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The CZECH SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW is a scholarly review open to the discussion of all professional and societal problems, sociological theory and methodology, and the dissemination of the results and interpretation of sociological research. Its attention is directed towards the development of the field and its teaching, while simultaneously striving to contribute to the solution of the practical problems of Czech social and economic politics.

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Thematic Issue

The Relevance of Ernest Gellner's Thought Today

Guest Editors

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Central European University, Budapest, Warsaw,
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Fall 2001

Editorial – The Ernest Gellner Seminar in Prague

We know Ernest Gellner as a cosmopolitan with a deeply ingrained English intellectual culture. There are, however, motifs in his thinking which could not be understood without his experience in Prague and life in the Czech Lands. Ernest Gellner lived in Prague during three periods of his life. Gellner's family lived in Prague until he was 13, when his parents emigrated to England. The second very short period was during the year 1945, when he came to Prague in the uniform of the Czechoslovak units in Great Britain, before returning to England that same year. The third, very intensive period of his stay in the city was linked with the establishment of the Prague College of the Central European University 1991. Gellner remained in contact with Prague, however, even in the years between 1945 and 1989, though initially only on a small scale. This relationship gradually intensified, especially after his visit to Prague in 1967 and after the Prague Spring.

During his engagement at Prague CEU he was a member and later on the head of the Department of Sociology, and he established the well-known Centre for the Study of Nationalism.

Ernest Gellner died unexpectedly on November 5, 1995 after having returned to Prague from a Senate meeting of CEU in Budapest. His death was a heavy loss for the whole university, and especially for the Prague CEU College. Most of us – who worked closely with him – were aware that the Centre for the Study of Nationalism, which Gellner had founded, would after his premature death be transferred to Budapest, the main seat of CEU. This indeed happened, and this decision put an end to the four-year existence of the Prague College of the Central European University.

Soon after Ernest Gellner's death, a group of his Prague friends and colleagues decided to preserve in Prague at least some of the activities that had been linked with this outstanding personality. We therefore reached the conclusion that we would continue to organise the Gellner seminars once a month. These seminars always combined an intellectual programme with a friendly gathering of people who were interested in social anthropology, sociology, philosophy and historiography, and in issues that we called 'Gellnerian'. For this purpose the section of social anthropology within the Masaryk Czech Sociological Association was founded, and after obtaining certain financial support we started, at the beginning of 1998, the regular monthly seminars. In these seminars we try to preserve the tradition of his own seminars, which he had been organising since 1993 at the Prague CEU College.

Thus, since May 1998 a permanent Ernest Gellner Seminar has been meeting monthly (with the exception of July and August) in Prague. Not a single month has yet been left out; once the organisers even managed to hold two seminars within one month. The aim of the seminar is twofold: (1) to enhance Gellner's legacy in the city where he grew up during the 1920s and 1930s and where he worked during the last years of his life, and (2) to help anchor social anthropology within Prague academic circles. The model for the Prague Gellner seminar is derived from the seminar organised back in the 1930s at the London School of Economics by Bronislaw Malinowski, the founder of social anthropology. Gellner, when he taught in the first half of the 1990s at the Prague campus of the Central European University, brought the Malinowskian seminar model with him.

The Gellner Seminar sessions since 1998 have been made possible owing to the financial and logistical support of the Senate of the Czech Republic and the Central European University's Prague office. The seminar sessions were originally held in the building of the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague and later in the Masaryk room of the Prague seat of New York University.

Gellnerian themes such as the philosophy of history, power, ethnicity, nation, nationalities, liberalism, democracy, civil society, state, segmentary theory, Islam, nomadism, modernity, rationalism, positivism, relativism and culture are examined afresh by the best available specialists, both Czech and foreign, in a critical but friendly fashion in which discussion is made easier by modest amounts of red wine (this custom also was first introduced by Gellner when he used to organise scholarly meetings at his Centre for the Study of Nationalism at CEU in Prague). The seminar discussions are extremely lively and are led in an informal way. They usually last for more than two hours, which not only provides ample time for an exchange of opinions, but is also evidence of their popularity and professional level. The regular members receive abstracts or full texts by mail, recently also by e-mail.

Both Gellner and social anthropology are not well known among Czech scholars and the public, and even now, in 2001, students at Charles University are still unable to enrol in the study of social anthropology (since autumn 2001 it has been possible at Pardubice University, 100 kilometres east of Prague) as it has yet to be accredited as a regular university subject. The discipline exists only informally, being taught in isolated courses in various departments of the university. Or, it is somewhat concealed behind headings such as 'ethnology', 'general anthropology' or 'cultural and social anthropology' which are taught at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University and the Faculties of Humanities at both Charles University and the University of Western Bohemia at Plzeň. Gellner and social anthropology certainly appeal to Prague and other Czech academics and students. These seminar sessions have been well attended not only by academics in the field of anthropology, sociology and political science, but also by many students from the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University. Since the beginning the Gellner Seminars have been convened by the sociologist Jiří Musil and the social anthropologist Petr Skalník, both long-time friends of Ernest A. Gellner. The Gellner Seminar is the pivotal activity of the Section of Social Anthropology of the Masaryk Czech Sociological Society.

Thus far 36 seminars have taken place:

1. Zdeněk Uherek (Prague): Gellner's Anthropology and Europe;
2. Petr Skalník (Prague): Gellner's Texts on the Uniqueness of Truth and on Rationalistic Fundamentalism;
3. Jiří Musil (Prague and Budapest): Gellner's Book *Conditions of Liberty. Civil Society and Its Rivals*;
4. Zdeněk Suda (Pittsburgh): The Czech Nation as a Historical Curiosity;
5. Martin Hampl and Petr Dostál (both Prague): The Globalisation or Polarisation of the World;
6. Miloš Havelka (Prague): Questions of Czech Mentality;
7. John Hall (Montreal): Nationalism and Civil Society;

8. Jindřich Toman (Ann Arbor): The Republic of Scholars: Aspects of Intercultural Integration in Inter-war Europe;
9. Maruška Svašek (Amsterdam and Belfast): Nationalism versus Regionalism: Developments in the Czech-German Border Region;
10. Milan Stanek (Basel and Berlin): Individualising the Conception of Field Research in the Social Sciences: Experience from the Czech Field Study (An Anatomy of Dissatisfaction);
11. Jiří Musil (Prague and Budapest) and Petr Skalník (Prague): Gellner's Last Book Language and Solitude: Wittgenstein, Malinowski and the Habsburg Dilemma;
12. Peter Salner (Bratislava): Ethnic Conflicts in the Ethnically Unified City Environment (Bratislava 1938-1998);
13. Janusz Mucha (Toruń): Cultural Domination and the Reaction to It;
14. Takeaki Hori (Nippon Foundation,Tokio): Anthropology in Japan. Japanese Concepts of Nation, State and Race;
15. Laurent Bazac-Billaud (Prague): Anthropology of Czech Townships;
16. Zdeněk Uherek (Prague): Holý's Concept of the Great Czech Nation;
17. Jiří Musil (Prague): Gellner's Interpretation of the History of European Rationalism;
18. Luboš Kropáček (Prague): Islamica Gellneriana: Gellner's Reflections on Islam and Muslim Society;
19. Ilya Utekhin (St. Petersburg): Dwelling Place Paranoids: On Some Cultural Determinants of a Psychopathologic Phenomenon;
20. Cynthia Paces (USA): The National Mother on Old Town Square: Gender, Nation, and Identity;
21. Johannes W. Raum (Munich): On the Relevance of Max Weber for Social Anthropology;
22. Stanislav Kužel (Plzeň): How to Interpret Geertz? (Gellner, Geertz and Bourdieu – Three Different Quoting Series);
23. Ivo T. Budil (Plzeň): William Robertson Smith: From Critical Theology to Social Anthropology;
24. Jiří Šubrt (Prague): The Problem of Time in the Social Sciences;
25. Chris Hann (Halle): Gellner's Theory of Culture – A Critical View;
26. Jitka Malečková (Prague): A Woman and a Nation on the Edge of Europe;
27. Peter Skalník (Prague): Will Europe Work? Democracy in the Conditions of Globalisation;
28. Jiří Musil (Prague-Budapest): Prague in the Twentieth Century: The City of Symbolic Regimes and Socio-cultural Dualities;
29. František Vrhel (Prague): Returns of Claude Lévi-Strauss;
30. Josef Kandert (Prague): Tradition and Traditional Cultures;
31. Miloš Havelka (Prague): Ernst Cassirer – Return of the Forgotten Thinker;
32. Martin Ottenheimer (Kansas): Current Controversy in Kinship;

33. Alfred Rieber (Budapest): Stalin – Man of the Borderland;

34. Martin Kanovský (Bratislava): Identity and Ethnicity: The Splendour and Poverty of Social Constructivism;

35. Jiří Musil (Prague): Ernest Gellner and Current Discussions on Social Theory;

36. Hana Novotná (Hradec Králové): Culture as a Social Science Problem.

A recent offer to publish a selection of papers from past seminar sessions in English in a special issue of the *Czech Sociological Review* will further disseminate knowledge about this stimulating academic enterprise. Revised papers by Hann, Musil, Ottenheimer, Periwal, Salner, Skalník, Suda, Šubrt and Uherek are published in this refereed journal. We also intend to continue this impressive series of Gellner seminars in the future, and expect presentations by both local and foreign professionals, especially from among graduate students. We hope that the main aim of the Gellner Seminar will continue to spur the Prague intellectual community towards critical thinking in the genuine Gellnerian tradition.

Jiří Musil, Petr Skalník

Gellner's Philosophy of History – Interpretations and Problems

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Abstract: The major part of Ernest Gellner's work ranks among the few contemporary attempts at a global theory of the development of mankind, or, in his words, 'the structure of human history'. Gellner's theory is based on two main assumptions: first, the succession of three radically and generically different types of societies: 1) hunter-gatherer society; 2) agrarian society; 3) industrial society; and second, the assumption that in all these societies it is necessary to distinguish three categories of human activity: 1) the economy; 2) power; 3) knowledge. In his last books he added a fourth component: culture and organisation. The possible variations of mutual relationships between the economy, power, and knowledge in each of the developmental phases is what forms the first part of Gellner's thoughts on the philosophy of history. The second, and perhaps more important part consists of his thoughts on the forms and causes behind the transition from agrarian to industrial society. The emergence of industrial society cannot be easily explained. Therefore Gellner prefers to speak only of the circumstances surrounding this development. They can be summarised in the following way: a restrained state, not interfering too much in the life of the people; Protestantism and its ethic and life style; a developing, if modest and not too robust technology. The mixture of these three circumstances created a situation out of which an industrial, contractual, pluralist, and open society emerged in Europe. In this article, the author challenges the interpretation of Gellner's theory as being a kind of non-Marxist historical materialism, and describes it rather as structural functionalism applied to history. At the same time, the author points to several problems that can be found in Gellner's sociological theory of history, and devotes the latter part of the paper to outlining four specific problem areas.
Czech Sociological Review, 2001, Vol. 9 (No. 2: 153-172)

In contemporary sociology and anthropology a distinction is made between two types of theories concerning the development of mankind: global theories and specific theories. Global theories attempt to explain change on an abstract level. They identify the factors of change, describe how changes come about, and predict their probable consequences. Specific theories of development deal with the changes that certain elements of mankind go through, or may deal with certain periods, and, if the theories aim beyond a mere description, they also apply one of the global concepts to their interpretation of specific social phenomena. For understandable reasons, specific theories are greater in number, and there are considerably fewer global concepts of the development of society.

The major part of Ernest Gellner's works rank among the few contemporary attempts at a global theory of the development of mankind. Several years ago a festschrift[1]

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[1]) This collection of papers under the title *The Social Philosophy of Ernest Gellner*, the editors of which are John A. Hall and Ian Jarvie (1996), contains 33 papers, including an especially interesting paper by Ernest Gellner himself, entitled 'A Response to Critics'. In 7 sections the book deals with the intellectual background of Ernest Gellner, nationalism and nations, the models of devel-

was published in honour of what would have been his seventieth birthday, with written contributions from over thirty of his students and commentators, and this collection of papers clearly points to the main areas of Gellner's interests. The first area of interest was the philosophy of history, and an examination of the laws that govern the development of human society and the emergence of industrial society in particular. The second important area for Gellner included issues relating to the nation and nationalism, relativism and universalism in philosophy and in daily life, the emergence and the role of science, and Islam. In addition, he dealt with an entire series of other subjects such as, for example, segmentary societies, the conditions surrounding the emergence and development of a civil society, postmodernism, Freudism, and linguistics. His range of interests was exceptionally broad, but the subjects they revolved around tended in different variations to return to the one circle of interests that I believe formed his central subject: the need to understand what he referred to as 'the structure of human history'.

The following text is devoted mainly to this subject, but in its scope it will be able to touch upon just some of its selected areas. The text is based on knowledge of the complete works of Ernest Gellner, but especially on an interpretation and paraphrasing of his pivotal work *Plough, Sword and Book*,[2] which in my opinion provides the best synthesis of his thoughts on human history. The paper also draws on other of his works, namely: *Thought and Change*;[3] *Reason and Culture*;[4] *Cause and Meaning in the Social Sciences*;[5] *State and Society in Soviet Thought*;[6] and, published posthumously, the books *Nationalism*[7] and *Language and Solitude. Wittgenstein, Malinowski and the Habsburg Dilemma*.[8]

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opment of society, Islam, science and the disenchantment of the world, relativism and universals, and the philosophy of history. It also contains the most complete bibliography of Gellner's works.

[2]) The first edition of the book was published in London in 1988. In this article I am citing from the 1991 edition [see Gellner 1991].

[3]) Gellner's book *Thought and Change* was published in 1964, and it is characteristic of him that he dedicated it to Bertrand Russel! It should be pointed out that the Introduction to Gellner's first book *Words and Things* [1959] was written by Russell, who expressed full agreement with Gellner's criticism of the at that time very powerful Oxford linguistic philosophy.

[4]) The book *Reason and Culture* was published in Oxford in 1992 and was translated also into Czech by the Centre for the Study of Democracy and Culture in Brno and published as *Rozum a kultura* in 1999.

[5]) *Cause and Meaning in the Social Sciences*, published in 1973 by I. C. Jarvie and Joseph Agassi, is a collection of epistemological and methodological studies focusing primarily on social anthropology. It includes an important paper on the mutual relationship between sociology and social anthropology.

[6]) Ernest Gellner inherited his great interest in Russia and the Soviet Union from his father. This led to his frequent visits to the Soviet Union. But he also maintained a deep intellectual interest in the work of Soviet ethnographers and anthropologists and in the relationship between Marxism as an official ideology and Marxism as an analytic tool. In a number of papers published in the book *State and Society in Soviet Thought*, published in 1988, Gellner deals with the Marxist theory of society.

[7]) The first posthumously published book of E. Gellner, which his son David Gellner – also a social anthropologist – prepared for publication, was *Nationalism* in 1997. In this publication Gellner expresses concisely and briefly his opinions on the issues of the nation and nationalism in the context of society-wide development. In it, he reacted to the development of Europe and the world after 1989.

The conclusion of the paper is then devoted to a short critical evaluation of Gellner's philosophy of history.

