburg-Catholic-Austrian) by giving more consideration to lower classes and ethnic minorities? What answers do we get for the disturbing questions of the urging present if we look at some of the pressures caused by European integration or globalization?

2. English Gentleman and Austrian Civil Servant as Incarnations of National Character

For a long time, there has been attributed to the English national character a set of elements which can be classified either as parts of a »Gentlemen's Code« or of a more bourgeois »Puritanism«[10]. The typical Englishman is said to be cold and reserved; he is held to value his privacy above all else; and he is seen as someone who expects no one else to interfere with his private affairs, but also as someone who has sufficient self-control not to interfere with the affairs of others. Furthermore, there is a much more general affective control which is said to be present in the English character: every exuberance should be avoided and is regarded as embarrassing. Any expression of self-importance is regarded as a weakness, and so too is any overt and unsuppressed show of strength. Chivalrous and noble reserve as well as individualized isolation corresponding to the market-place seem to combine in an inextricable way to guarantee a high measure of affective control which is frequently seen as »typically English«.

There is, of course, more to the image of the »typically English« than this: not to mention their pride, their endurance and confidence in victory. I will not deal with them here. But even these few facets of the image are sufficient to draw a vividly contrasting picture to that of the »typical Austrian«. The latter is seen as friendly and charming, indecisive and weak[11], and unable to refuse anything to anyone. At the same time, Austrians are said to be bureaucratically rigid and to stick anxiously and firmly to order.[12] They tend to emotional exuberance[13] and are polite, often in a submissive way; but they also have the gift of renunciation in a stoical and resigned way, being advocates of an impartial, although patrimonial, order. In the Austrian mind, according to Magris[14], there is an eternal longing for a strong benevolent authority to take control of the no less eternal squabbling and discontent. Here, two pictures emerge: the first of a hedonist Austrian catholicism with its glamour and ostentation, accompanied by a supposedly easy-going manner; the second of the tragically dutiful seigneurial bureaucrat who prefers administering to decision making and for whom order is propriety and propriety order, and whose conduct is modest and moderate.

14 Cf. Magris 1988.

15 Ford, F.M.: The Good Soldier. A Tale of Passion. Harmondsworth: Penguin 1946, p. 29f.

16 Cf. Cannadine, David: The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy. New Haven: Yale UP 1990.

17 Defoe, Daniel: Moll Flanders. Harmondsworth: Penguin 1989; Fielding, Henry: The History of Tom Jones. Harmondsworth: Penguin 1985.

18 Cf. Maurer, Michael (Hg.): O Britannien von deiner Freiheit einen Hut voll: Deutsche Reiseberichte des 19. Jahrhunderts. München, Leipzig: Beck, Kiepenheuer & Witsch 1992.

It is not easy to paint a better picture of the English gentleman than Ford Madox Ford has done it, using the following words:

> I could see his lips form a word of three syllables [...] – and immediately I knew hat he must be Edward Ashburnham, Captain, Fourteenth hussars, of Branshaw House, Branshaw Teleragh. [...] His face hitherto had, in the wonderful English fashion, expressed nothing whatever. Nothing. There was in it neither joy nor despair; neither hope nor fear; neither boredom nor satisfaction. He seemed to perceive no soul in that crowded room; he might have been walking in a jungle. I never came across such a perfect expression before and I never shall again. It was insolence and not insolence; it was modesty and not modesty.[15]

Here, the gentleman is not only defined through his descent, he is also a »good soldier« and there is a mystical quality in his appearance which remains indefinable. Courage, loyalty, honour and constancy form parts of it, and so does a perfect control of expression – his English »reserve«. In addition, Ashburnham is an expert in the arts of the chase, of all kinds of adventures, of excellent horses, the best boots, the finest soap, the best brandy. He is a darling to all ladies and belongs, without any doubt, to the *good people*. At the same time, he is a benevolent Lord of the manor, caring for the poor and hapless; at least, this is the impression he creates.

At the turn of the century, English fiction abounds with gentlemen of the land-owning class. Before its slow decline – beginning with 1880, according to D. Cannadine[16] – the English aristocracy was still the most important pillar of political rule, in spite of the industrial revolution and a rising bourgeoisie. The origins of the gentlemanly code of behaviour are quite likely to lie in the French-speaking, Norman layer of conquerors who held medieval Anglo-Saxon England in firm control, with their fortresses and with the help of a centralized administration. A decisive step on the long way of forming an English character was taken when a so-called, highly differentiated ›gentry‹ developed, an untitled nobility, which was able to penetrate the whole of English society in a much deeper and more profound way than their highly exclusive counterpart in most of Europe.

In the early or mid-eighteenth century, the English gentlemen's code of generosity, mutual favour, helping the weak and bravery was still clearly separated from the more utilitarian, rational-contractual self-interest of the bourgeois middle classes. This is evident in Defoe's novels, such as *Moll Flanders* (1722) and Fielding's *Tom Jones*[17] (1749) . A ›gentleman‹ does not work, and he often takes up arms.

