



Time: An Essay

Norbert Elias

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The nature of time, and how various societies describe and measure its passage, has long been one of the most fascinating areas of social history and philosophy. In this wide-ranging work, now available in paperback, Norbert Elias argues that what we call 'time' is neither an innate feature of the human mind, nor an immanent characteristic of non-human Nature. Rather, it is an achievement of human synthesis which can be understood only in connection with certain processes of social development. The author aims to show how attitudes to time have differed from early times to modern, by taking examples from a wide range of societies at every level of development and relating time to the move from 'involvement' to 'detachment'. The laborious construction of the European calendar over thousands of years serves as a model of the developmental approach to sociology which Norbert Elias always advocated. Norbert Elias is also the author of "The Civilizing Process".

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