Basic conceptual starting points

In Gellner's view, one of the great paradoxes of our age is the fact that, although it is an age in which deep social and intellectual changes are occurring and in which everything is in motion, thought in this age has remained primarily unhistorical or anti-historical [Gellner 1991: 12]. Historicism has "become a term of abuse" [ibid.].

One reason for this is found in what is referred to as the 'genetic fallacy'. This fallacy is essentially the assumption that the origin, rise and validity of any thought are realities that are independent of one another. In the introductory chapter of *Plough, Sword and Book*, Gellner responds to this in the following way: "Our opinion here is that we look at (...) roots in order to understand our options, not so as to prejudge our choices." [ibid.: 12]

In the introductory chapter of *Plough, Sword and Book*, entitled 'The Need for Philosophic History', Gellner explains the aim behind his effort to understand 'the structure of human history'. In the effort to summarise the results of his life-long reflections on the structure and development of human society, Gellner attributed the philosophy of history with playing a key role. "It is to spell out, in the sharpest and perhaps exaggerated outline, a vision of human history which has in any case been assuming shape of late, but which has not yet been properly codified. The attempt to bring it to the surface is not made because the author has any illusions about knowing this vision to be true: he does not. Definite and final truth is not granted to theories in general. (...) The vision is formulated in the hope that its clear and forceful statement will make possible its critical examination." [ibid.: 12-13]

His opinions on scientific method, which resembled in their rationalism the views held by Karl Popper, complied with his rejection of attempts at an inductive, descriptive approach to the construction of the philosophy of human history. Instead, in his own words: "...one chooses the crucial and elementary factors operative in human history, selected to the best of one's judgement, and then works out their joint implications. If the resulting picture fits the available record and highlights the relevant questions, well and good. If not, further tinkering with the premises is evidently required. The method is in principle very simple; its implementation is not." [ibid.: 13]

In what way does this approach differ from models in any other scientific field? According to Gellner, in this case there exists something that is specific to the historical perspective: sequence, or succession. This approach adds a fundamental element to the general concept of scientific models: the emphasis on the knowledge of facts recorded in history, and not merely on a logical modelling of statically interpreted relationships between elements in some system. The rise of agriculture, political centralisation, the division of labour, literacy, science, intellectual liberalisation, all of this happened in a certain historical succession, and in Gellner's view this happens because some phenomena in the history of mankind necessarily require the existence of other phenomena that emerge

[8]) *Language and Solitude. Wittgenstein, Malinowski and the Habsburg Dilemma* is the second book that was published after the death of E. Gellner. It came out in 1998 and was meticulously prepared for publication by David Gellner.

prior to them and which they are unable to precede. Gellner also asserts – and this I believe is an important reminder of a well-known but often overlooked fact – that certain changes are irreversible: the rise of agriculture, the centralisation of society, the spread of literacy, and science; under certain circumstances these may vanish from areas in which they have once existed, but on the whole it is possible to assume that a certain kind of general cumulativeness exists, i.e. that certain civilisational and cultural realities form a sort of 'layer' of skills, rules, knowledge, and technology, which is never lost, but instead accumulates into continually more complex and also more effective cultural patterns.

That this principle of cumulativeness applies in human history, or in other words, that one kind of change is possible only on the basis of another, prior change, is something that evokes a parallel with evolutionary biology. In history, movement is of course transmitted by culture, that is, through acquired signs, and these are not transmitted genetically. In Gellner's view, it is possible to loosely define culture as a system of concepts or ideas which drives human thought and behaviour. Human history in the real sense of the word was born in a situation in which the genetic equipment of man became permissive enough to allow for the emergence of heterogeneous forms of social behaviour. In other words – and this is my own interpretation – as the genetic equipment of man became so indeterminate, mechanisms for regulating human behaviour other than just biological ones had to arise – and culture, language and concepts emerged. According to Gellner, this was absolutely necessary, and even if the social heterogeneity of mankind was and is tremendous, at the beginning of human history, within individual communities an internal socio-cultural order had to emerge, as small human communities could not have survived if they had only internally heterogeneous concepts and language, and heterogeneous rules of relationships between its members.

Gellner was however fully aware that the progression of human society is not dependent only on culture, but rather on much more simple and hard material realities; he literally said that it depends on physical power, on the economy, and on the threat of hunger. The relationship between the cognitive, ideological and material causes of historical changes is what divides historical idealists from materialists. It is important not to underestimate these 'hard' realities. The very title of the work in which he most completely summarised his opinion on human history was intended to express his historical pluralism: the plow represents agriculture, the sword represents power, and the book, knowledge. Human history in his interpretation can be understood as a re-grouping of relationships between these three basic structural elements of all societies. It should be added that these relationships were always specific within the individual phases of human history – they changed.

It is interesting to note that Gellner is referred to with relative frequency as an original historical materialist, or even a Marxist, and some authors have called him an historical idealist. But he was always difficult to classify. This was also true with respect to his political position. In 'A Response to Critics',[9] included in the above-mentioned festschrift, he says: "I am exceedingly proud of a remark once made about me behind my

[9]) The last section of the collection, entitled *The Social Philosophy of Ernest Gellner*, published in 1996 by former students of E. Gellner, John Hall and Ian Jarvie, is the chapter titled 'A Response to Critics'. In it, Gellner responds to all the main critical objections to his opinions. The structure of this festschrift manages to entirely escape the usually celebratory format of Central European collections of this kind.

back by David Glass: 'When the Revolution comes, both sides will shoot *him*.'" [Hall and Jarvie 1996: 673]

But here he explains his position in his own words: "My relationship to Marxism has at all times been critical: it has only influenced me so to speak by reaction. I am a mild socialist in the sense that I consider the generalized market to be a bad model (prescriptively and descriptively), though at the same time I hold the absence of central control over production and trade to be a precondition of liberty; in other words, I believe in a mixed economy. In an advanced and partly atomized society, I hold an effective welfare state to be both a moral imperative, and a precondition of a stable order. Passionate and messianic socialism, which sees the pervasive abolition of private control over resources as the big divide between good and evil, and hence as permitting any means in overcoming its inherently evil opponents, is, demonstrably, the biggest enemy of freedom in industrial society." [ibid.: 671] In the conclusion of this paper we will return to the subject of his relationship to historical materialism and Marxism.

That he was so frequently considered a materialist in his interpretation of history stems among other things from his division of history into three stages: Gellner distinguished between three radically and generically different societies: 1. hunter-gatherer society; 2. agrarian society; 3. industrial society. He spoke of these as 'fundamentally different types'. Gellner vehemently refuted the assertion that this is a matter of historical or economic determinism. The economic or production base does in his opinion determine our problems, but – and this is important – it does not determine our solutions. Empirical data demonstrate that all three types of societies have extremely heterogeneous, distinct forms.

Gellner combined the division of the development of society into three developmental stages with a division of human activity into three basic categories, which he considered to be: 1. the economy; 2. power; 3. knowledge. One of the books that was published after his death shows that he later added a further distinction: culture and organisation.[10] This was important in his account of the rise of nationalism and the nation. The possible variations of mutual relationships between the economy, power and knowledge in each of the developmental stages forms the first part of Gellner's thoughts on the philosophy of history. The second, and perhaps more important part consists of his thoughts on the forms of the causes behind the transition from one developmental stage to the next. It may be said without a doubt that he was most attracted, we could say even fascinated, by the question of the birth of the third stage, i.e. what in the beginning he referred to simply as industrial society, and later as scientific-industrial society.

The concept of the structure of human history

I will now attempt to summarise the content of Gellner's concept of the structure of human history. The book *Nationalism*, published posthumously, is an aid in this effort, as it contains the chapters 'A Short History of Mankind' and 'The Industrial and Industrialis-

[10]) Gellner considered culture and organisation to be the two general components in all human societies. In his opinion these are the 'raw materials' of all social life. By the term social organisation he means the internal differentiation of society and actually any social group. The significance he ascribed to these terms stems from the fact that he considered nationalism to be a political principle, which assumes that the similarity of culture is the basic social bond, the basic element of social organisation [see Gellner 1997: 3 and 5-13].

ing World', in which Gellner presents his opinion in its most concise form [Gellner 1997: 14-24 and 25-30].

Since Gellner was drawn most to the questions surrounding the emergence of industrial society, all his work pays some attention to what preceded this form of society, and then to industrial society itself. What then are the features of an agrarian society, or what he referred to as 'ruritania' or 'agraria'?

Thanks to developments in the area of the food production and storage, in comparison with hunter-gatherer societies agraria is characterised by a rapid growth in population. The growth in the number of inhabitants stimulated an increase in the division of labour and led to greater complexity in the social organisation. It saw the rise of the Red and the Black, i.e. the specialists in power and government, and the masters of ritual and doctrine, connected with the transcendental, and the emergence of political centralisation, or in other words, the state and a hierarchical organisation of society. Complexity and hierarchy developed in tandem. In Gellner's view, these societies were also characterised by technological stability or slow technical progress. In these circumstances the only possible way to increase the production of food was through an increase in the area of cultivated land or a growth in the number of people. This kind of situation had its limits as far as production is concerned, but not as far as the growth in the number of inhabitants is concerned. For this reason Gellner referred to these societies as Malthusian – even inherently Malthusian, that is, under the continual threat of hunger. In these societies famines did occur with unavoidable frequency, though hunger did not strike people randomly but rather selectively, i.e. according to social position. In these Malthusian conditions the fate of the individual was determined by social position, category, and privilege. In agraria, power determines wealth, and not wealth power. But the large role power occupies in agraria requires social cohesion and stability, and for this reason, knowledge in such societies is primarily aimed at the maintenance of order and stability.

The representative *par excellence* of the social theory of agrarian society is Plato. Gellner says of him in *Plough, Sword and Book*: "Plato codified and tried to absolutize an arrangement which is in fact the commonest, most pervasive way of running an agro-literate society. It is a blueprint of a society endowed with agriculture, arts and crafts, with a surplus which needs to be guarded, with writing, and with a fairly stable, or in any case not visibly expanding, technological base." [Gellner 1991: 85]

Elsewhere in the same book Gellner makes a general summary of the differences between the concept of knowledge and what he called truth in agricultural and scientific-industrial societies. This is one example of the original thought of E. Gellner and for this reason it is worth quoting him directly: "Truth is for it the fulfilment of an ideal, which in turn is moulded by complex and plural concerns. This is wholly different from truth as satisfaction of the simple, isolated requirement, such as the collating and predicting of facts. The truth of agro-literate society is essentially different from the truth of scientific-industrial society." [Ibid.: 276] The primary functions of culture in agrarian societies is to strengthen stability, the agrarian society "...values stability, and generally conceives the world and its own social order as basically stable. Some agrarian social forms at least seem to be deliberately organized so as to avoid the dangers of possibly disruptive innovations." [Ibid.: 17] According to Gellner the aim of intellectual activities in agrarian societies was therefore to stabilise and cement the societies, establish loyalty and secure their values. In industrial, modernised societies, knowledge has a different function. It

becomes above all an instrument for dealing with specific issues and a means for discovering what is as yet unknown. Knowledge and science cease to be the stabilisers of society. Durkheimian generic rationality, aimed at maintaining general rules, changes into what may be referred to as Weberian rationality, that is, partial and instrumental rationality, where the means essential for achieving clearly set aims are what is sought above all.

Before we begin to examine how European society extricated itself from the agrarian model it is first necessary to make a sketch of Gellner's picture of industrial society. This picture is based on a view he expressed in *Nationalism*.[11] Again we must limit ourselves to only the main features and then turn to his most difficult question: how and why did it happen.

1. Industrial society differs from agrarian above all in that it is founded on *growth* of the economy and science and not on a stable economy or technology. The growth of the economy is faster than the growth of the population – in other words, this society is no longer Malthusian. At the same time the production of food in these societies is the concern of a continuously smaller number of people.
2. Economic growth is connected with increasing social mobility. Unlike development thus far, in the course of which societies became more unequal, these societies were more complex, and the formation of industrial society initiated a trend towards increasingly egalitarian conditions. In this connection Gellner cites de Tocqueville with approval – he as is known considered the trend towards greater equality as one of the great progresses in Europe since the end of the Middle Ages [Gellner 1997: 26].
3. Also, Gellner repeatedly emphasises that we are ever more equal because we have become more mobile, and not the other way around.
4. Rapidly changing technology means that the structure of professions also changes quickly. Industrial society can therefore not be linked to a system of castes or estates.
5. The social structure of these societies must at least to a certain degree be meritocratic.
6. Innovation and meritocracy necessarily lead to the substitution of a rigidly stratified society with a formally egalitarian society. Modern societies are not obviously egalitarian in the sense that large differences in terms of power or wealth are unable to exist in them. They are egalitarian in the sense that the differences between particular strata are ordered in the form of a certain continuity, so that no formal line of division, expressed by legal norms, ritual or custom, actually exists. The differences in these societies are graded and continual [ibid.: 28].
7. The mobility and anonymity of modern societies is their most marked feature.
8. The semantic character of work dominates, and physical labour is increasingly substituted with intellectual work, and this supposes a relatively long period of preparation, i.e. learning.
9. In industrial societies, the significance of non-contextual and universal culture increases.
10. A part of the metamorphosis which transformed agrarian society into an industrial one is not just the new economy, social structure, and a change in the employment of

[11]) The description of the features of industrial societies is taken from Chapter 4 of *Nationalism* [Gellner 1997: 25-30].

power, but rather also the nature of social cohesion. The way of thinking of course also changes, and the role of knowledge increases very quickly.

Simple agricultural societies are characterised by a higher level of social cohesion. The world people live, think, and act in is the same world. The cognitive and moral orders mutually reinforce and maintain each other. Within the scope of his thoughts on these relationships Gellner formulated what he said to be an important though somewhat rough law on the intellectual history of humanity. Logical and social coherence are in a contradictory relationship: the more you have of one, the less you have of the other. And this is actually another way of expressing Weber's theory of the process of rationalisation as an essential component of industrial capitalist societies.

The rationalisation of the world leads to what Max Weber referred to as the 'elimination of magic from the world' – and Gellner accepted this view fully. A rational, scientific-industrial world is cold, less cosy, impersonal, and disconnected – estranged and anomic. Gellner agrees with Weber and adds his own words on the effects of 'Reason'. In the *Legitimation of Belief* he writes: "Reason does not produce another, and a rival, total and closed picture, as gratifying for man as the old theological ones (or more so) only upside down. It produces none at all. On the contrary, it merely erodes the old one." [Gellner 1974: 194] The openness of this society and its fate are givens in that logical consistence and openness are acquired at the price of social and moral inconsistence. We will see, however, that towards the end of his life, in my opinion, Gellner somewhat altered his view on this matter.

Gellner moreover believed that this type of rationalistic and open society in history is something exceptional and with no historical guarantees. This modern society – and for Gellner that means at the same time the open, contractual and liberal society – is ephemeral and can in his view vanish; there is nothing certain about it.