The picture of English society in the middle of the 19th century is quite different, as the example of Trollope's fiction demonstrates. Trollope describes the extreme refinement of Victorian codes of »privacy« and »reserve«: Bourgeois rationality and aristocratic striving for social distance amalgamate in a uniquely elaborated etiquette which protects privacy and combines pride, reserve and self-control. This has its price: it takes the form of considerable fears and constraints. The picture of the gentleman is getting more and more moralized and christianized. The rise of the working bourgeoisie enriches the gentleman-ideal with typical middle class values – since the school reforms initiated by Th. Arnold, we see the emergence of a code of »Muscular Christianity«.

Already in the 18th century, England was perceived by German-speaking travellers as the country of freedom, embodied in the unique institution of Parliament. Therefore, every foreigner wanted to visit Westminster, and most of them admired strongly[18] the way this institution worked. How it had developed during the 19th century, can be seen best in Trollope's political fiction. The institution of king or the person of Victoria is nearly completely absent; instead, we find the description of a rich, but loyal and responsible oligarchy, reminding one of republican Rome or Venice. *Can You Forgive Her?*, for instance, is a novel which gives a vivid and sensitive picture of English Parliamentarism in the 60's of the 19th century. Above all, Trollope describes in a detailed way the behaviour which Parliament demands of its members – the rhetoric, the sudden changes of coalitions, with determined opponents of yesterday becoming political friends of today, with ritual exchanges of accusations and insults, and true emotions hidden behind a mask of joviality. The gentlemanly code incorporates now the taming of emotions in political and social life. Aggressiveness has to be tempered, passions that would lead to mistakes have to be avoided:

19 Trollope, Anthony: Can You Forgive Her? Vol. II. Oxford, New York: Oxford UP 1982, p. 13.

20 Cf. Bruckmüller, Ernst/ Stekl, Hans: Zur Geschichte des Bürgertums in Österreich. In: Kocka, Jürgen (Hg.): Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich. Vol. I. München: dtv 1988, pp. 160-192, pp. 172f.

21 Cf. Anderson E.N./ Anderson P: Bürokratisierung und die Entwicklung der Beamtenloyalität. In: Fleck, Christian/ Kuzmics, Helmut (Hg.): Korruption. Zur Soziologie nicht immer abweichenden Verhaltens. Königstein/ Ts.: Athenäum 1985, pp. 104-127.

22 This is also the judgment in Mann, Michael: The Sources of Social Power. Vol. II: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States 1760-1914. Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1993, p. 447, p. 349.

23 Cf. Magris 1988, p.17.

24 Roth, Joseph: Radetzkymarsch. Reinbek: Rowohlt 1957.

25 »Demnach ergab sich als zum Entscheid stehend die notwendige Heranbringung eines Tisches, welcher geeignet schien, auf seiner Platte Raum zu bieten für den Beobachtungs-Stuhl sowie etwa für ein davor zu postierendes niederes Taburett als Schwenkbasis des kurzen Dreibeins: hiezu konnte das seinerzeit so lärmende Rauchtischlein als geeignet angesehen werden, wenngleich seit damals Mißtrauen gegen dieses Möbelstück bestand. Die darauf befindlichen Requisiten wären vorher zu entfernen und wegzuschließen und zwar a) wegen gänzlicher Überflüssigkeit, b) wegen des damals erzeugten Krawalles in Verbindung mit Wiederholungsgefahr bzw. Rückfälligkeit also strafweise. Vielleicht konnte in dieser Weise gleich unter einem mit dem Entzuge der Bewilligung für Herrn Wänzrich vorgegangen werden, was in Anbetracht der neu zu treffenden Anstalten als unbedingt angezeigt erschien.« – Doderer, Heimito v.: Die erleuchteten Fenster oder Die Menschwerdung des Amtsrates Julius Zihal. Ein Umweg. Zwei Romane in einem Band. München: Beck 1995, p. 98.

26 Cf. Musil, Robert: Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften. Reinbek: Rowohlt 1988, p. 169 u. p. 182.

And men walked about the house in the most telling moments, – enemies shaking hands with enemies, – in a way that showed an entire absence of all good, honest hatred among them.[19]

A particular kind of political culture develops – where the art of compromise is highly esteemed in Parliament, and self-regulation of gentleman-politicians is much more important than obedience to a king.

Vienna in the early and mid-nineteenth century was very different. In Vienna, the »bürgerliche« strata closely associated with the canon of aristocratic norms did not mainly consist of merchants, entrepreneurs, or commercial bourgeois, but of officers (the military was one of the pillars of the monarchy) and »bureaucrats«, civil servants or officials. If middle-class people came into touch with those of the »first« society of courtiers and high nobility, this encounter was rather unevenly balanced and demanded servility of the former. A »second« good society consisted of high-ranking civil officials of bourgeois background who had been just nobilitated recently.[20] Quasi-feudal or courtly principles of conduct became, in a modified way, principles of an official's existence. However, aristocratic grandezza was amalgamated to administrative ritualism[21]: a bureaucratic mentality was formed. In so far as bureaucracy represents one of the main pillars of modernity, Austria, in the late 18th century, had surpassed Britain[22], in contrast to the belatedness of marketization and parliamentarization. Reaching from the classical Viennese comedy by Raimund and Nestroy, Grillparzer's tragedy, and the novels of Stifter, to the great novels written by Doderer, Roth and Musil, a pattern of development becomes visible: the baroque legacy of hedonism and of courtly servility, in Raimund and Nestroy, changes into the k.u.k. (imperial and royal) »satisfied mediocrity«.

