

people's market preferences, but it is not *against* preferences but *in conjunction with* preferences that a reinjection of the concept is warranted.

Much of what is wrong with the book is pointed up in a chapter entitled "Utilitarianism without Utility." Even making allowance for the author's tongue being firmly in cheek, this deliberate courting of paradox is distracting. "Utilitarianism without utility" turns out to be utilitarianism with provision for a social minimum, yet language screens the reader from this insight—*needlessly*, one is tempted to conclude.

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Ernest GELLNER. *Culture, Identity, and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. 189 pages. \$12.95 paper.

The essays, book reviews, and philosophical fragments that comprise this book grapple with the meaning of the sweeping social changes of the nineteenth century—industrialism, nationalism, secularism—and the merits of the social sciences as attempts to make sense of them. Most of the selections ooze erudition and are leavened with wry wit and pithy prose, although most also assume substantial sophistication in philosophy, theory, and language (e.g., several passages in French and German were left untranslated).

Gellner, professor of social anthropology at the University of Cambridge, is at home in all of the social sciences and at all levels of analysis from the ethnographic to the meta-theoretic. One essay argues that different social structures and divisions of labor lead to different uses of culture, which may or may not lead to cohesion through nationalism. He builds on a fascinating argument by Renan: nationalism requires collective amnesia, a *forgetting* of unique pasts rather than a remembering of one shared past. This is followed by a meandering meditation on Malinowski at his centenary—part history of theory, part theory of history. Here Gellner shows how Malinowski reversed our understanding of the authority of history over everyday life ("We do not perform the acts we perform because we believe that certain things happened: we believe that certain things happened because we do what we do." He also suggests an irony: despite the conservative cast of American functionalism, the original functionalist vision insisted that stability was not natural, but an achievement that had to be explained.

More samples: In a review of a biography of Hannah Arendt, Gellner offers a rich interpretation of her work in which he makes the case that Germany's atrocities in war had to do with its Romantic reaction to the Enlightenment, and that Arendt's romantic relationship with the Romantic Heidegger kept her from seeing how Nazism was *continuous* with some species of European thought. Next he offers 14 theses on the social roots of egalitarianism, which add up to a thought-provoking critique of idealist models of its spread. Gellner's sense of the profound breadth and depth of that spread will seem overly sanguine to the Left and genuinely worrisome to the Right. Another essay reflects upon one of the author's earlier books (*Thought and Change*) in which he advanced the notion that capitalist development tends to yield democracy. Two decades later, Gellner wonders whether the liberal vision—a minimalist state and "legitimation by affluence"—has not left a moral vacuum which ideological regimes ("ideocracies") too often fill. This sheds light on New Right Reaganism and on the end of the End of Ideology. Next, a review essay on a book on Czech society after the crushing of the Prague Spring of 1968 suggests that socialist industrialism, too, can buy off discontent with consumerism, albeit at the cost of liberty. In another chapter Khomeini's teachings are deconstructed to reveal how a new hybrid Islamic ideology (rather than the old) helped forge reaction against flaunted oil wealth. It seems that secularization need not accompany modernization under such circumstances.

In the closing pieces Gellner first reexamines the disenchantment thesis—that we are rightly disencharnted with the "iron cage" of instrumental rationality with which we've purchased power and affluence. He posits instead a "rubber cage" of facile thought and leisure in which we are not so disencharnted but perhaps ought to be. Lastly, a "Tractatus Sociologico-Philosophicus" is offered in which are sketched two ideal-typical methods for assessing the relative legitimacy of moral visions and social orders. Roughly, these are positivism and Hegelianism. Gellner makes a complex (at times convoluted) case for positivism, though on Hegelian grounds.

On the whole the author handily traverses the shifting sands on which state and society, identity and culture now lie. While these heavily theoretical and philosophical pieces are not for everyone, Gellner almost always comes up with intriguing ideas. Nine of the 11 selections have been previously published (three more than once), but most U.S. scholars will find them new. He takes a few almost gratuitous slaps at Wittgenstein (with whose work one can justify any old idea), the Left (whose "cheap moral indignation" over any old injustice "drives out the good"), and critics of positivism (who are only a tad more critical than he is). On balance, however, he left this reviewer refreshed by his even-handed reflexiveness. Finally, although the title of the book loosely captures its themes, Durkheim's maxim seems inverted: the whole here is a bit *less* than the sum of its parts. Some may find these essays little more than the intellectual fingernail clippings of a great thinker, but others will delight in their diversity.

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