The deep awareness of the uncertainty and the precariousness of the open, and in the true sense of the word, liberal society – and in this Gellner agrees with Max Weber – must have also had deep philosophical consequences. This point can be found in Gellner's book *Reason and Culture*, published in 1992, where in the chapter entitled 'Ailments of Reason', Gellner contemplates the consequences of this information, that the society he has such an affinity for and with which he himself agrees is altogether an uncertain, non-self-evident historical phenomenon.[12] In the above-mentioned chapter he reflects on those philosophers who are convinced that in human history, as in nature, in the end reason must prevail. This is the optimistic idea of the increasing presence of rationality in nature and in human history. It can take the form of Hegelian growth of rationality, but also the form of thought adopted by pragmatics. Gellner refers summarily to both of these categories of thinkers as 'Providentialists', as those who believe in providence asserting itself in history: "Providentialists in effect claim that the circularity does not matter: the world is such a blessed place that their own particular circle contains the truth." [Gellner 1992: 101]

Standing opposed to the Providentialists are the Rationalists: "So we can distinguish between Providentialists, who believe in a Pre-established Harmony, and their opponents, who might be called Rationalists with a Siege Mentality. (...) The latter do not

[12]) Chapter 5 is among the most interesting chapters, because it explains how in European thought rationalism gradually transformed into irrationalism [Gellner 1992: 97-111].

allow themselves to be reassured by the complacent assumption of a pervasively benign world, which will look after us, at least at the end, or in some versions, all along the way. The Siege Mentality assumes a world which is generally alien and hostile, or at best is neutral and totally unpredictable, and in which we cannot expect any cosmic underwriting and guarantee for our commitment to reason. For my own part, I happen to believe the Siege Mentality is correct." [Ibid.: 101-102]

If then the modern industrial and open society, which at times is referred to as the liberal society, is something so non-self-evident and essentially fragile, it is important to examine how it actually established itself, how it was possible for it to emerge at all, and how it will be able to survive in the future. In other words, the foremost question is in what way it was possible for it to 'escape' from the carapace of stable, relatively closed, agrarian societies. For this reason Gellner refers to this change as the 'exit'.

The problem of the exit

In reference to this problem, Gellner speaks of a miracle; it isn't clear to him how industrial society could have emerged, and he doesn't know how to solve this question. And he believes that the transformation of agrarian society into an industrial one is something that will probably remain a mystery for good. He stresses that in looking at this transformation it is necessary to distinguish between the Hegelian and the Weberian approaches. He unambigously embraces Weber's approach, which does not allow for the idea of any 'historical necessity' lying behind the emergence of modern society. Instead it lays emphasis on the uniqueness of the European constellation of cultural, economic and power circumstances that opened the gate to this direction of development.

The emergence of the scientific-industrial society cannot therefore be easily explained. Thus Gellner prefers to speak only of the circumstances surrounding this development, despite the danger of some eclecticism. Gellner somewhat surprisingly lodged his thoughts on the so-called conditions of the exit from agrarian society in the section of *Plough, Sword and Book* that focuses on questions of power.[13] That he includes them in the section dealing with questions of power perhaps suggests that it was the changes occurring in this sphere that he considered as holding the key to revealing why this change occurred in Europe alone. Even if it is not clear why Gellner explains the emergence of industrial society in this very section of his works, his list of the 'conditions of exit' deserves our attention. It includes the following thirteen points:

1. *Feudalism as the matrix of capitalism.* Gellner claims that within European feudalism, which was governed by position and not by contract, there emerged something he refers to as 'a curious free market in loyalty' [Gellner 1991: 158]. Land was rented in exchange for a promise of loyal service. This model of contractual and binding relationship set an important precedent. Within feudalism there also emerged centres of business and trade existing under the protection of local or central rulers. Here there

[13]) Gellner always stressed that the emergence of modern European societies was the result of an entire series of still not entirely clear circumstances. Sometimes he used the term 'chance' for this transformation, and elsewhere, even 'miracle'. In any case, he was among those authors who assumed that the exit from a stagnating agrarian society was the result of a constellation of a large number of causes. He presents a list of these causes on pp. 154-171 in *Plough, Sword and Book* [Gellner 1991).

emerged an important, autonomous sphere – the town. Gellner frequently emphasises the importance of towns in the process of forming a modern liberal society.

2. *Dualism of the state and the church.* During the process of the feudal dispersion of power a dual system was created, in which the secular and the spiritual powers divided up power over various components of society. This balance of power, which continually changed, made room for the freer position of some members of society.

3. *A restrained and restricted state.* For various reasons the successful, centralising state that ensued after the period of feudal dispersion was aimed rather at maintaining its rights than at political confiscation. Gellner claims that this was perhaps owing to the survival of the tradition of Roman law.

4. *Restrained and non-revolutionary town dwellers.* The new town dwellers, who were guided by the Protestant ethic, not only ploughed back[14] the profits, they were also lacking in any inclination to make overt demonstrations of their wealth, prestige, and even power. This bourgeoisie, and especially the English bourgeoisie, was not revolutionary in nature, and thus it enabled the old powers to grow accustomed to them.

5. *The possibility of penetrating the aristocracy.* Although the theory about the openness of the English nobility is today questioned, and though it was never as great in the past as we thought, there is no doubt that it was never an entirely closed caste or estate. Instead, it is possible to find evidence of alignments with the new wealth, which had nothing to do with the land, but were rather the consequence of business and production.

6. *The existence of a growing amount of financial resources that could be used for collective bribery.*[15] In the first phases of its existence, the new order, oriented towards industry and business, had to bribe the old power in order to satisfy the latter's representatives. In the later phases it had to make pay-offs in a downward direction instead, in order to satisfy the new urban poor. They could only do this of course if the overall economic resources of industrial societies were growing rapidly.

7. *A growing degree of technical innovation.* Only in the circumstances of strong economic efficiency, which among other things was conditional upon technological progress, was the new industrial society capable of accumulating the necessary resources for bribing different strata.

8. *The existence of free peasants.* In decisive areas of north-west Europe, where there emerged an individualistic economy-oriented society, considerably free and individualistic peasants had lived for a long time. According to a number of analyses they retained their independence for centuries.[16]

9. *The beginnings of individualism through the church and the religious sources of individualism.* Gellner links the emergence of European individualism also with develop-

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[14]) The term 'plough back the profits' refers to the deferment of consumption among English Puritans.

[15]) Collective corruption as a condition for the emergence of capitalism is one of Gellner's original hypotheses on the paths of exit from ruritania [see Gellner 1991: 160-161].

[16]) The opinion of Gellner expressed in this point was probably inspired by the book of his Cambridge colleague, Alan Macfarlane: *The Origins of English Individualism* [1978]. [Gellner 1991: 162-164].

ments within Christianity. In his view, the first step in this direction was the emergence of cloister communities, which with the help of modern vocabulary he characterised as the 'first dissidents out of society' [Gellner 1991: 165]. The second step is the Reformation, and the third is then the situation in which each person is his own priest, or in which 'anyone can be a dissident'. This is the last stage of development: no supervision and no restriction on individualism. He then added the paradoxical impact of the institution of celibacy. This restriction of clerics was primarily intended to strengthen economic and other powers of the Catholic Church, but its consequences also led to the emergence of an individualistic society.

10. *The Protestant ethic.* Gellner in essence agrees with Weber's theory of the role of Puritanism and Calvinism in the process of forming European capitalism. He stresses that the economic miracle of Europe is more of a political event than an economic one. Calvinism placed emphasis on order in the world, and its representatives were motivated by this opinion to rationally connect means with aims.

11. *A pluralist system of states.* The fragmentation of Europe into a large number of independent and at the same time well-functioning states undoubtedly had serious consequences. Among other reasons because it enabled enterprising minorities to move to regions in which they could develop their talents and energy.

12. *The internal and external balance of power.* The fragmented composition of Europe and the internal balance of powers between competing social groups within individual states led to what may be called a pluralist compromise.

13. *National rather than civic bourgeoisie.* When the first business-oriented, participatory, non-centralised islands of open societies surfaced they usually took the form of city-states. But these were unable to become a strong foundation for robust liberal societies, and it was rather the stabilised nation-states that did.

One of the critics of Gellner's work included in the above-mentioned collection, Alan MacFarlane, summarised his theory of the conditions of exit into three main points. Industrial, modern and open societies emerged as a result of the fact that the following phenomena combined themselves: 1. A restrained state not interfering too much in the life of the people; 2. Protestantism and its ethic and life style; 3. A developing, if modest and not too robust technology. The mixture of these three circumstances created a situation out of which an industrial, contractual, pluralist, and open society emerged in Europe.[17]

The problems of a Marxist interpretation of history

According to the Estonian author Andrus Park, Gellner's theory of history may be interpreted as an example of 'non-Marxist historical materialism' [Park 1996]. I believe that in reality it is somewhat more complicated, even though a part of Park's opinion has a rational basis, and this relates especially to the sympathy E. Gellner had for certain forms of materialism. It is however necessary in the first place to emphasise the fact that in his judgement: "Marxism is the major sociological theory to have emerged in the nineteenth century. Its standing is confirmed by the fact that such a large proportion of non-Marxist

[17]) Alan MacFarlane [1996], summarises the conditions of the exit from ruritania into the three points mentioned here.

social thinkers continue to define their positions by reference to it."[18] In practically all Gellner's books he dealt with Marxism in one way or another. Behind this interest of course was more than just an academic motive to understand one of the attempts at a general explanation of social change. Of much greater significance was the fact that in his view this was a theory that was also an ethical and political philosophy, 'a promise of the collective salvation of mankind, of its deliverance from exploitation and oppression' [Gellner 1988: 176], which became the official ideology of an entire block of countries and had, and in some parts of the world still has, the role of determining how the life of society is to be arranged.

Among the relatively early, and somewhat forgotten texts by Gellner that dealt systematically with Marxism is the paper presented at the International Sociological Congress in Evian in 1966 entitled 'Sociology and Social Anthropology'. In this lecture, in which he explicitly expressed his sympathy for the method of structural functionalism – and in which he explained the points of agreement and difference in the thought and methods of sociologists and anthropologists and defined basic concepts such as structure and function – an important part is devoted to thoughts on the idealist and materialist account of causal relationships in society. Here I will only present a more concise version of Gellner's reflections.[19] Causal relationships in society may be founded on a nexus formed by either nature or culture. The social system is then as a unit the common product of natural and cultural bonds (connections), whereby the soundness or infallibility of these cultural bonds is a co-product of the entire system. In this unqualified form, such an approach to the analysis of society can in his opinion be referred to as being idealist, and at the same time flawed. It includes excessive emphasis on two points: first, the power of concepts and ideas to direct the behaviour of people, and second, the length of time throughout which people can let themselves be directed by certain concepts and ideas.

On the other hand, the materialist approach assumes that social causality is very similar to causality in the material world and the most important relationships in society are of a nature similar to physical or biological relationships. Even this simplified version of course allows for the existence of 'ideology' or 'culture', which are also affected by material conditions. The reverse influence of these ideological factors is, however, in Gellner's view relatively weak. In later publications he changed his position on this.

In the above-mentioned paper presented at Evian, Gellner stressed that the structurally functional method does not allow for either one of these extreme positions, even though the materialist interpretation of social bonds is closer to it. He was however also fully aware of the argument of the idealist interpretation, which had not yet been dispensed with. This argument is founded on the point that in social, semantic, psychological and other systems, the context is provided by the system as a whole, a fundamental and inherent component. 'Meanings', which play an important role in every communicating human society, form an integral part of it. The anthropological concept of structure in his opinion incorporates both these sides, i.e. both the material link and causality, and the non-material, semantic link. He defined this form of materialism as 'multiform materialism', which he explicitly set against historical materialism. Even then, and it may be

[18]) These are Gellner's own words taken from the book *State and Society in Soviet Thought* [1988: 176].

[19]) The Evian lecture printed in a collection of lectures presented at the 6th International Sociological Congress in [Gellner 1973: 107-137].

claimed that this was the result of studying Max Weber, he counted primarily the social organisation and the forms of power among the hard material factors that affect the development of society. In his view these were more significant than Marx's economic base. Any good anthropological research of a community must therefore in his opinion always incorporate what he referred to as the 'Power Balance-Sheet', which is the demonstration of how a political or economic system is the result of the interplay of the forces that are in effect in the given situation.

In Gellner's later works the critical examinations of Marxism increased. They dealt particularly with the political and economic aspects of its application, but also with Marxism as an analytic tool. Here I will mention only the objections that appeared repeatedly in his texts.

In the concluding chapter of *State and Society in Soviet Thought* [ibid.: 176-181] he makes a very succinct summary of his opinions on some aspects of historical materialism. The materialist concept of history in Gellner's view was born as a reaction to Hegel's opinion that concepts and abstractions are the hidden forces that shape human history. The rival opinion of Marx, wherein the determinants of history are concrete people, the concrete activities of these people, and not abstractions, was very attractive for its realism. This was the moment when the basic approaches of Marxism formed themselves. However, later on there occurred a controversial shift to another and more contentious one in Gellner's view: "...*within* the class of concrete activities, productive ones are more fundamental and decisive than coercive ones. (...) The shift from a stress on coercion and politics to the ultimate dominance of relations of production is incomparably more contentious." [ibid.: 177 and 178]

Despite the efforts of Marx, Engels and Lenin, in Gellner's view they never sufficiently clarified the relationship between economic and power institutions, between the economy and the state, both on the analytical level, and on the practical level. This deficiency then expressed itself in the more mature phases of socialist societies, and uncertainties in this regard signified for Marxism, as a theory oriented towards practical politics, one of the most serious problems.

Gellner felt that another serious deficiency in the Marxist view of history is the fact that it considered any social groups other than classes, defined in relation to the forces of production, as being of no fundamental importance in an account of historical change. By underestimating national communities as relatively independent social entities, and explaining conflicts between nations and nationalities as merely an expression of class conflict, Marxists were led towards fateful political difficulties and errors.

Two visions of society and thought

Towards the end of his life Gellner introduced a new element into his views, which had always given clear preference to rational individualism and an orientation towards instrumental rationality in the Weberian spirit. This is especially clear in the work his son David Gellner edited after his death, dealing with Wittgenstein and Malinowski.[20] According to Gellner there exist two basic models and at the same time contradictory phi-

[20]) The book, *Language and Solitude. Wittgenstein, Malinowski and the Habsburg Dilemma* [Gellner 1998], which was published with a Foreword by Steven Lukes, is Gellner's assertion that philosophy is not an abstract observation of the world as it is, but rather it deals with the most important historical, social and also personal questions.

losophies of knowledge, in essence two basic theories of society and man. On the one hand there is atomistic individualism, and on the other romantic organicism [Gellner 1998: 7-13]. In Central Europe the confrontation of these two principles is very intense and is well known in Tönnies' polarity of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. However, Gellner has his own version of atomistic individualism. He says: "...atomistic individualism, which sees the individual building his cognitive world (and indeed any other) by orderly, step-by-step, individual effort, possibly maintaining co-operative relationships with others similarly engaged, but without this fundamentally affecting the nature of the enterprise, which in the end is solitary." [Ibid.: 181] Gellner sums up by stating that the deepest principles of this individualism are self-sufficiency and atomism. If we discover truth as individuals, we err in groups.

Contrary to this is what he called romantic organicism, which considers society, or also any live tradition that transcends the individual, as the real social unit. One way or another, the only opportunity for fulfilment and creativity is found within this community. Each of these two visions has been expressed in various fields, not only in the sphere of knowledge. Each of them has, for example, its own conception of economic life, and political stances have also often been classified from the perspective of this polarity.