Since the middle of the 19th century, the Austrian novel emerges as a distinctive genre. The favourite hero of Austrian literature, from Grillparzer's *Der arme Spielmann* (poor minstrel) and Stifter's *Nachsommer*, to the novels of Musil, Roth and Doderer, is now (according to Claudio Magris),

[...] the diligent old official, in his office and in his own life, who strives to hold back the stormy winds with the help of the clips of official portfolios.[23] [Transl. HK]

The individualization of the Austrian national character takes the figure of a painfully pedantic bureaucrat. The life led by these officials is very peaceful and non-belligerent. They are still hedonists, at least to a certain degree. In the upper ranks, they often have an air of noble and solemn gravity, but they are normally separated from the vivacity of emotional expression by a deeply internalized bureaucratic attitude. This is demonstrated by Joseph Roth (in *Radetzkymarsch*) in his moving portrait of the old Baron von Trotta, who only understands his son when it is too late.[24] Doderer parodies the bureaucratic mind with the help of a bureaucratic jargon, which cannot be translated without serious loss of meaning[25]: He describes the preparations of a voyeur who is watching women undressing through the brightly illuminated windows opposite. This is a very simple procedure, compared with the pompous description found in the impersonal spirit of the imperial and royal (k.u.k.) instruction for officials. It is merely accidental that »Amtsrat« Zihal (a title which means »counsellor of office«), who is doomed to lack of self-fulfillment and to apathetic resignation, finally experiences his »Menschwerdung« (»humanization«): he eventually gets one of the women he was watching in secret.

As Magris has elaborated, resignation had for a long time been a prominent Austrian theme. It corresponded to the narrowness of the hierarchically ordered social space, which inhibited innovation, punished success in competition with envy and counterposed dynamic progress to the Habsburg principle of »judicious procrastination«. Fatalistic determination and patrimonial dependence on the good will of powerful superiors is the antithesis to a life-long project of *self-improvement* found in English fiction. A longing for *order* created by a *beloved father* can be found instead of a loyal attitude against *self*-made *rules* characteristic of the English gentleman-ideals. Musil gives an example of a perfect parody in the language of administration which was so typical of the late Habsburg Monarchy, when he describes the (fictitious) preparations for the (fictitious) celebration of the emperor's jubilee birthday. This birthday-celebrations should appear as a spontaneous utterance of the people – but, of course, it had to be organized from above and even to be approved by the emperor. This is at least Count Leinsdorf's opinion who is bureaucratically responsible for this.[26] Here we see some essential principles of construction for the Austrian national character in the nineteenth century. The Austrian political system genera-

27 Cf. James, Louis: The Xenophobe's Guide to the Austrians. London: Ravette 1994, p. 46. – James gives also a nice exemplar of the self-depreciating side of Austrian humour after the crushing defeat of Königgrätz/-Sadowa 1866 against Prussia when »Austrian generals could not comprehend why the enemy consistently refused to adhere to the battleplan which they had patiently worked out in elegant manœuvres at home. As one commander plaintively remarked after the defeat: »I cannot understand it. It always worked so well on the Schmelz [the paradeground in Vienna].« – Ibid., p. 6f.

28 Cf. Bruckmüller, Ernst: Sozialgeschichte Österreichs. Wien, München: Herold 1985, p. 136.

29 Cf. Elias Norbert/ Dunning Eric: Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process. Oxford: Blackwell 1986, pp. 28-34, pp. 126-149 and passim.

30 Cf. Stone, Lawrence: The Crisis of Aristocracy 1558-1641. Oxford: Clarendon 1965.

31 Cf. Elias, Norbert: The Civilizing Process 1982, p. 106 for a characterization of the ›monopoly mechanism‹ as outcome of the competition of feudal war-lords, and pp. 170-173 for the definition of the ›royal mechanism‹.

32 Cf. Brewer, John:. The Sinews of Power. War, Money and the English State 1688-1783. London: Unwin Hyman 1989.

ted, in their high-ranking civil servants and politicians, much loyalty towards the state so far as it was impersonated by the emperor. But the »*Reichsrat*«, the Austrian parliament, really never worked as an institution in which political compromise between diverging ethnic and class-based claims could have been reached. The art of compromise rather flourished at the level of administration. I think it is mistaken to assume that these principles have wholly vanished today. Firmly internalized rules of fairness on the English model have never played a prominent role in Austria: there have always been many »back-doors« in Austrian absolutism (often called »an absolutism softened by negligence« – »*durch Schlamperei gemilderter Absolutismus*«). These back-doors encouraged rule breaking. There is, therefore, also a difference between English and Austrian humour. In England, humour is a means of distancing from a closely woven net of rigorous self-surveillance (enforced and controlled by one's own peers). »Understatement«, sometimes a kind of self-mockery, very often means that those who degrade themselves can be sure to be elevated by sympathetic by-standers. In Austria, humour allows the back-doors to exist also within the self, in the unconscious (as Nestroy once remarked: »I expect the worst from everybody, including myself, and I am seldom disappointed«[27]) and it helps to create a distance from the caprices of a »society of grace« and to produce solidarity with other rule-breakers.