At the same time both visions represent a specific view of the nature of man and the nature of society. On the one hand, there is the Robinson Crusoe model – which enters society only on the basis of contract – and on the other hand there is the model of romantic holism. The latter stresses that man is a social animal, which without a community would not even have an identity of its own. Although in many respects Gellner agreed with the atomistic model, he was well aware of its problematic aspects: "Atomistic individualism is custom-corrosive and culture-corrosive. It facilitates the growth of knowledge, and of productive effectiveness, but it weakens the authority of cultures and makes the world less habitable, more cold and alien." [Ibid.: 5]

He then asks: how on earth are we to choose between these visions? It would indeed be a difficult or almost impossible task if we really had to make this choice. And here one of Gellner's new thoughts surfaces, one which in my view separates him from the Gellner of earlier years. He claims that we are not faced with this kind of choice in such a sharp form at all. Not only do we not have to decide, we are not even capable of making such decisions. But what is more important, our present-day situation is not as simple and sharply divided as it was in the past. Perhaps it was valid in, say, 1905, but today, luckily, it is not the case at all. But here is the most important point in his view of the structure of human history: "...happily, the world has changed. Our real situation and its options are somewhat different and more complex. Or rather, we have come to understand our world a little better than when its nature was disputed by two parties, each claiming a monopoly of truth for itself and, more significantly, tacitly united in supposing that there is no third option." [Ibid.: 182] Each of these great visions, as formed by their proponents, represents a rough sketch of our actual situation. Individualism, which we refer to as the tradition of Robinson Crusoe, began with Descartes, continued through Hume and Kant, and then was reformulated by 'secondary positivism' (Vienna) and contemporary neo-liberalism. It presents us with the story of how the wonderful and independent individual constructs his or her own cognitive, economic, and social world. Gellner commented dryly on this: "All this simply will not do either as an actual descriptive or as an explanatory account. This simply is not what actually happens, nor how it

possibly could have happened." [Ibid.: 182] Both visions are sorts of Weberian ideal types or models.

The individualist model has no great aspirations of becoming a realistic portrait of society, or a detailed historical description of what happened in actual human history. It rather aims to be a sort of ethic of knowledge.

The crude deficiency of sociological realism found in atomistic individualism does not mean that it is an opinion without value or importance. It is its own kind of normative model of how a certain tradition creates its cognitive image of the world, of how it formulates its instructions on how to construct this world, and of how to successfully go about business and production. According to Gellner it is a kind of unwritten constitution of the 'republic of thought', and a description of how the way in which this constitution has been used completely changed the world. This normative function is actually its genuine role. It is not intended to be an adequate description of events that occurred, and it is not meant to be a piece of historical information. People have actually never been atoms, nor were they from the beginning of thought ever capable of breaking down the perceived world into its component parts. Some of them no doubt began as tamed members of their community who tended to always perceive things as units and forms. It was only when they discovered the individualist model of knowledge and they applied it to practical life, did a sharp growth in knowledge and the economy occur. Gellner is convinced that it is certain kinds of perception, thought, or action, or a 'new anthropology', that lie behind the emergence of capitalism and modernity. In this regard, Gellner's opinion at the end of the 1990s remained the same as when he wrote *Plough, Sword and Book*.

This very atomistic individualism for which in a cognitive and economic perspective he retained such sympathy is however only one of a number of possible traditions and cultures, and it is in no way a realistic description of what actually happened in history. But at the same time it is not just one of a number of traditions. It is unique and specific in the sense that it represents an immense cognitive and technological force. Other traditions may be strong in other areas, but in the two mentioned above, they are usually weaker than atomistic individualism.

After Gellner had again acknowledged his deep sympathy for these elements of the power of individualism, he made, in my view, an interesting turn in his last book, one that in his previous works had only been hinted at. In his view, this manner of individualist and rationalist thought and existence cannot develop and support some other and important aspects of the culture of human life, such as the sense of belonging to someone or something, the interconnection of the social and natural order, the emergence of obligation and co-operation, or simply escape through tragedy. In this area, the philosophy of individualism is basically weak and without value. Earlier Gellner wrote that this cognitive style does not answer our questions of 'What to do?' and 'How to live?'. But even here, at the end of this section of the book, he yet again emphasises the excellence and superiority of instrumental rationalism in the area of knowledge and the economy.

Conversely, the rival visions of romantic communalism claim that knowledge and practically everything else is always a sort of team game, so that the isolated individual is merely a strange or even pathological abstraction. In this connection Gellner mentions various forms of romanticism, but stresses, as would be expected of him, that this romanticism is merely a new confirmation of agrarian values, which in his view include aggres-

siveness, classification into status groups, uncritical loyalty to political and religious leaders, conduct inspired by precedents and feelings rather than reason, and all this occurs within the environment of a non-agrarian society, where these values have already lost their original purpose. This new-age cult of *Gemeinschaft* became in his view attractive to those who were unable to live in the disenchanted world of individualism, and who began to hate this world and naively sought possibilities of escaping from it. What this philosophy offers, the escape from the cold and disenchanted world, was very attractive and impressive. One of its components was an element that gradually proved itself to be unusually dangerous. The emphasis on the unique value of each individual culture opened the doors to radical relativism. Again, Gellner comments laconically on this: "Relativism is an absurdity. It simply is not the case that all cognitive styles are equal." [Ibid.: 185]

However, Gellner agrees that the second vision has a better grasp of the nature of society. Society really is not a cluster of self-shaping individuals, entering into contractual relationships, but otherwise remaining in isolation. Life is experienced through sharing thoughts, concepts and values, which are not created by individuals – though here and there of course they do introduce important innovations. He stresses that only a shared culture can provide life with order and meaning. At the same time, however, he warns against the errors which this picture can cause, one of which is the enduring orientation towards a certain type of dangerous idealism, i.e. towards the idea that culture as a set of ideas shared by some community is the main or the only force guaranteeing social order and control. This idealism ignores the significance of physical and economic power in society. In this respect, Gellner of the 1990s had not abandoned the concept that he formulated for the Congress at Evian in 1966. At the same time, in his view this idealism is too egalitarian, in so far as individual cultures are concerned, and in this way it obscures the cognitive or technical dominance of some cultures. In addition, this opinion is dangerously narcissistic, it adores the idea that norms are always an internal part of cultures and thus rejects what is perhaps the most important reality in the history of humanity: transcendence. Truth is not cultural, but trans-cultural. In many areas people really can fail to transcend their culture, but this is not an essential weakness and it is not a necessary and inherent aspect of the human condition. Of course, it is this weakness that the romantics of organic immanence wanted us to believe in.

In his last book Gellner also expresses full agreement with Bronislaw Malinowski, who in his opinion managed to find the solution to what he referred to concisely as the Habsburg dilemma, that is, the vacillation between rationalistic and individualistic universalism, and romantic and historical relativism. He summarises his opinion on Malinowski's solution in roughly the following manner. As an anthropologist Malinowski was well aware that people live in communities and that their lives are shaped by these communities. The ideas, attitudes, and values that are maintained in the communities invest meaning into the lives of individuals, and it is possible to understand them properly only 'from within'. This is an old wisdom of the romantic tradition, which has always emphasised the uniqueness of each culture. However, Malinowski recognised one additional important point. Whenever an attempt is made to seriously examine the world, and to understand it, it is necessary to throw off any relativising viewpoints of individual cultures, and it is necessary to maintain a distance, or, if you will, to transcend the given culture. It is essential to penetrate the language, thoughts, and values of cultures in order to understand the real life of individuals in the society. However, this should not be used to help solve the questions of the validity of our knowledge. The validity, and therefore

the truthfulness of our knowledge cannot depend upon the uniqueness of individual cultures. And this is an idea that Gellner also backed fully.

Problems

A sociological and historical imagination such as Gellner's, which deals with subjects as numerous and broad as he did, exposes itself to the danger of strong attacks. His daring for such an untraditional and, in the view of a number of critics, simplifying formulation of the structure of human history called blatantly for this kind of reaction. If we leave aside the criticisms aimed at details and less serious points, we find that there are still several objections to his philosophy of history that merit some serious reflection.

First, there is a hidden tension between his functionally structural methodology, which he received from Malinowski, and his philosophical tendency towards ontological and social atomism. It would be possible to cite many examples in his work wherein he assumes the existence of relatively strong bonds between the two categories of social phenomena, e.g. between economic growth and the existence of robust science. Very often his arguments have the character of proof of structural dependencies, and some of his claims seem as though they have come straight from Comte's concept of consensus. Opposed to this is his frequent emphasis on the role of chance, the uniqueness of the constellations of economic and political circumstances, the multiplicity of particular forms of society, e.g. agrarian, and the individualism of modern societies. His methodological functionalism and structuralism collides with his image of societies created through freely linked elements and structures that do not create solid systems; I would call this 'slackened structuralism'. This also led him to a rejection of linearity in the concept of human history, and he undoubtedly would have accepted the concept of so-called multiple modernities. I remember well a conversation with Gellner on Norbert Elias, in which despite all his admiration for Elias he declared that the great problem with the theory of the process of civilisation was Elias' linear evolutionism.

The second problem area is Gellner's division of the structure of society into three blocks – 'production' (economy), 'government' (politics), and 'knowledge'. It is possible here to raise the objection that his social statics lack a fourth element. This could be described as the set of mechanisms that are directed at preserving and maintaining the basic values and rules for regulating mutual relationships between individuals, groups and institutions. It is the component in society that fulfils the function of a stabiliser, the keeper of the existing order in its manifold forms (custom, morals, ethics, law, etc.). Anyone who reads Gellner's works must notice that he has never payed as much attention to this component of the structure of society as he has to that which he referred to as 'knowledge', 'cognitive styles', 'science' etc. It is rather likely that he would say that the function of stabiliser is fulfilled by the component of society that he called 'knowledge'.

That he did not set facts and values against each other, nor deal with their mutual relationships in the least, testifies to this point. He did not therefore consider it important to devote himself to relationships between factual and normative judgements, and equally he did not deal with the question of the possibility of objectivity in the social sciences, like Max Weber. However, he no doubt observed the dilemmas that Weber attempted to solve in his essay 'Science as a Vocation'. Yet it is clear that alongside Weber he was also fully aware that 'what should be' cannot be derived from knowledge of 'what is'. Despite his post-Enlightenment rationalism, which is how he referred to the base of his deepest thought, he stated that: "Reason simply is not capable of providing the premises

which could select or establish either our aims or our means. (...) In a world dominated by an effective science and technology, and a highly variable and manipulable society and humanity, we simply lack sufficient premises for long-term decisions. (...) Our past constraints had limited our options, and our superstitions endowed our constrained options with the illusion of legitimacy. (...) Our new powers leave us free-floating. We may find ourselves in a kind of premises-less vacuum, with too much power to create, and no reasons for choice concerning what we create." [Gellner 1992: 181] Weber was also fully aware of this situation, and as Karl Jaspers pointed out,[21] he was inclined towards an existentialist solution: in the situation of 'a premise-less vacuum' our actions are primarily the result of a choice. We make a decision and act according to it, and through it we create a new social and cultural reality. A rationalistic interpretation of knowledge, knowledge in Gellner's interpretation, cannot explain the content and direction of these choices. However, in a novel way it points to the dilemmas of the liberal concept of historical development, understood as the progression from a stiff, regulated social organisation to a 'free' one, to a 'premise-less vacuum'. What has been unambiguously considered as a development towards greater individual freedom can in his view conceal the risk of a thus far unknown state, which he referred to as 'free floating'.

The third area of problems with Gellner's structure of human history concerns his three phases of development of human society. The immensely long period of agrarian society is understood as one basic and homogeneous phase. Social and economic historians have always considered this to be an exaggerated simplification, and this is true for both the generalisation based on European history alone, and the generalisation based on the development of other civilisations. The theory of the Malthusian nature of all agrarian societies would also require more meticulous verification. Generally it is possible to state that in comparison with the analysis of industrial societies, Gellner's analysis of agraria did not show enough respect for the rich variability of this developmental phase. Internally it was more heterogeneous, and it was also not so static, i.e. lacking any technological or economic progress, as Gellner suggested. Also, the transition from agraria to an industrial society was probably not as sharp as Gellner assumed. Between both phases there were many overlappings. It is likely that a number of Gellner's generalisations and their concrete forms stemmed from his view that was based primarily on the history of Europe. His deep interest in Islam and his continual comparisons between European development and the development of Muslim societies was not a sufficient substitute for a comparison of Europe with China or India.

The fourth problem area is Gellner's attempt to define contemporary Western society as industrial. He perceived the new information and communication technology as being a part of industrial society. In a few of his reflections on what could divide industrial society from a post-industrial society he stated that this would be the application of science not only to the manipulation of natural elements but also to the manipulation of human qualities. Gellner's post-industrial society is strikingly similar to Huxley's *Brave New World*, but it is impossible to fully agree with this definition of industrial and post-industrial society.

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[21]) The existentialist features of Weber's thought were pointed out by Karl Jaspers in his paper 'Deutsches Wesen im politischen Denken' in 1932 [Jaspers 1932].

Finally, the last group of problems concerns those related to the fact that Gellner bound the fate of open, liberal and even civil societies too tightly to industrial society and to the concept of modernisation and modernism. I think that this kind of close connection can pose a threat to the concept of an open and liberal society. The end of modernism would then also have to lead to the end of the open society. Some of Gellner's thoughts suggested that he feared this kind of development. Unlike Anthony Giddens or Ulrich Beck, he did not take into consideration the possibility of a 'second modernism', and instead worried about the danger of new types of authoritative and non-liberal regimes. In his opinion these could emerge due to many factors, for example as a consequence of introducing necessary regulation on the use of natural resources (he sometimes referred to this type of scenario with the term 'ecological dictatorships'), or owing to a strengthening of the manipulative role of the mass media, or as a result of an increase in terrorism and international organised crime, as he presciently predicted in some of his statements.

Gellner was fundamentally tied to the first modernism, and despite all its problems he remained its protagonist and defended it. He understood it like few others did, and only few saw as clearly as he did its deep contradictions and dilemmas. Yet he accepted it, and in essence supported it. He never of course had the feeling that it was absolutely secure, and was ever painfully aware that it could indeed vanish.

Translated by Robin Cassling

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Gellner's Structural-Functional-Culturalism*

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Abstract: Enlightenment traditions celebrating the individual and knowledge that is universally valid are only one stream in the social philosophy of Ernest Gellner. As a philosopher, he vehemently rejected Wittgensteinian relativism. As a social anthropologist, he prioritised the study of 'structure' and 'function', rather than cultural 'costume'. Yet his theory of nationalism relies on a concept of culture, which I suggest derives ultimately from the Herderian countercurrent to enlightenment universalism. This notion of culture has a surprising affinity with the world view of Clifford Geertz. The paper argues that such holistic notions of 'a culture' are unconvincing anthropologically, increasingly unrealistic sociologically, and anti-liberal politically.

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Introduction

Five years after his death, the influence of Ernest Gellner remains pervasive. It tends perhaps to be stronger among sociologists and political scientists than among philosophers and social anthropologists, though these were the nominal disciplines in which he worked for most of his career. He is probably best known for his work on nationalism, but his contributions to understanding Islamic societies and socialist societies continue to fascinate later scholars. In all of his work Gellner is viewed by posterity, as he was in his lifetime, as a voice of cool reason; and he himself encouraged such a view, e.g. in characterising his intellectual position as that of the 'enlightenment puritan', or the 'rationalist fundamentalist'. When the rest of the world was drifting into relativism and postmodernism, he stood firm for universalism. Knowledge, notably that produced in the modern West, could transcend the boundaries of culture and morality. It was fatuous for relativists to pretend otherwise. Hence the many extended polemics, with Geertz in anthropology and with the successors of Wittgenstein in philosophy.

In assessing the dichotomies that Gellner constructs to support his 'cognitive universalism', it is easy to overlook the fact that he, too, relies extensively on a concept of culture. The aim of this paper is to subject this to a closer inspection. I shall point to a surprising degree of overlap with the dominant Geertzian usage and suggest that, despite the ceaseless rejection of Wittgenstein, underpinning Gellner's work is a concept of culture that derives ultimately not from the philosophers of the Enlightenment but from his own background in Central Europe.

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Structure and culture

Gellner's interest in culture diverges markedly from that of most contemporary anthropologists. When he discovered social anthropology at the London School of Economics in the 1950s, the tradition of Bronislaw Malinowski's 'functionalism' had been modified by Radcliffe-Brown's insistence on the search for general principles of social structure. Gellner found this synthesis deeply congenial and remained loyal to this 'structural-functionalism' long after most of his contemporaries had moved on elsewhere. Most of them, in Britain as in America, went in what can loosely be termed the Geertzian direction. They paid less attention to function and structure than to the meanings understood by the actors they studied and the problems of interpreting what was said and what was symbolised in 'other cultures'. Gellner always resisted this move. His stance retained an affinity with that of the early Edmund Leach, whose analysis of political systems in Highland Burma [Leach 1954] was a search for structure rather than an effort to understand the cultural 'dress' of the social order. Much the same could be said of Gellner's adaptation of segmentary lineage models in the analysis of political systems in Highland Morocco [Gellner 1969]. But whereas the later Leach used the methods of French structuralism to explore the cultural phenomena he had previously disdained, Gellner was never attracted by these methods and polemicised vigorously against the rise of cultural studies: he was not interested in analysing the details of cuisine or 'wallpaper'! Culture was at best of secondary importance. Of course every human group had such a 'costume', but social anthropologists were concerned with 'the real structural and functional aspects of our life' [Gellner 1992a: 95], not with inventories of folklore and similar 'decoration'.

From this angle, Gellner is a structural-functionalist of the old British school and very far from being either a structuralist or a culturalist. But his interest in long term transformations, notably the rise of the West and the significance of nationalism, led him to develop a structured model of human history that depended crucially on a concept of culture. He elaborated this in successive versions of his theory of nationalism, which he famously defined as a principle that requires the political unit (the state) that should coincide with the national unit: "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent." [Gellner 1983: 1] As he concedes a few pages later, this definition is parasitic on a definition of nation, which turns out to be even harder to pin down than state. Both are contingent: "Having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such (...) Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating." [ibid.: 6-7] Gellner then adds a subjective, voluntarist criterion and suggests that, because it is so hard to define culture, we should look instead at what it does. In the agrarian age: "Local culture is almost invisible (...) cultures proliferate in this world, but its conditions do not *generally* encourage what might be called cultural imperialism." [ibid.: 12] Complex proliferations are possible but the key point is the absence of homogeneity. In industrial society, in contrast, "A high culture pervades the whole of society, defines it and needs to be sustained by the polity. *That* is the secret of nationalism." [ibid.: 18] Gellner in fact argues for a triple correspondence (or 'congruence') of culture, nation and state, which is achieved in unique modern conditions because of the organisa-

tional requirements of an industrial society.[1] In this and other books on the subject, he further insists [e.g. Gellner 1997: 3] that humans have always lived in cultures, long before modern ethnic groups and nations were invented, just as they have always had social organisation. His examples include the diversity of the Ottoman Empire, based on recognition of several religiously-defined *millet*. The implication is that one's group is one's culture, though he also mentions the possibility of 'multiculturalism even in small bands' [ibid.: 14], as documented by Lévi-Strauss in Brazil.

Here I am not interested in pursuing the 'modernist' theory of nationalism, arguably the crowning jewel of Gellner's *oeuvre*, but the concept of culture, which is left largely unelaborated and implicit. Gellner, like Malinowski, slides between a singular usage of culture (useful in highlighting how humans differ from other species) and the plural use in which cultures appear as thing-like, bounded wholes. As he put it: "...this capacity of ours for acquiring culture does not prejudge just which culture it is to be. Cultures vary enormously from one community to another, and they can also change with great rapidity within a single community." [ibid.: 2] In Chapter 15 of the same book, based on one of his last public debates before his death in November 1995, Gellner looks again at the issue of cultural continuity and suggests, in line with his modernist position, that most modern nations 'have navels invented for them by their own nationalist propaganda'. [ibid.: 96][2] He finally declares both temporal and spatial (dis)continuities between cultures to be open questions that warrant further research. But at whatever instant of time the investigator comes along, he implies that individuals can be slotted in to one, and only one, culture. There is no mention of variation within these 'package-deal worlds' [Gellner 1992a: 80]: everything of importance in each culture seems to be shared by all its members.

To summarise the argument so far, Gellner is at heart loyal to British structural-functionalism and pushes the search for elegant structural models to an extreme with his multiple homologies between group, culture, nation and state. His dependence on a notion of culture leads me to call him a 'structural culturalist'. Critics have pointed out that even highly homogeneous 'nation-states', such as modern Poland and Turkey, still contain a variety of cultural minorities. True, but Gellner can defend his theory, in those cases, by pointing to the sharp contrast between the block-like 'high culture' of those states today and the multiple 'low cultures' which prevailed in the past. I am more concerned to question the supposition that bounded 'low' (or 'wild') cultures determined the opinions and behaviour of their members in the age preceding nationalism. The notion of cultural 'membership' seems central to Gellner's theory, before nationalism as well as after it, when it is rendered explicit [Gellner 1995].

Now, is this the legitimate abstraction of a model-builder or an untenable reification of the concept of culture? In Gellner's hypothetical Ruritania [Gellner 1983], cultures are on the scene long before the intellectuals set to work on them for the purposes of nation-building. But what were these cultures? In the central Carpathian zone where I have done some fieldwork, the largest culture was presumably the 'Ruthenian', with Poles,

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[1]) The theory has attracted criticism for its implicit functionalism. For a defence of Gellner on this point see [Mouzelis 1998].

[2]) Gellner [1997: 96] offers the Czechs as a typical example, in contrast to the case of Poland, which has a more genuine navel, and Estonia, which is 'altogether navel-less'. This dichotomy corresponds to the *Kulturnation* versus *Kleinvolk* distinction.

Jews and others forming significant minorities. With Poles there was intermarriage and much sharing of cultural traits, with Jews there was not. Within this Ruthenian population there was considerable variation and complexity. The 'members' had little sense of belonging to one group or culture; depending on the context they might state that their primary affiliation was to a small cluster of villages, to a larger region ('Lemkovyna'), to an emerging nation ('Ukraine'), to the vast east Slavic 'linguistic community', or to the entire world of Byzantine Christianity. In short, the terms 'group' and 'culture' become fuzzy, even arbitrary, as soon as one comes to apply them.

The Herderian tradition

How might this notion of culture be explained in terms of Gellner's general intellectual stance? His own sketches of his philosophical roots are consistent over the years, with Hume and Kant regularly singled out for quotation. Yet he recognises the inadequacy of Humean psychology and, by implication, of the British empirical tradition more generally, which was flawed by its 'atomistic individualism' [Gellner 1992b]. For the necessary collective corrective to Cartesian rationalism he turns to Durkheim, who showed how socially indispensable compulsions are induced through ritual. I want to suggest that he might equally have found this corrective closer to his own personal roots in Central Europe, in the tradition of theorising that dates back to Herder. Herder's notion of the organic community, passing on its accumulated traditions through time, is supplemented by a notion of the authentic individual, partly derived from his teacher Immanuel Kant, for whose philosophy the categorising capacities of the human mind were crucial.[3] In a way, Herder's world of 'cultures' is not so much an alternative to the Enlightenment *imaginaire* of equal rights-bearing citizens as a magnification of this individualism at the level of the collectivity. His philosophy, like that of Gellner, is compatible with the rationalism of Descartes, as it is with cognitive and interpretive approaches that approach culture as a given package; but it is remote from contemporary theories of culture as a generative process.

I have no space here to outline the complex trajectory of the Herderian concept of culture before it became the foundational concept of twentieth century American anthropology.[4] It is conventional to view Franz Boas, educated in Germany, as the pivotal figure. Steven Reyna [2002] argues that Boas was the first to realise and document how culture provides the 'software' which determines not merely all the rich contents which fill Kant's empty categories, but the culturally variable definition of those categories in the first place. We know that Boas read Kant and, even if no direct link to Herder has been established, this concept of a cultural community was transmitted by a sort of intellectual osmosis. It was finally elaborated and celebrated by Boas and his students in the specific political conditions of the inter-war period.

Bronislaw Malinowski did his best to make the concept of culture similarly central in the British tradition, but here its triumph was delayed by the structural-functionalism of the late colonial period. Gellner, who acknowledged Malinowski as his 'intellectual aca-

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[3]) When Herder argued that each person had his or her own 'measure', he was in effect repeating on the micro level his argument about collectivities. "Jeder Mensch hat ein eigenes Maass, gleichsam eine eigene Stimmung aller seiner sinnlichen Gefühle zu einander." [cited by Taylor 1992: 30].

[4]) See Kuper [1999] for more detail on recent developments in North America.

demic grandfather' [Gellner 1995: 86], himself contributed significantly to the illumination of Malinowski's Polish-Hapbsburg roots. Again, we have no evidence that Malinowski actually read Herder, and Gellner preferred to attribute his anthropological holism to the philosophy of Hegel [Gellner 1998: 124-125]. When Andrzej Paluch questioned this link, Gellner's response was to claim that "it hardly matters: the ideas were so much in the air that, directly or otherwise, he could not but be familiar with them" [ibid.: 125]. The key idea, for Polish intellectuals in a city that was otherwise an 'intellectual suburb of Vienna', was a romantic cultural nationalism. Gellner explicitly endorsed Malinowski's view of 'culture as unity' and praised his "...vivid sense of the crucial nationalist premise: that men live their lives through a culture and can hardly find fulfilment in any other way." [ibid.: 131, 137] This is the 'totalitarian' view of culture at its sharpest [see Hann forthcoming].

The concept of culture underwent a major idealist twist in the hands of Talcott Parsons after the Second World War, which opened up the period in which the approaches of Clifford Geertz and the mature Marshall Sahlins have become dominant in the discipline. Gellner repeatedly condemned Geertz for his relativism and insisted that *some* knowledge, at least, had cross-cultural validity. But he did not question the concept of culture as such and, while insisting on 'cognitive universalism', he was curiously hesitant to proclaim an equivalent moral universalism. I think he betrays his latent Herderianism at this point. A careful comparison of his notion of culture with that of Geertz will show that the gap between them is much smaller than it is usually thought to be.

In his recent *Available Light*, Geertz [2000] seeks a balance between respect for difference and Charles Taylor's 'deep diversity' on the one hand, and the necessary rejection of what he terms the 'configurational', 'pointillist' view of culture, i.e. culture as integrated totality. There is no admission that his own earlier work did much to promote this view, no apology for the fact that the title of his most influential work features 'cultures' in the plural [Geertz 1973]. The tone of the recent essays is consistently relativist and idealist, as when he explains in Chapter 1 that when he writes 'culture' he means "the *mot*, not the *chose* – there is no *chose*" [Geertz 2000: 12]. In his last chapter, however, Geertz engages more concretely with divisive forces in contemporary world politics. He sets out good reasons for questioning received views on nations and nationalism and develops a political theory based on highly concrete particularist pragmatism, a 'practical politics of cultural conciliation' [ibid.: 256]. Geertz's preferences and prescriptions here, as well as the basic units of analysis he proposes, are quite similar to those of Ernest Gellner. This should not be such a great surprise since, however great the differences in their philosophical orientation and in their means of literary expression, both men share a basic conservative-liberalism, a preference for stability and a respect for the individual.

Thus, despite their epistemological differences, Geertz and Gellner share much common ground in their understanding of what a culture is and what it does for its members. Gellner's most concise definition of culture might almost have been drafted by Geertz [Gellner 1983: 7; quoted above].[5] Hence it is not so surprising that they have

[5]) In a lecture given in September 1995, only months before his death, he offered a definition with strong echoes of the later Leach: "By culture I mean simply the sum-total of the tools people employ to communicate. Language, of course, but also anything which signals: clothing, what one eats, what one does not eat, what one wears, what one does not wear, (...) The general sum-total of tokens employed for communicating with other people. Not a very satisfactory, not a very elegant

similar views about the implications of cultural diversity for politics. Geertz's political theory is based on concrete particularist pragmatism, a 'practical politics of cultural conciliation' [Geertz 2000: 256]. When he urges acknowledgement of a 'differenced world' [ibid.: 258], this seems to correspond pretty closely to Gellner's plea for 'cultural pluralism' [Gellner 1997: 108]. The latter exhortation rings curious at the end of an essay which reiterates the theory according to which nationalist homogeneity follows from the organisational requirements of modern societies. This is a tacit acknowledgement that the homogenising high cultures are not as effective as the Gellner model implies.

Geertz, through amassing a welter of examples, argues that no general model can make sense of the diversity of nations, peoples, cultures and identities in the contemporary world. But the outcome of all these cross-cutting ties is nonetheless some sort of encompassing order, now based vaguely on 'country' as a historicised place. He fails to acknowledge the force of Gellner's arguments explaining why this country normally takes the form of the nation-state and why, despite deviations from the ideal-type (some of which Gellner would dismiss as merely 'decorative'), it is this 'societal culture' that provides both basic frame of reference and dominant source of identity for the majority of citizens. To capture the diversity, Geertz comes up with another analogy. The job of the ethnographer is to compile file cards on all observable – or perhaps he means imaginable – 'levels and dimensions of difference and integration' and then to cross-index these various isolated identities, since they only obtain their meanings through interaction. [Geertz 2000: 254]. This is not incompatible with Gellner's model, in which the nation-state constitutes the basic organisational framework for modernity: Geertz simply goes rather further than Gellner in describing some of the imperfections and complications that this idea encounters in the real world.

On the point of most concern for this paper, Geertz's latest phrasing does little to amend the concept of culture. At the end of the day, the culture which results from all the 'cross-indexing' is still a unified conglomerate. It is not, of course, a cosy, frozen consensus, but an *ad hoc* style or approach: 'intersections of outlook, style or disposition, are the bases on which cultural complexity is ordered into at least something of an irregular, rickety, and indefinite whole.' [ibid.: 254-255] But what exactly is this whole? 'Irregular, rickety, and indefinite' might be a passable description of the way a late Geertz paper hangs together but is this late echo of the Herderian tradition a helpful perspective for anthropologists who wish to engage with the contemporary world?