3. State-Formation and Civilization since Early Modernity in Austria and England/Britain

The different fates of Austrian and English (later: British) societies had already been preformed by their different feudal past. In England this includes early integration (through the Normans), enforced pacification and a rather homogeneous ruling elite. Austria, as part of the Holy Roman Empire, had many more problems to overcome feudal resistance when creating a monopoly of taxation and violence. This was largely due to its complicated geo-strategical position with its systemic openness and multiple military threats from outside. Economically and politically, a larger part of the peasantry (with the exception of those in Tyrol) was caught in a status of personal dependence, without producing for markets to the same extent as in England. We call this ›manorial Absolutism‹. Although Austria saw an improvement in rural conditions towards the late middle-ages[28], it still lagged behind and a lapse back into serfdom occurred in the 16th century, with excessive personal services and rents.

In early modernity, there exists an English counterpart to the French civilizing process. Instead of a »courtization of warriors«, we find a »sportization« of the landed aristocracy. According to Elias, there is an elective affinity between Parliament and sport. In one »civilizing thrust«, the English gentleman learned to be ›fair‹ in peaceful sporting events and to bow to self-imposed rules of political conduct in Parliament[29]. ›Civilizing‹ means here in a rather pure form the control of destructive violence and of feelings of hate while the threshold of shame and embarrassment advanced. That this de-escalation became effective, had partly to do with the common class basis of ›Whigs‹ and ›Tories‹, of which they represented only factions, not opposing classes. In this respect it was important that there was a ›gentry‹, a lower aristocracy which emerged and found its place between urban craftsmen and merchants on the one hand, the landed nobility on the other. The English aristocracy was also the first to lose its military function. Around 1500, peers still used to be armed, in the 1580s, only 50% were experienced in warfare, and in the 1650s, the English aristocracy was without a militarily function.[30] The reasons for this seem to be manifold: commercialization, an undisputed monopoly of taxation, reliance on the navy as the main weapon in state-competition, and the relative effectiveness of central administration since the early Tudor-reforms. With a navy instead of a standing army, the king could not impose his will on the aristocracy.

Both the »monopoly-mechanism« and the »royal-mechanism«, as Elias called them[31], developed differently in England: While in France and much of the continent the rise of the town, of the monetary sector and the town-based merchants and craftsmen led to an unstable balance of these groups with the land-possessing warrior-caste and the king, in England, those classes formed a coalition with the aristocracy and were, thus, able to limit royal power. This is part of the secret of English »liberty«. The gentry way of life led to an exchange of rural patterns of living with those of the capital through the London »season« of the higher aristocracy; a house in the country and a house in the city formed part of it. The 18th century, therefore, saw a massive rise of Parliament and the status of wealthy land owners, who turned England into a fiscal-military state[32] without generating a repressive warrior-mentality.

33 Cf. Elias 1996, p. 165. – Elias stresses here also the moralizing of the English national ›We-Image‹.

34 Cf. Heer 1981, pp. 40-114.

35 Cf. Bruckmüller 1985, pp. 243-247.

36 Cf. Axtmann, Roland: ›Police‹ and the formation of ther modern state. Legal and ideological assumptions on state capacity in the Austrian Lands of the Habsburg Empire 1500-1800. In: German History 10 (1992), pp. 39-61.

A largely Anglo-Protestant »aristocratic century« formed itself at the expense of Celtic independence (Unions of 1707 and 1801 = formation of Anglo-Britain) and with the help of a coalition between landed and monied interest. While »court« lost against »country«, a political nation developed which was tied to the lower classes in the paternalistic exercise of rule (*Justices of the Peace*). The Anglo-Britain state, therefore, was not in opposition to its aristocratic elite, but rather on expression of its power. Political self-rule of the nobility led to a whole catalogue of values, norms, virtues and skills that demanded obedience to self-made rules, realistic judgment in international affairs and authority structures according to the pattern of »indirect rule«. This development accompanied England's rise to global power and even, to a certain degree, her slow decline afterwards. The resulting self-pacification of a ruling oligarchy led to personality-structures which facilitated obeying the rules. Peaceful persuasion replaced dagger or sword. A typically English ›habitus‹ emerged.[33]

What now corresponded in Austria to English parliamentarization and commercialization, to the gentleman and the Puritan element in the English character? What were the central »mints« to shape typical modulations of the »affective household«? How did they depend on factors from outside (state-competition) and from within (economical, political structures of dominance and surveillance between the ruling and the ruled)?

a) The first deeply penetrating and affect-moulding, specifically Austrian, civilizing process occurred with Catholic Counter-Reformation.[34] It still shapes Austria, in greeting habits, architecture, and styles of thinking. The Jesuits were highly effective in their mode of thought control; they were the first to systematically socialize and train for obedience and loyalty toward the dynasty and the early modern state. Their means included schools, baroque plays, Catholic rituals of all kind – for instance, pilgrimages – which helped to erect the clerical pillar of dynastic rule.

But, as the Austrian historian F. Heer maintains, the pressures from the Counter-Reformation (after a nearly complete victory of Protestantism in Styria, Austria, Bohemia and even Hungary) did not result from the strength of Habsburg rule, but rather from its weaknesses. The simultaneous danger from foreign powers and Reformation led to alliances with Spain, the papacy, with conservative Bavaria and put Austria under largely Romanic influence.