Why culture matters

Debates about the concept of culture are important politically and not only for their academic interest. This word carries an enormous load in contemporary debates in many countries. For a recent example, consider the text issued by Pope John Paul II, whose roots lie in the same Central European city as Bronislaw Malinowski, to mark the beginning of the UN's 'International Year of Dialogue Among Civilisations'. The concept of civilisation is left undefined, but note that it is used in the plural [cf. Huntington 1996]. The German text refers throughout to *'Dialog zwischen Kulturen'* and culture turns out to be the dominant concept in the English version as well. The Pope comments on 'the com-

definition. It is very much like what St. Augustine said about time, that until asked what time is, he knew, but when asked, he didn't know how to reply. We know what culture is, but to offer a precise definition, which doesn't beg any questions, is difficult." [Gellner 1995: 85]

plexity and diversity of human cultures. Each of them is distinct by virtue of its specific historical evolution and the resulting characteristics which make it a structurally unique, original and organic whole (...) *a person necessarily lives within a specific culture*. People are marked by the culture whose very air they breathe...' [John Paul II 2001: §4-5, emphasis in original]. In the papal analysis, cultures are 'authentic' if they promote human dignity. They mature, as do individuals, through dialogue with others. At the same time, the 'intermingling of traditions and customs' brought about by large-scale contemporary migration creates the challenge of integration, for it is important to preserve 'a certain "cultural equilibrium" in each region, by reference to the culture which has prevalently marked its development.' [ibid.: §14][6] This text juxtaposes celebration of differences – the 'multicoloured mosaic' [ibid.: §22] with reminders of the primordial 'unity of the human race' [ibid.: §7] and of 'universal ethical values' [ibid.: §13]. The Pope may be accused of some looseness and inconsistency in his use of the concept of culture, but by the standard of much contemporary social science and moral philosophy it is nonetheless an impressive statement. He speaks of dialogue, dialectic, and the mutual constitution of cultures. Yet, like so many anthropologists, including Gellner as I read him, he remains thoroughly trapped within the nationalist's view of the world the 'mosaic' image, which projects bounded, unified cultures as entities, interacting both with their individual members and with each other is increasingly untenable in an era of accelerating globalisation.

Many believe the concept of culture should become even more central to policy-making than it is already, and many look to the academic literature, including anthropology, to support their political stance. That is why these academic debates matter. Two camps seem to be especially influential. One position, highly ethnocentric, is the claim that some populations will have to change their cultures if they want to enjoy the benefits of democracy and development [Huntington and Harrison 2000]. Few anthropologists would support this use of culture, which is suffused with an old 'Orientalist' bias in European writings about other parts of the world. The alleged deep-seated barriers to change and development in places like East and South Asia turned out to be less formidable than imagined, once certain structural conditions were in place. Ernest Gellner is sometimes suspected of Eurocentric bias (e.g. in his many writings on civil society) but I would not place him in this camp. He would not be joining those who currently argue that the Orthodox religion or the 'fatalistic Russian soul' pose a fundamental barrier to the capitalist transformation of Russia.

The second position is a liberal variant of Herderianism. This also has far-reaching political consequences in the modern world, for example in the form of Charles Taylor's case for a 'politics of recognition' [Taylor 1992] or Will Kymlicka's arguments for 'multicultural citizenship' [Kymlicka 1995]. Here the emphasis is on escaping from Western ethnocentricity, so it is hardly surprising that multiculturalism has attracted a good deal of support among anthropologists. Recently, however, a number of critics have questioned the wisdom, from the point of view of liberal objectives such as widening choices and increasing social mobility, of classifying persons into particular cultural communities.

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[6]) The text continues: "This equilibrium, even while welcoming minorities and respecting their basic rights, would allow the continued existence and development of a particular 'cultural profile', by which I mean that basic heritage of language, traditions and values which are inextricably part of a nation's history and its national identity."

Brian Barry [2001] has published a comprehensive critical analysis which reasserts a more traditional liberalism, based on the individual. From a more radical political perspective, Richard Rorty [2000] has argued that left wing politics should avoid prioritising membership of a cultural community. He concludes with a preference for Mill and Dewey, who understood human diversity as a diversity of self-creating individuals, rather than a diversity of cultures.

In these debates, it seems to me that Gellner is closer to the Central European Herderian tradition than to Anglo-American liberalism. The chief problem is that none of the contestants offers an adequate definition of culture. Most slide about inconsistently between singular and plural, like Gellner himself, between usages that no anthropologist would call in question and the outright 'totalitarian', in which cultural membership determines everything. Gellner does occasionally acknowledge 'the tangled unstable overlapping nature of "cultures"', implying that they cannot be treated as bounded homogeneous units, but he does not at any point seem willing to give up his premise of culture as a 'package-deal', which 'freezes' ideas into 'organic' wholes, the antithesis of atomistic individualism.

Conclusion

I have argued that, ultimately, Geertz and Gellner have a similar concept of culture, derived from the intellectual traditions and political realities of Central Europe, and that this is inadequate for understanding and engaging with the pressing problems of the contemporary world. To understand the concepts of social philosophers we have only to put together what Gellner says about the invisibility of culture in Carpathian villages, and the air that scholars breathe. He himself did not have to read Herder or Nietzsche to acquire his concept of culture, any more than Malinowski actually had to read Hegel in order to formulate his brand of anthropological holism. This crucial concept was simply there, so to speak, in the air he breathed as he grew up in Prague. Many years later he elaborated a powerful model to explain that nationalism develops when a previously invisible culture becomes an explicit object of construction and reflection. In this paper I have suggested that this very notion of culture is flawed. It is a product of the Herderian, nationalist view of the world, which as Gellner himself argued is a contingent rather than a necessary aspect of the human condition.

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The Role of Political, Social and Cultural Capital in Secondary School Selection in Socialist Czechoslovakia, 1948-1989

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Summary: In this paper I present an analysis of secondary school tracking in socialist Czechoslovakia. Despite the importance of the transition from primary to secondary school in the Czechoslovak education system, previous attempts to model this transition have been fatally flawed. Using multinomial logistic regression, I show the effects of family background on the odds of making the transition to vocational, technical, or academic secondary schools. I test various hypotheses regarding trends in educational reproduction and the effects of parental Communist Party membership on educational attainment. 'Communist affirmative action policies' had some impact on inequalities in access to *vocational* and *technical* secondary schools, but did not affect status differences in access to *academic* schools. I also show the effects of parental involvement in the Communist Party upon the transition from primary to secondary schools. I argue that party membership represented political rather than social capital, since its effects were highly variable over time and were sensitive to historical variations in the official communist ideology. I also show that people from certain demographic categories benefited more from the post-war expansion of the educational system than others. While larger numbers of lower class, rural and female students enrolled in secondary schools, their higher enrolments were largely confined to vocational schools. Though a large number of higher status children were enrolled throughout the 1948-89 period, their enrolments in vocational schools dropped as they began to fill positions in the growing technical and academic schools.

Euclid of Cosmopolis

or The Importance of Reading Ernest

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Abstract: Ernest Gellner's writings on nationalism need to be read in the wider context of his thought as a whole. The key lies in regarding Gellner as a thinker who was interested in the possibility of understanding particularist sentiments and collectivist political loyalties which radically differed from his own individualistic cosmopolitan worldview. A richer interpretation of Gellner's life and thought emerges from this insight than from more superficial understandings of Gellner as a functionalist or a rationalist.

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> What makes a thinker significant, among other things, is that his work possesses some measure of unity, and that it contains some central ideas which pervade and inspire the corpus as a whole.
>
> Ernest Gellner [1985: 14]

Ernest Gellner is today best known for his work on nationalism.[1] Gellner's attempt to develop a general theory of nationalism has been criticised for many different (and sometimes tautological) reasons: the theory is *too* general, too Eurocentric, too a-historical, too functionalist, too economically determinist, too *reductionist* in its emphasis on the cultural homogeneity required by industrial society.[2] Even sympathetic interpreters of Gellner's ideas admit that "Gellner's theory is not a truly universal one" since it does not succeed in explaining specific cases of pre-industrial nationalism [Hall 1995: 12].

This essay does not seek to defend Gellner's explicit theory of nationalism against any of the particular criticisms mentioned above. Such a defence would be presumptuous, redundant (given the size of the Gellner *oeuvre*: four books and countless articles on the subject), and pointless, given the fact that many of these criticisms of the theory are quite genuinely justified by Gellner's own tendency to speak in Capital Letters, especially in his later writings on nationalism.

This essay does, however, claim that Gellner's writings on nationalism need to be read in the wider context of his thought *as a whole* and that only such a reading does jus-

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1) Gellner "brought a formidably equipped mind to bear on *his main interests*: the nature of national identity and the links, especially in the Islamic world, between democracy and economic modernisation." (my italics) ["Obituary..." 1995]

2) While it is tempting to compile a list of critics of Gellner, a kind of anti-bibliography, as it were, it is sufficient here to mention only a few representative criticisms. Thus, for instance, Benedict Anderson's much quoted rebuke that "Gellner is so anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretences that he assimilates 'invention' to 'fabrication' and 'falsity', rather than to 'imagining' and 'creation'." [Anderson 1991: 6] One of the more sophisticated discussions of Gellner's purported Eurocentrism can be found in [Mohanty 1989: 2].

tice to the complexity of Gellner's thought. The key lies in regarding Gellner as a thinker who was primarily concerned with the possibility of understanding a worldview which was radically different than his own.[3] This essay argues that Gellner was embedded in an individualistic cosmopolitan worldview which he intellectually and politically endorsed, but that he also felt it necessary to go beyond his own cosmopolitanism and to try to understand holistic mentalities, particularist sentiments, and collectivist political loyalties which radically differed from his own.

I. Professor Ernest Euclid, F.B.A., M.A.E.

> It is no doubt exceedingly presumptuous to compare oneself to Euclid, or to hope that Euclidean cogency is ever available in the social sphere. My excuse is that I make the point with irony, and more in self-criticism than in vain-glory. The argumentation does seem to me to have Euclidean force, but I also note that the world we live in is only in part Euclidean.
>
> Ernest Gellner [1993]

Leaving irony aside (for the moment), what makes an explanation of nationalism which links political legitimacy and the cultural requirements of industrial society 'virtually Euclidean in its cogency'? It is only fair to go through the theorem briefly before more closely examining the axioms and postulates involved.

A brief demonstration of Gellner's theory of nationalism, then, would look like this: A great transformation has taken place in the social conditions of humankind. Before the industrial revolution, society was agrarian, stable, and hierarchical. Above a plurality of insulated low (oral) cultures lay the strata of the agents of coercion and the priests of a high (written) culture. Modem industrial society, on the other hand, is grounded in the shifting sands of ever-evolving industrial technology and is meritocratic and egalitarian because it is mobile. The workforce of modern industrial society must be able to engage in a constant flow of context-free communication because work is primarily semantic. Modern industrial society, therefore, requires a homogeneous universal high culture which is made possible by a standardised educational system. The state is responsible for maintaining and protecting this literate now-*national* culture. The political structures of a modern industrial society are legitimated by their continued capacity to ensure sustained economic growth and to protect the culture which is the idiom of the society. Nationalism is the principle of political legitimacy which requires the congruence of political and cultural boundaries. Q.E.D.[4]

A 'proof' of this kind – coldly concerned with large-scale structural social changes and their ideological consequences – is necessarily liable to the charge that it fails to

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[3]) As Gellner points out, men "make themselves radically different pictures of reality. The crucial word in this assertion is 'radically'. Its full force is not often appreciated... There is no doubt whatever about the existence of rival decision-procedures, of terminal courts of appeal, in various styles of thought. In this sense, visions do differ radically." [Gellner 1987b: 166]

[4]) This particular version of Gellner's thought on nationalism, which I refer to as Gellner's *explicit* theory of nationalism, is developed at length in [Gellner 1983], and more briefly in the article mentioned above [Gellner 1993].

capture the most obvious feature of nationalism: the sheer *emotion* involved. Do people other than philosophers really kill one another because they are denied complete access to a context-free semantic code? One provocative Gellnerian answer to this would be: Yes, because we are now all of us *de facto* philosophers insofar as we are forced to participate in a universal 'high culture' that was once restricted to the priestly keepers of wisdom and truth. This sort of dispassionate riposte is of course infuriating, and, as with all infuriatingly cool intellectual responses, it is worth considering just why it is so maddening.

People probably do not become nationalists because they want better jobs. As Gellner himself writes, there is "no need to assume any conscious long-term calculation of interest on anyone's part... It would be genuinely wrong to reduce these sentiments to calculations of material advantage or of social mobility." [Gellner 1983: 61] There are two related reasons why such a reduction might be wrong: first, because it might simply be a factual error to think that people become nationalists because they want better jobs, and, secondly, because 'sentiments' and 'calculations' are incommensurate. Even (perhaps, especially) if self-advancement were blatantly a motive, a nationalist would probably heatedly deny it.[5] One cannot read minds, let alone hearts. Furthermore, as Pascal put it, the heart has its reasons which the reason cannot know. And it is this general perception of emotion as a privileged, exclusive, and essentially subjective domain which makes intellectual analyses of nationalism *qua* sentiment seem so abstract, rarefied, and 'functionalist'. The warm-blooded Romantic revolt against the rationalism of the Enlightenment, all over again, in microcosm.

But, for all his emphasis on the self-deluding 'false consciousness' of nationalism, was Gellner really so very lacking in sympathy, or, at the least, understanding for the essentially emotive aspects of the phenomenon? Was he altogether the Enlightenment rationalist? There are good reasons for thinking the contrary.

One reason lies on the level of rhetoric. Gellner stressed the 'imagined' quality of nationalism because he *came* to see that nationalism is not something that is simply natural. As he writes, the temptation to take nationalism as something self-evident

> "is so deeply built into the modern condition, where men simply assume that culturally homogeneous units, with culturally similar rulers and ruled, are a norm whose violation is inherently scandalous. To be shocked out of this pervasive assumption is indeed something for which one must be grateful. It is a genuine illumination." [Ibid.: 125]

Gellner's seemingly exaggerated emphasis on the 'imagined' aspect of nationalism is not wilfully naive hyper-intellectual dismissal of genuine feeling. Rather, it is a deliberate rhetorical strategy which reflects his desire to transmit this 'illumination' to others. Elsewhere, for instance, describing Conor Cruise O'Brien as a 'victim' of nationalism, Gellner writes:

> "...he has internalised, as initially most of us have, the key nationalist assumption – namely, that the nation is the natural political unit. Unlike some of us, he has not liberated himself from taking that assumption for granted... This presupposition pervades our particular world so much that most people presuppose it without realising that it is indeed a contentious assumption. They deem it as obvious and unproblematic as speaking prose. My own discovery that I was speaking prose, and that forms of discourse other than prose exist, I owe to Elie Kedourie..." [Gellner 1994a: 60]

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[5]) Interesting recent research carried out by Gordana Uzelac suggests a strong correlation between nationalist sentiment and altruistic motives.

The analogy with prose is exceedingly apt. For in 'our particular world', in 'the modern condition', we do not speak in the classical alexandrines of Racine's characters (a lapse of taste which Kedourie, from Gellner's account, seems to have deplored); we are saturated in the 'context-free communication' provided by our daily news[6] and our scientific texts, and our world is particularly prosaic.[7] Yet Gellner clearly believes that it is at least possible to "liberate" oneself from assumptions that are taken for granted, to realise that 'forms of discourse other than prose exist', and the 'functionalism' of his own prose style when writing on nationalism is a rhetorical device designed to force readers to question their assumptions.

Why was Gellner so 'grateful' for the "discovery" that nationalism is not natural? Why did this philosopher turned anthropologist invest so much energy insisting on the essentially *ersatz* quality of nationalist feeling? This essay cannot possibly offer any definitive answers to such questions; however, it does seem fair to speculate on Gellner's motives, especially since these possible motives form another set of reasons for believing that Gellner was both less and more 'objective' than the objectivity of his rhetoric might suggest.

Although he liked to disclaim responsibility for the world, claiming, "I didn't invent this situation, I simply tell it like what it is" [Gellner 1987b: 184],[8] it is obvious that Gellner was more politically involved than this seemingly disinterested disclaimer would suggest. Gellner was politically involved in several aspects of his person: as a private individual who believed in helping friends in political difficulties;[9] in the social role of an eminent intellectual who often faced what he once nicely described as the choice 'To Sign or Not To Sign?' the various petitions of protest that were presented to him [Gellner 1994b: 55];[10] and as a thinker who understood clearly and without illusions the complex interplay of power and thought, thought and moral feeling, moral feeling and political values, political values and the dynamics of power. As he once wrote of Václav Havel, one should not take "too seriously the Czech national motto, *Truth Prevails*. It cannot be relied on to prevail, even in the long run, and as Keynes said, in the long run we are all dead... Illusions will not do anyone any good." [Gellner 1994c: 127-128] Neither one's

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6) The diffusion of 'print-capitalism' is, of course, central to Benedict Anderson's views on nationalism as well. Quoting Hegel's remark that newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers, Anderson elegantly notes the doubleness of a process wherein secular routines and communities are sacralised just as previously sacred concepts lose their privileged hold on human minds. See Anderson [1991: 35-36].

7) Gellner was acutely aware of the disenchantment produced by the prosaic, wholly mundane character of the modern world: in one of his most perceptive (and wittiest) essays, he writes that, perhaps, "we are not disenchanted, or not nearly as much as consistently as we once supposed or anticipated; but perhaps we certainly *ought to be*." See [Gellner 1987a: 152].

8) This was also one standard defence he employed in post-lecture discussions.

9) Gellner was invariably modest about the extent to which he could and did help friends who were dissidents in the Soviet Union and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe; however, his friends were and are not stinting in their appreciation of his efforts. A moving eulogy to this effect was delivered by Anatoly Khazanov at the conference 'Our Current Sense of History: Essays for Ernest Gellner', held in Prague, 8/9 December 1995.

10) One might add a further choice 'To Visit or Not To Visit' regimes of dubious political nicety, a choice which Gellner also explores in [Gellner 1987c: 1-5].

own illusions, nor, for that matter, anyone else's. There are no easy answers and it is intellectually dishonest for intellectuals to pretend that there are easy answers.[11] The cardinal sin is the 'deliberate disregard of truth in the interest of loyalty to doctrine'. As his exemplar of this sort of intellectual dishonesty, Gellner repeatedly mentions Jean-Paul Sartre who "was brazenly willing to suppress the truth about gulags so as to protect his darling French working class from emotional discomfort." [Gellner 1994d: 169, see also Gellner 1994b: 57] The sheer savagery of Gellner's snarl at Sartre's 'brazen' suppression of the truth at first seems at odds with the recognition that truth does not necessarily prevail. But, far from leading to a cynical apathy, it is precisely this recognition of the fragility of truth which makes Gellner snarl in its defence. Truth "*cannot be relied on* to prevail" in the face of historical and political contingency, but it might prevail if enough people "simply tell it like what it is". In other words, Gellner tells the truth because he *wants* the truth to prevail. He is 'objective' because he is involved.[12]

This intertwining of objectivity and involvement lies at the heart of Gellner's philosophy of the social sciences. Gellner does not naively believe that truth is intrinsically persuasive nor that empiricist procedures for arriving at the truth can vindicate themselves purely on their own objective value-neutral terms. For Gellner, the quest for intelligible and consistent explanations of observable facts is justified, not simply because this sort of attempt to understand the world is grounded in a more plausible epistemology, but more importantly, because this sort of quest for truth is part of a vision of the world which is associated with a kind of society which is both morally preferable and pragmatically more successful. As Gellner writes, this "double validation is inelegant but inescapable. The endorsement of a vision by those already indoctrinated in it is also a bit suspect. This can't be helped." [Gellner 1985a: 66] For Gellner, the crucial point is that this kind of society, which both sustains and is in turn sustained by science, "seems richer, more fulfilling than the others, and also historically dominant. It seems to be winning and to be

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[11]) "It is not necessarily wrong to display doubt rather than conviction. It is not necessarily wicked to be less than clear about the limits of one's responsibility. It is not always wrong to be realistic about the situation and to refrain from Quixotry. The recognition of these difficulties is itself a duty. The tacit deployment of a model which fails to do justice to the seriousness of these difficulties is itself a kind of intellectual treason. The strident denunciation of the treason of the clerics, which pretends that our situation is far clearer and unambiguous than in fact it is, is itself a form of betrayal." [Gellner 1994b: 56] Yet, as Gellner also points out elsewhere, doubt and complacency are potentially linked in an infinite regress. In a virtuoso passage, he writes: "I cannot feel at home either with the holier-than-thou puritans (who never compromise at all) or the blase practitioners of *realpolitik*... Yet one must also try not to be complacent, even at the second level, about one's lack of complacency... There is a certain seductive regress, seeming to offer one moral clearance by virtue of one's anxiety. I am not complacent, or even complacent about my non-complacency, and so on. Yet in the end one still risks patting oneself on the back. The fact that I am recursively anxious about using my own anxiety as a justification still does not give me clearance. The danger lies in supposing that being a Hamlet excuses everything, which is one further twist of complacency – and so is saying this in turn, if it were meant to excuse anything." [Gellner 1987c: 5]

[12]) This claim is meant to mirror Gellner's often-repeated argument that "the positivists are right. For Hegelian reasons." [Gellner 1985a: 64, see also Gellner 1987b: 181] The following summary discussion of Gellner's philosophy of the social sciences to a very large extent derives from these two essays and also from other essays in *Relativism and the Social Sciences*.

better, though we should be embarrassed to say either that it was better simply because it was winning, or that it was winning simply because it was better." [ibid.: 64]

It is important, then, to tell the truth (and, presumably, to encourage others to also do so) because societies which rely on a certain form of institutionalised truth-telling called science are both nicer and richer. Indeed, Gellner argues that these societies are nicer precisely because they are richer. As he writes,

> "this kind of society alone can keep alive the large numbers to which humanity has grown, and therefore avoid a really ferocious struggle for survival among us; it alone can keep us at the standard to which we are becoming accustomed; it more than its predecessors, *probably* favours a liberal and tolerant social organisation (because affluence makes brutal exploitation and suppression unnecessary, and because it requires a wide diffusion of complex skills and occupational mobility which in turn engender a taste for both liberty and equality)." [Gellner 1987b: 183]

The sheer rhetorical force of such arguments in favour of cognitively open, science-based, industrial societies almost makes one want to become a scientist or else to set up a factory in order to do one's bit for humanity's survival.[13] These arguments, of course, work in favour of any form of industrial society, whether capitalist or socialist. Gellner claims to prefer the former variety because it is 'considerably more efficient'; however, he also makes it quite clear that his preference is based on rather more than merely this criterion of efficiency: it is also because capitalism "commits the society undergoing it to far less false consciousness concerning its own organisation, than does socialism." [Gellner 1994f: 13] Those who live by the sword die by it: as Gellner liked to pointed out, just as the "Nazis had believed in war and were eliminated by a violent trial by combat; the Bolsheviks believed in the verdict of the economy and were eliminated by an economic contest." [Gellner 1993] The enforced doctrinal monopoly of Marxist dogma strangled economic growth in the same way as any other ideocracy and for the same reason – because a society which seeks to close the minds of its members prevents the cognitive and technological growth upon which economic growth is predicated.[14] Conversely, economic stagnation and technological failure eroded Marxism's doctrinal monopoly: as Gellner writes, it "was Brezhnev not Stalin who destroyed Marxism: terror would be and was conceptually accommodated, permanent squalid inefficiency could not."[15] Furthermore, it was precisely the technological intelligentsia created by (and for) socialist poli-

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[13]) Gellner was by no means quite as enthusiastic about industrial development as such rhetoric might suggest. In particular, he did recognise the damage done to the environment by industrialisation. (Thus pre-nationalist Ruritanian peasants "had no reveries about plans of industrial development which one day would bring a steel mill (quite useless, as it then turned out) to the very heart of the Ruritanian valleys, thus totally ruining quite a sizeable area of surrounding arable land and pasture." [Gellner 1983:]) However, this is not a significant theme in his writings. Even so, Gellner did also come to recognise the global environmental threat posed by world-wide industrialisation, although he could only hope that some form of world government might be able to deal with such problems. As he wrote, the "ecological problem... may oblige mankind in the future to abandon this 'insurance through political diversification'." [see Gellner 1994e: 181]

[14]) It is important to point out here that Gellner did not have a high regard for the moral philosophy of neo-classical *laissez faire* economists. Nor did he believe in Progress [see Gellner 1985a: 49-50, and also Gellner 1987d: 120-121].

[15]) [Gellner 1994g: 112]. Or again, "perestroika merely allowed everyone to say out loud what they had privately come to suspect, namely, that the Emperor was naked." [Gellner 1994e: 174]

cies of industrialisation-from-above who could no longer tolerate the technical backwardness and political squalor of real socialism.[16] It is clearly not enough simply to build lots of large factories and to make peasants into scientists: the legitimation of an industrial society requires a sustained level of economic growth which is made possible by, and which gives rise to, 'a taste for both liberty and equality'.

The 'taste' for liberty and equality is in sharp contrast to another kind of 'taste' which Gellner finds less palatable. Trying to understand the Western fear of what is today broadly (and bizarrely) named 'fundamentalism' in the developing world, Gellner writes:

> "We always knew that societies undergoing the acutely painful transformation to industrial organisation might need strong ideological meat to see them through; it was precisely our detachment from that need which had that somewhat offensively patronising air about it. This, however, does not save us from being somewhat surprised, pained, and frightened when we see them indulging this taste with such zest, and in a manner which does not suggest that, after a while, this enthusiasm will abate and become routinised. Perhaps it will: but just now it takes a lot of nerve and optimism to expect such an outcome with any confidence. Could it be that the psychic taste for, or the social need of, the moralistic state is there for keeps, rather than as a temporary palliative for the suffering of the transitional period? No one knows the answer, but it is hard not to feel uneasy." [Gellner 1987d: 116]

The most striking rhetorical feature of this remarkably revealing passage is the stark opposition Gellner posits between 'us' and 'them'. Just exactly who is the 'we' that 'always knew', the 'us' that is capable of 'detachment' from a certain 'psychic taste', a certain 'social need', but who is still 'surprised, pained, and frightened' by the sight of 'them' ravening over their 'strong ideological meat'?

Superficially, the contrast is between societies that are 'undergoing the acutely painful transformation to industrial organisation' and those which have already undergone this transformation. This contrast between 'developing' and 'developed' countries is also related to a contrast on another level between those societies which need a 'moralistic state' to legitimate these painful economic and social changes and those who are content with a merely instrumental one. So far, so good: these typological distinctions between the developed and the developing, the First and the Third Worlds, were the conventional wisdom during the *belle epoque*,[17] and there is nothing so very peculiar about

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[16]) As Gellner writes, the Russian middle class, the professional intelligentsia "not merely survived, but numerically expanded during the period of Soviet power... Its numbers were swelled by universal education, and by the number of jobs which could only be filled by educated people... The eventual succession of, first disclosures about Stalinism, then the sense of the squalor of Brezhnevism, and finally the full impact of economic-technological failure and backwardness, by their cumulative impact weaned this class from their loyalty to the regime... I had always expected that some measure of liberalisation would come in the Soviet Union from the slow increase and thrust of this class, slowly moving like an irresistible sand dune. What I did not foresee (nor I think did anyone else) was that through Gorbachev, quantity would be transmuted into quality: the insidious quiet collective drift of this intelligentsia would become a landslide, and cause a dramatic transformation of the entire moral climate of the Soviet Union." [Gellner 1994g: 112-113]

[17]) Of course, the very notions of 'developed' and 'developing' countries have been endlessly problematised by critics of modernisation theory, as has the division of the world into the categories of First, Second, Third, Fourth... [See, for instance Worsley 1990]. One wonders, incidentally, if the concept of First, Second, and Third Worlds became so popular because of vague mental associations with gold, silver, and bronze Olympic medals.

Gellner sharing some of the prejudices of his time. It is only when Gellner goes beyond these dry typological distinctions and begins to brandish *feelings* such as 'need', 'detachment', 'surprise', 'pain', 'fear', 'indulgence', 'zest', 'enthusiasm', 'nerve', 'optimism', 'confidence' and 'unease', this is when. it becomes important to ask whether this is merely a case of overblown rhetoric or whether something more important is going on here.

The key lies in Gellner's use of the phrase 'psychic taste'. Although he quickly tags on the more acceptably sociological concept of 'social need', it is clear that Gellner is really talking about two radically different states of feeling, of 'psychic tastes'. And not merely *psychic* tastes either: material tangible tastes as well – radically different styles of cooking,[18] eating, and, for that matter, defecating. As Gellner wrote of the Ayatollah Khomeini, to "understand him, we need to see him as he is. In taking him as he is, we show him more respect than if we present his works in a way which makes them almost acceptable as family entertainment. The brutal moralism and the hair-splitting scholasticism, but almost tenderly careful handling of sodomy, sweat, and excrement are all part and parcel of the man's mind." [Gellner 1987e: 138] Khomeini then might stand for the pre-modern mentality in general; and Gellner's use of the word 'we' begins to make more sense.

Or does it? Gellner's own rhetorical strategy in prefacing his essay on Khomeini with more than a page of Khomeini's more shocking (to Western sensibilities) sayings, might well be deemed analogous to Khomeini's own 'theo-porn', if one considers that the position of William Wyse Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge is about as close as one can get to theocratic authority in a secular society. (Ought one, perhaps, to call Gellner's own frequent and very funny aphorisms about sex 'philoporn'?) What makes the devout Muslim's regard for the Ayatollah's pronouncements so very different from the attitude an ordinary British layman takes towards the latest scientific discovery, findings that are incomprehensible to him or her, but which are legitimated by the intellectual authority of the distinguished Professor? Even if one accepts that there are significant epistemological differences between faith in the Ayatollah's pronouncements and belief in the Professor's findings, differences which are also reflected in social status and political influence, it still seems possible to posit a continuum between the Ayatollah and the Professor, and, more generally, between traditional agrarian society and industrial society. The idea of such a continuum is supported by the notion of industrialisation itself as a *process*, as an ongoing operation of technological change and economic growth, with its own dynamic of obsolescence and advancement. Furthermore, the notion of industrialisation as an ongoing process actually allows (in its use of only the variables of power, cultural difference, and economic/educational opportunity) for a more structurally Gellnerian explanation of the simultaneous persistence and diminution in intensity of ethnic conflict within industrial societies and also of the persistence of nationalism in the form of antipathy towards other nation-states, than Gellner's own rather weaker historically-based arguments about the time zones of

[18]) As Gellner writes, "gastronomy is not so much a code, whether universal or specific, as a reflection of the level of development of the forces of production and coercion... Back to prehermeneutic sociology. Societies are systems made up of concrete people and their activities, and the interdependence and preconditions of these activities require exploration..." [Gellner 1985b: 165]

nationalism.[19] Yet Gellner always firmly rejected the idea of a continuum between agrarian society and industrial society, nor was he much interested either in the idea of 'post-industrial society' or in the notion of industrialisation as an ongoing process [see, for instance Gellner 1983: 96]. What really interested Gellner were the *dis*continuities between the ideal-types of Agraria and Industria, between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, since these discontinuities produced the radical difference between 'us' and 'them'.