Centralization was slow, ineffective, and all »councils« and »chancelleries« for the Empire or the Habsburg countries themselves quickly became overly extended and clumsy bodies – a striking contrast to England, the early nation-state.[35]

Since 1526 – when Bohemia and Hungary fell under Habsburg rule – the heterogeneity and openness of the system were unique. This unification was partly accidental, partly caused by the Turkish threat, and partly the result of the dynastic striving for power (indeed, these explanations do not exclude one another). Even in German speaking Austria alone, there were, according to Heer, two or more political religions, two nations, two or more cultures. The result was a polyphone, multicoloured, universal and multinational baroque culture, which was belonging neither to a nation nor to a political whole, but rather to a fluctuating balance between various powers and principles.

Nevertheless, the practices of rule included more and more techniques of systematic policing[36], in the comprehensive sense of early modern times, and, in a marked contrast to England, appeared as a generalization and rationalization of patrimonial (feudal) techniques of rule. New methods of surveillance replaced the older, less successful ways. The numerous peasant-revolts in the Habsburg countries had no counterpart in market-oriented England.

b) The second process is a more familiar one – Graz, Innsbruck, Prague and later Vienna became centres of court-societies; this is a marked contrast to England, even if the Austrian court was not able to rival Versailles. But since the estates were so strong, Austrian absolutism was rather weak. Some territories could never be fully incorporated into the Habsburg sphere of rule, like Hungary, which used to spend rather than bring money. The reality of Austrian absolutism was its painstaking search for compromises, which may have played a larger role in forming the Austrian character of today, as much as the politeness of the courtier.

Militarily, Austria had always severe problems in defending her status as a great power. Lack of money was chronic. She was soon destined to be a defensive power, never, in contrast to Prussia, an offensive one. This is also a huge difference, compared to self-confident England, even today.

37 A good account of the reform period is given in Kann, Robert A.: Geschichte des Habsburgerreiches 1526-1918. Wien, Köln, Graz: Böhlau 1982, pp. 162-187.

38 Cf. Bodi, Leslie: Comic Ambivalence as an Identity Marker: The Austrian Model. In Petr, Pavel et al. (Ed.): Comic Relations. Studies in the Comic, Satire and Parody. Frankfurt/M. et al.: Lang 1985, pp. 67-77.

39 Cf. for instance Gerlich, Peter et al. (Ed.): Sozialpartnerschaft in der Krise. Leistungen und Grenzen des Neokorporatismus in Österreich. Wien, Köln, Graz: Böhlau 1985.

40 Gorer, Geoffrey: Exploring English Character. London: Cresset 1955.

41 Ringel, Erwin: Die österreichische Seele. 10 Reden über Medizin, Politik, Kunst und Religion. Wien: Europa 91991, pp. 7-45.

42 Cf. Colley, Linda: Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837. New Haven, London: Yale UP 1992.

c) The third civilizing process is, like the very violent process of re-catholicization, a result of both state-competition and internal pressures. In the former case, the struggle for supremacy in the Empire or, in Europe (ignoring the centuries of defense against the Ottoman empire), enforced a strengthening of the state apparatus via counter-reformation. The first really effective and modern state was to rise from the pressures of the real danger of annihilation of the Habsburg monarchy after 1740, when Frederick II from Prussia, France and Bavaria simultaneously attacked Maria-Theresa. »Enlightened Despotism« or, as Austrians call it, »Enlightened Absolutism« meant both a strengthening of administrative power (centralization of administration and police, taxation of the aristocracy, re-organization and enlargement of the army, secularization, re-formation of censorship etc.), and a civilizing thrust according to Western norms (reform of the institutions of jurisdiction and law-enforcement, e.g. abolition of torture and physical punishment, protection of the peasants, liberalization of the economy, abolition of tolls, introduction of compulsory schooling etc.[37]).

These administrative reforms created, somewhat belatedly, a real state (Bohemia and Austria proper were united; Hungary, which had been never part of the Holy Roman Empire, was a different case). In this process, the central mint of an Austrian ›habitus‹ was formed: the bureaucracy, as a generalized and rationalized patrimonialism (»*Kameralismus*«). This development was in marked contrast to North-Western conceptions of a civil society, of a gradually and spontaneously evolving economic and political order. Under Joseph II, a secularized, loyal body of officials was formed, which remained until 1918 the backbone of the monarchy, together with the supra-national army. It was to create the main element of what was later to be called the ›Habsburg Myth‹: The Austrian official represented a world of benevolent order, of honesty, of patrimonial humanism and supra-nationalism, of loyalty toward the person of the emperor. But he was also caught in a permanent state of »muddling through«, lacked strength of decision, with massive self-restraint and caution, leading to immobilism.

One further element of this code is, what has been called »comic ambivalence« and »doublethink«[38] as attitudes towards authority – first, of officials, but later, of the Austrian character itself. These traits emerged as reaction forms against close bureaucratic surveillance and rigid censorship particularly, when the nearly revolutionary character of the Josephine reforms was broken by the reactionary and restorative period following the French revolution and the Napoleonic wars.

These reforms were, thus, Janus-headed; civilizing processes under the aegis of the state. They mixed patrimonial dependence with the art of administration, by making compromises with all groups and societal forces without parliamentary representation – a technique that has survived even until today. Its present name is ›*Sozialpartnerschaft*‹[39] – a corporatist model of political bargaining and governing.

4. Authority, Social Discipline and the Development of Capital Punishment

Geoffrey Gorer, in his study on English Character[40], thought it particularly remarkable that and how one of the most law-less and ferocious peoples of the world could be turned into one of the tamest and best-behaved of all. Similarly, the psychoanalyst Erwin Ringel[41], saw the most striking Austrian character-trait in their obedience. But nevertheless, there are some marked differences. The Austrian system has always stressed, throughout all historical changes, the element of personal dependence and control. But all restrictions and obligations involved a certain good-naturedness and the element of grace of an authority lacking a firm and precise grip in its efforts to control those in subordinate position. This holds good for the feudal relationship of caring and controlling, but even today's welfare-state has never lost its patrimonial qualities: every national election involves some acts of open bribery of the electorate. The English system, on the other hand, provides more personal liberty, is less tied to personal subservience (only think of the process of law-finding through juries, the application of the more universalistic norm of »fairness«), but it is also able to cling to excesses of systematic cruelty – think of the misery of the working classes during the industrial revolution – which would have been impossible in Austria. While in the latter the protection of the peasants from feudal caprice had been established on a grand scale (partly out of military concerns), the English upper classes (being the state) led, during the 18th century, an unrestrained campaign against the rural lower-classes and another one against the working-classes during the first half of the 19th century. For their ruthlessness there is no Austrian equivalent.

The following short list of comparisons tries to give a balancing account.

- In terms of religious freedom and tolerance, the balance favours England (resp. Britain after 1707): Even if Catholics and Puritans were oppressed (the former were denied eligibility for Parliament until 1828 – *Catholic Emancipation Relief Act*) after the Restoration period, the degree of confessional liberty was considerably larger than in Austria (»*Toleranzpatent*« of Joseph II in 1781) and allowed the development of a culture of books and of critical public opinion.

- Since the Protestant identity in England/Britain[42] was deeply linked to Parliament, to the landed classes and their right of taxation, these ruling strata were also unrestricted masters of foreign policy and of peace or war. They were the main winners of the developing fiscal military-state (with a constant redistribution from below to the wealthy[43]) and constituted the Anglo-British nation with a corresponding national loyalty – at the expense of the lower classes. In Austria, things were different: Here, the emperor was also limited by the noble estates; wars were not a matter of the nation, but of the dynasty.

- English social discipline was, thus, enforced by aristocratic self-government and administration (*Justices of the Peace*; even 1842, 78% of these JPs came from the ranks of the gentry[44]). Chastity, hard work, obedience, orderliness, punctuality, avoidance of drunkenness, blasphemy, hazard and blood-sports were, in England, propagated by the combined efforts of associations, societies, Charity Schools (1728) and Sunday Schools (2nd half of the 18th century), through the enduring effects of the developing factory-system and with the help of a police-force becoming slowly more professional. The Austrian tradition relied much more on policing[45] in a broader sense of the word, also involving the church as the clerical pillar of secular authority, but it was far more restrictive in terms of surveillance, particularly in its efforts to control the free movement of people and ideas. Especially after the French revolution, surveillance and control of political opposition had become quite massive: A direct line went from »Manorial« to »Enlightened« despotism and to the police-state of the first half of the 19th century.

- But surprisingly enough, the English upper-class campaign against property-related crime in the 18th and the first third of the 19th century was much bloodier than in unenlightened Austria: There were, in the period from 1822-1826, approximately 40 times more death-sentences and 5 times more actual executions in England/Wales than in Austria, more than 50% of these because of crimes against property (in Austria: below 20%) form clear and unambiguous indicators. Although Austria possessed, until 1776, one of the blood-thirstiest systems of physical punishment, including torture and cruel methods of execution, the actual number of executions was small; while England's methods of execution used to be less spectacular and visibly cruel, the sheer number of executed and transported people was frighteningly high[46]; and most of capital punishment concerned crimes against property.

All in all, we can summarize: In post-revolutionary England, the power of the state coincided with the power of landed property. On the one hand, English parliamentarism developed an outstanding culture of political participation and non-alienated responsibility, on the other hand, broad strata paid for this triumph of the gentleman-ideal with many sacrifices, victims of the hardness of merciless propertied classes. In Austria, the state (emperor plus officials) and the noble estates were at two opposite ends. The patrimonial interest of dynastic and state-authority led to some protection of the lower classes, but also to a close-meshed surveillance of everything resembling opposition. The English ideal of parliament aimed at tolerance and acceptance of conflicting political opinions and favoured the institutionalization of political opposition; but the world underneath was often cruel. The Austrian ideal was state-centred and shaped by the idea of harmony: Conflict and opposition were tabooed and, in the case of truly benign rule, also unnecessary.

5. Austrian and British Character and the Challenges of the Present

The identities of both modern Austria, as one of the many successor-states of the Danubian Mo-

43 Indirect taxation burdened rather the lower classes than the rich who used to profit substantially from state loans. Cf. Schremmer, Eckart: Steuern und Staatsfinanzen während der Industrialisierung Europas. England, Frankreich, Preussen und das Deutsche Reich 1800-1914. Berlin: Springer 1994, p. 5. Cf. also Kuzmics Helmut/ Axtmann, Roland: Autorität Staat und Nationalcharakter. Der Zivilisationsprozeß in Österreich und England 1700-1900. Opladen: Leske & Budrich 2000, pp. 69-80.

44 Berghoff, Hartmut: Adel und Bürgertum in England 1770-1850. Ergebnisse der neueren Elitenforschung. In: Fehrenbach, Elisabeth (Hg.): Adel und Bürgertum in Deutschland 1770-1848. München: Oldenbourg 1994, pp. 95-127, p. 112.

45 Cf. Axtmann, Roland: State formation discipline and the constitution of society in early modern Europe. In: Australian Journal of Politics and History 42 (1996), pp. 173-191.

46 From 1822-1826 (a five-year period) the following figures exist: 5289 death-sentences in England and Wales against 138 in Austria (with roughly the same size of the population: In 1830 Austria without Hungary and Upper Italy had about 15 000 000 inhabitants England/Wales in 1831 approx. 14 000 000. Sources: Bolognese-Leuchtenmüller, Birgit: Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Berufsstruktur. Gesundheits- und Fürsorgewesen in Österreich 1750-1918. Wien: Verlag f. Geschichte u. Politik 1978, p. 20; Taylor, David: Mastering Economic and Social History. Houndmills et al.: Macmillan 1988, p. 3); 304 actual executions in England and Wales against 58 in Austria. In 1822 59,6% of death-sentences in England/Wales referred to property-related crimes (without violence) whereas the Austrian number for the same category is only 19,2% (69,2% were executed because of having committed murder). I owe these numbers to Dieter Reicher, Univ. of Graz, who has compiled them from two sources: the *Parliamentarian Papers* (England) from 1802-1900 and the *Tafeln zur Statistik der österreichischen Monarchie* (Austria) since 1822. »Austria« means here the largely German speaking »*Erbländer*«, Bohemia, Dalmatia, but not Hungary plus Croatia and Upper Italy. The English reform-period since the 1830s reduced the numbers of death-sentences and executions substantially (the former fell beneath the Austrian numbers but for the latter Austria's lead continued: Between 1850 and 1900 the average rate of executions for each year was 13,7% in England and 4,9% in Austria).

47 Cf. Wellings, Ben: England's Oc-
cluded Nationalism: State and Nation
in English Identity. In: Arena Journal
14 (1999/2000), pp. 99-112; cf. ibid.,
p. 101, where he quotes from Hornby,
Nick: Fever Pitch. London: Gollancz
1992, p. 48.

48 Davies, Norman: The Isles. A His-
tory. London et al.: Macmillan 1999.

49 Cf. Musil 1988, p. 451.

50 In Ascherson's words: »It may be
a long novel for politicians with in-
fernally little spare time but it's no
exaggeration to say that Musil's mas-
terpiece really has been the rediscov-
ery of the decade in Britain. Uka-
nia's own fin de siècle seen through
the lens of the millenium prepara-
tions is prefigured with horrifying ac-
curacy in this comedy about how a
failing multinational state sets up a
Great & Good committee to study
ways of celebrating its own anniver-
sary. The only reason to celebrate the
Chief Minister's [Donald Dewar] re-
signation would be the chance it of-
fered him to get stuck into the *Man
without Qualities* and discover for
himself how witty, how shockingly
relevant it is in 21st-century Britain.«
– Ascherson, Neal: On with the Poo-
ling and Merging. Review of: Tom
Nairn: *After Britain: New Labour and
the Return of Scotland*. In: London
Review of Books 22/4 (2000), p. 8.

51 CF. Hobsbawm, Eric: Nations and
Nationalism since 1780: Programme
Myth Reality. Cambridge: Cambridge
UP 1990.

52 Cf. Scott, John: Who Rules Britain?
Cambridge: Polity Pr. 1991, p.135 for
numbers on the educational back-
ground of the British elite: In 1939
90,5% of the top civil servants had
come from a Public school and 77,4%
from Oxbridge; 1970 the respective
numbers were still 61,7% and 69,3%.

narchy, and England resp. Britain, appear now as seriously threatened. This can be seen as a di-
rect consequence of the loss of power both suffered in the emergent new system of nation-sta-
tes. Austria's suffering began already in 1918, after the collapse of the monarchy, and, thus, at
least 3 or 4 decades earlier than England's or Britain's; as everyone should know from history-
books, Austria's way led to her temporary extinction. It is common to both societies, that their
once secure identity has become obscured and problematic. This is valid for Austria as a »nation
of court councillors« – »*Hofratsnation*« – with her Habsburg-myth and for England with her de-
cent, civilized, fair-minded and dispassionate Gentlemen as well. There are many witnesses for
a profound confusion of British identities; particularly the once solid, middle-class image of Sou-
thern England seems to collapse under the pressure of competing identities, offered by Ame-
rican models and by models of once marginal (Irish, Jamaican, Black and provokingly working-
class) groups which now seem to become more attractive than the old ones.[47] Similarly, also in
Austria, the influence and shaping power of the old upper- and middle-class patterns has dimini-
shed; upper-class speaking habits are quickly disappearing and give way to a strange mixture of
TV-German according to »Prussian« standards with elements of an American slang. Native, Aus-
trian folk and pop-music degenerate and lose ground with incredible speed. It is in this context
that older, once dominating images of national character are being replaced by a highly critical
new revisionism.

For England/Britain, Davies[48] has recently tried to demolish what he regards as ancient, but un-
substantiated Anglo-centric myths. For Austria, this discourse is much older. »*Kakanien*«, the
classical non-nation state has collapsed because of a simple lapse of the tongue, according to
R. Musil's famous dictum[49]; but Britain, more and more, turns into »*Ukania*«. The role of the Ger-
manic Austrians is compared now with that of the Anglo-Saxons and the role of the Czechs, Slo-
venes, Italians is seen similar to that of the Scots, Welsh and Irish[50]. The royal family has also
lost much of its mythical splendour. Davies destroys a whole set of self-interpretations of the
English elites: *Magna Carta*, *Common Law* and *Parliament* lose their charismatic qualities; the
noble *telos* of democratization starting from the 13th century is now contested and the hegemo-
nial, suppressing character of a militant Anglo-Protestantism has been carefully elaborated. Par-
liamentarization appears now more as an English conspiracy than the initial stage of a world-
wide success-story. Welsh, Scottish, English and British identies and loyalties appear as no less
complex than their Austro-Hungarian counterpart. It has become a commonplace truism to
speak of two nations (Disreali) or three (Hobsbawm[51]) when the class-variations of English cha-
racter are reflected. The same applies to Austria: Regional and ethnic variations on the one
hand, class-cleavages on the other denounce all versions of a unified and homogeneous natio-
nal character as hopelessly naive. Does this imply, though, that the shaping of national mentali-
ties, as has been demonstrated here, has lost any explanatory value for understanding the pre-
sent situation of both societies and their new constraints and challenges?

It can easily be shown that such a conclusion would be premature. While identities and loyalties
in the case of both states are certainly complex and shattered, things are different when we re-
gard the question of national character. As long as it is reproduced through the social fabric of
institutions like schools, bureaucracies, the welfare-state, the peculiarities of the respective
economies, »character« (or »characters« in the plural, which is always more appropriate) is in-
deed not unchangeable, but retains still many recognizable elements. In England/Britain, the re-
cruiting mechanism of the »public schools« is still largely intact and provides not only England,
but also Wales and Scotland with a substantial part of their political and business elite.[52] In Aus-
tria, the monarchy's legacy consisted in an outsized, but remarkable homogeneous and state-
loyal bureaucracy, which, far from being reduced, has until this day permanently expanded un-
der the aegis of the welfare-state. Here, the largely agrarian lower classes (with, in 1945, near-
ly a third of the labour force) have vanished, the workers have also lost their former importance
and have been replaced by a service sector whose members have been thoroughly schooled and
mentally shaped by the teaching bureaucracy following models deriving from the capital Vienna.

It is arguable that after 1945, Austria, in terms of the officials' code, became more Austrian than
ever before. Today, of course, she is facing an extremely difficult period of transition. Her still do-
minating corporatist, harmonious, consensus-oriented culture has been shattered thoroughly
and has to give way to something new. The model of a benign authority, exemplified through a

large state and para-state sector of highly protected and regulated labour-relations, can be scarcely defended in a period, in which the state has nothing left to distribute and in which the state's capacity to be benign and benevolent has diminished. Scarcity generates conflict, and among the less privileged sharpens awareness of the privileges enjoyed by more protected groups. Those threatened with losing jobs or businesses do not accept that others should suffer no risk at all. Globalisation under American aegis and European unification under monetarist pressures leave no space for manœuvre in the old Austrian way. Stiffer competition on the market-place also means a rougher political struggle. In these scenarios there is a preference for personalities who do not sit and wait apathetically for a miracle from above, but are able to articulate and organize their interests efficiently without demonizing political opponents or denying them a shared understanding of democratic values. Here, Austria can certainly still learn from Britain. Similarly, those experiencing the neo-liberal economic revolution which is now hitting Austria's highly protected population see Britain, with her age-old culture of stock-markets, as better prepared. In Austria, even the doctor, the chimney-sweeper and the chemist are still functionaries of the state. It is a true »clash of civilizations«, which is occurring here, and the old party-state from 1918 and 1945 with its patrimonial-bureaucratic mentalities, the epitome of Austrianness, is staring into the eye of the cyclone, and, for the first time since its rise, is facing its possible destruction.

In old Puritan-utilitarian Britain, the market-revolution of the 80's met less fundamental opposition from the »Nanny-state« and the combat-organisations of the working-classes than had been expected. Although the gentleman-politicians and the sporting amateurs of the 19th century have, for a long time, given way to a commercialized professionalism, the Anglo-British culture of parliamentarism still provides an exemplar for disagreeing in a civilized way and for correcting policy through consulting with a broad range of public opinion. The new parliaments in Wales and Scotland will certainly not deviate from this path, since those virtues of English character, which consist in the ability of compromising, in the readiness to stick to self-made rules and in realism in dealing with obstacles of all kind, result from models of behaviour that have, for a long time, left behind the narrow circle of a One-Class-Society and have found their way to a broad public. It is, however, unclear to this day, if and how England – perhaps even without Britain – can cope with her age-old claim of superiority, which has to be »effortless« as well, when her near relatives in the USA are shamelessly dominant and the European neighbours are incredibly annoying. Neither noble reserve nor indirect rule seem to help here; maybe it is the sobriety of the Puritans which allows them to adapt to a thoroughly unpleasant situation; perhaps this is also the only advice proud Albion may accept from an Austria smashed to pieces: How to cope with the loss of power without losing one's »*joie de vivre*« more than necessary.

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