II. Applying for a visa into Rational History

> The West is democratic, the West is strong, it is democratic because it is strong and strong because democratic, and because this is the way world history is going... I have had my primary education and two and a half years of secondary education in Prague schools, and I can only say that this message emanated, unambiguously and confidently, from the portraits of the President-Liberator which adorned every schoolroom.
>
> Ernest Gellner [1994c: 122]

Why was Gellner so interested in the radical difference between 'us' and 'them'? One clue can be found in one of his most extraordinary essays, a brilliant speculation on the inner logic and genesis of Malinowski's functionalist anthropology and its influence on European thought [Gellner 1987f]. Discussing the possible political and intellectual options open to Malinowski as a Pole at a time when there was no Polish state, in an intellectual environment saturated by a Hegelian belief in Progress as represented by the State, Gellner writes, "in this realm of rational history, there clearly are second-class citizens, fellow travellers endowed at best with a kind of immigrant's probationary visa or entry-permit into rationality and meaningfulness, eagerly and anxiously waiting to see whether full citizenship will be conferred on them." [ibid.: 49] One obvious option available to such 'second-class citizens of World History' is to individually jettison the ethnic identity which makes them second-class and to assimilate into a dominant state-endowed nation. Another option is to struggle to form one's own nation, to fight for its own state, and thus to compete with presently dominant nations. However, Gellner also identifies a third option, the option of internationalism, cosmopolitanism, and identification with humanity as a whole rather than with one nation or another. As Gellner writes:

> "This path has also been trodden by many. It may perhaps appeal specially to individualists, culturally self-made men living in a complex and mobile environment, and therefore given to identifying such a situation with the human condition in general: men who feel either that this is what human life is like, or that this is what it ought to be. But this internationalist, individualist, 'cosmopolitan' option, the cult of the Open Society, is perhaps less likely to constitute the *whole* answer for a man who knows full well, professionally, that the human condition in general is *not* like that – who knows in virtue of his professional expertise and commitment, that a great part of mankind lives or lived in absorbing, relatively self-contained communities. In other words, can an anthropologist whole-heartedly adopt the 'cosmopolitan' model of man?" [ibid.: 50]

[19]) For Gellner's notion of nationalist stages and time-zones see [Gellner 1993, and also Gellner 1994h].

Gellner moves from an analysis of the options open to 'second-class citizens of World History' to a description of why one particular option, the cosmopolitan one, has a special appeal for a certain kind of person, 'individualists, culturally self-made men'. He then proceeds to specify the sub-set still further to include only those men who possess a certain kind of 'professional expertise and commitment'. Not all cosmopolitans are anthropologists, nor are all anthropologists cosmopolitans, or, for that matter, 'second-class citizens of World History'. But Gellner goes still further in narrowing down the ideal-type personality he has created in a few dazzling sentences: "He may well be cosmopolitan himself, but can he conceivably see the human condition in general in such terms? And if indeed he cannot, is he therefore *condemned to embrace* [my italics] its best-known and most favoured alternative, and indulge in the 'organic' sense of historic communities and of continuity? (...) Must he choose between cosmopolitanism and Hegelianism?"

The tenor of the passage, indeed, the intense empathy which pervades the entire essay, suggests the very high degree to which Gellner identified with Malinowski and his predicament. This can be illustrated with a rather pretty parallel. Gellner quotes Malinowski: "I should like to lead you back some twenty years to an old Slavonic university town... I could then show you a student leaving the medieval college buildings, obviously in some distress of mind..." [ibid.: 50-51] This is Malinowski in Cracow in 1905, on the verge of discovering the joys of anthropology. A little more than forty years later, another student can also be imagined, leaving the not-so medieval buildings of Balliol College, Oxford, also in an 'uneasy state of mind':

> "I had been trained in Oxford, largely in economics and philosophy... Economic theory was largely deductive, and its premises postulated individuals with clearly articulated, privately chosen ends, seeking to satisfy them in a world of limited means. I knew full well that such a condition, if it ever applied at all, certainly did not apply to all men at all times (...) the philosophy which was emerging at the time, and which was being hailed as a great and final revelation, made exactly the opposite mistake: it claimed that the correct way to proceed in philosophy was by observing and accepting the conceptual customs of one's community, because such customs alone, enshrined in the habits of speech, could authorise our intellectual procedures... I was not terribly impressed by the conventional wisdom which was then taught and rather eagerly embraced by my contemporaries, but I lacked the confidence to repudiate it and reject it with emphasis, at any rate at once." [Gellner 1994h: 20-21]

But repudiate it Gellner did, eventually and with emphasis: rejecting both parts of the conventional wisdom, criticising the modernist blinkers of an economistic formalism which treats the pre-modern world as an 'ontological slum unworthy of attention', but also fiercely attacking the later philosophy of Wittgenstein for its claim that conceptual meaning derives from communal consensus.[20] Substitute 'economics' for 'cosmopolitan-

[20]) As Gellner once drily noted, "I think I can say, without fear of immediate and virulent contestation, that I am not widely known as an uncritical and enthusiastic admirer of Ludwig Wittgenstein's later work." [Gellner 1985c: 70] Gellner believed that "Wittgenstein taught a whole generation of philosophers to ask the wrong questions (...) conceptual control cannot be reduced to social control. Social control cannot be reduced to conceptual compulsion. Wittgenstein taught the former error to philosophers and the latter to social scientists, some of whom have come to think that the world is the totality not of things but of meanings. *Hermeneutik über Alles.*" [Gellner 1985d: 185]

ism', 'Oxford analytic philosophy' for 'Hegelianism', and one might well be able to substitute 'Gellner' for 'Malinowski'.

However, a further substitution is also required, and this is where the comparison becomes less facile and also more suggestive. Malinowski was a 'pre-war Pole', someone who grew up in that part of the Habsburg domains which had once been Poland. Yet, far from taking the nationalist option, Malinowski in fact "had an undisguised admiration and affection" for the Habsburg Empire.[21] (In part this might have been because Malinowski did rather well for himself under the Habsburgs: as Gellner repeatedly points out, Malinowski's thesis on Ernst Mach was the only dissertation in Cracow in 1908 to be received *sub auspiciis Imperatoris* [Gellner 1987f: 55, 56, 58, 62]. Gellner, on the other hand, was a 'post-war Czechoslovak', someone who was born fairly soon after the establishment of the (first) Czechoslovak Republic, too soon for there to be any widespread nostalgia for the Habsburgs yet. Furthermore, Gellner himself was soon enough affected by the rise of a rather more brutal empire, the Third Reich, from which his family fled and against which he later fought as a very young soldier. And, as if this weren't enough, soon after he was demobilised, he had to flee from Prague once again, foreseeing the imposition of yet another period of imperial domination in the form of Soviet hegemony. Why did all this first-hand experience not turn Gellner into a Czechoslovak nationalist?

One might argue that Gellner did not become a nationalist because he in fact took the first option open to 'second-class citizens of World History': the route of assimilation. Leaving Prague and its tragic uncertainties behind (not just once, but twice!), young Ernest went off to Balliol, acquired the right Oxbridge accent, got his First and a good job in London, married a beautiful Englishwoman, settled down with his pipe and his books, and ended up the distinguished Professor with the right initials behind his name. In some ways, Gellner goes out of his way in his writings to support such an interpretation, with his references to 'Lady Montdore's Principle' (who on earth *was* Lady Montdore?, an uninitiated reader wonders) and other insider allusions. Sometimes, though, he really goes a bit too far in this sort of projection of himself as old-fogy-with-plummy-accent:

> "West End clubs are one of the few places left where it is still possible to have one's status confirmed by having one's shoes polished by human labour. Elsewhere it has become impossible, as I realised when I left my shoes outside the door of a New York hotel in the 1960s, and the hotel staff, quite misinterpreting my intention, simply threw the shoes away." [Gellner 1987g: 99]

The mischievous note of self-parody is unmistakable. But even if assimilationists are allowed to make fun of themselves, the fact remains that this interpretation of Gellner as an assimilationist is simply too pat. The assimilationist hypothesis would indeed conveniently explain why Gellner was so 'grateful' (to Elie Kedourie, another assimilated outsider) for the 'illumination' that nationalism is not simply natural, for if nationalism is not natural then there is no reason why one should not choose to belong to another nation of one's choice: assimilation loses the bitter flavour of betrayal. The assimilationist interpretation would also explain why Gellner constructs a fastidious Western collective 'we'

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[21]) [Gellner 1994i: 77]. Elsewhere Gellner quotes Malinowski as writing, "I should like to put it here on record that no honest and sincere Pole would ever have given anything but praise to the political regime of the old Dual Monarchy. Pre-war Austria in its federal constitution presented, in my opinion, a sound solution to all minority problems." From Malinowski's Preface to *The Cassubian Civilisation*, quoted in [Gellner 1987f: 58].

(in which, by definition, he is included, and whose feelings he can then voice) that is 'surprised, pained, frightened' by the sight of 'their' bad taste as reflected in Khomeini-style fundamentalism. The best way to confirm one's own membership of a club is to blackball (or, at least, to bad-mouth) others. However, while convenient and, perhaps, partly true, this hypothesis is too superficial to be wholly satisfying. For one thing, a successful assimilationist does not conspicuously draw attention to the extent to which he has succeeded in assimilating, as Gellner himself notes in a diverting footnote on social climbing:

> "the cult of restraint which is so characteristic of English culture (...) could be attributed to a valuation of rank and status, which frees its carrier from a vulgar need to insist loudly on his standing. He *is*, he doesn't need to *do*. This provides a useful and discouraging hurdle for the would-be climber, who is faced with a fork: if he conducts himself with restraint, he will remain unnoticed and outside, for as yet he *is* not, but if he makes a noise, he will display his vulgarity and damn himself. (In practice, many have, however, surmounted this fork.) [Gellner 1987f: footnote 96-97]

Was Gellner speaking from personal experience? Assimilation is generally regarded as the 'easy' option: only those who have undergone the finer details of identity-moulting know just how painful, even humiliating, the process can be. It is not coincidental that some of the fiercest nationalists have been those who tried to assimilate – and failed. Indeed, it is the humiliation felt by these failed 'wanna-bes' which is at the heart of Gellner's theory of nationalism.

The hypothesis that Gellner did not himself become a nationalist because he succeeded in assimilating into a relatively nice and rich culture probably does have some truth to it. However, the assimilationist interpretation does not cover some important aspects of Gellner's life and thought. It does not, for instance, explain his long-term fascination with North Africa and, more generally, the Islamic world. (In all fairness, the assimilationist hypothesis does not have to prove that *all* aspects of Gellner's life and thought were dictated by the requirements of assimilation. Just the most important aspects.) However, the limited scope of the assimilationist interpretation is most clear when one considers the continuity, complexity, and depth of Gellner's intellectual interest, political commitment, and personal ties to Central and Eastern Europe, in particular, to the Czech lands. The intertwined nature of these concerns is particularly evident when Gellner writes about the fate of those intellectuals who were not as foresighted, or simply as lucky, as he was himself, and who did not manage to escape:

> "The Czech intelligentsia is the captive Hamlet of Europe: ironically, the sloppy, inefficient and ill-disciplined industrial economy of contemporary Czechoslovakia (for communism has managed to reduce one of the most work-addicted nations on earth to just such a condition), which has made its writers, teachers and thinkers into hewers of wood and drawers of water, is also so lax as to give them, evidently, a fair amount of time to think, and even to write." [Gellner 1987h: 124]

As previously noted, Gellner claimed to prefer capitalism to socialism because capitalism was relatively more efficient and also because it required less 'false consciousness' of those living under it. These themes recur here – the same cool disdain for the 'sloppy, inefficient, and ill-disciplined' character of real socialism is here also coupled with a real sympathy for the 'writers, teachers and thinkers' who have been coerced into the almost Biblical roles of "hewers of wood and drawers of water" instead of performing the complex semantic functions appropriate to an industrial-age clerisy, functions which they can now only perform in their free time and on the sly. Gellner's sympathy sounds strangely

utilitarian, almost as though the worst part of the situation faced by the Czech intelligentsia was the bad work conditions.[22] He seems to feel a similar sort of sympathy for the populace as a whole: in a peculiar parenthesis, he sounds sorry that "one of the most work-addicted nations on earth" has been "reduced" to sloppy inefficiency. Addiction to work is clearly a virtue for Gellner, and his critique of Czechoslovak communism is twofold: first, that it prevents these good workers from doing their jobs properly; and, secondly, that it is so 'lax' that it cannot even successfully prevent these good workers from doing their jobs properly in their free time, intellectuals from thinking and writing, and ordinary people from the careful cultivation of their gardens in their weekend cottages.

Yet, for all its sloppiness, inefficiency, and lack of discipline, Czechoslovakia was an *industrial* economy. Gellner's strong insistence on this leads to certain conclusions. First, the real opposition between 'us' and 'them' is not between capitalism and socialism (especially when both tend towards the middle ground of the consumerist welfare-state), but rather between industrial and agrarian societies. Czechoslovakia and Britain are not so very different, after all.[23] Furthermore, the structural similarity between industrial societies means that *some* of their members can be transplanted fairly easily from one industrial society to another. As Gellner writes:

> "two equally sophisticated well-trained members of the upper professional layers of developed industrial countries feel little strain and need to adjust when visiting each other's lands, irrespective of how competent they are at speaking each other's language, in the literal sense... They already 'speak each other's language', even if they do not speak each other's language... It is ironic that intellectuals, the driving force of initial nationalism, are now, in a world of nation-states, often the ones who move with the greatest ease between states, with the least prejudice, as once they did in the days of an international inter-state clerisy." [Gellner 1983: 117-118]

As an inveterate conference-goer himself, Gellner was an active member of this new international clerisy composed of cosmopolitan intellectuals. Three observations result from this insight. First, assimilation and cosmopolitanism are not quite as divergent options as they might seem. In a sort of transverse social climbing, Gellner, for instance, assimilated into the trans-national class of cosmopolitan intellectuals. Indeed, one might argue that the reproduction of this particular class is especially dependent on this sort of

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[22]) Even Gellner's personal sympathies, then, are closely related to his intellectual concerns. It is the refusal to allow feelings to dominate the intellect which generates a stance of irony which can sound misleadingly dispassionate. As he points out, he "accepted this suffering of others with a vicarious stoicism which may, no doubt rightly, seem complacent and comic. But then, what help would it have been to anyone if one had become hysterical? The state of perpetual moral outrage, occasioned indifferently by good causes and bad (and seldom with enough knowledge to know just *which* it is) and used simultaneously to titivate oneself, to justify a shriller complacency, a meddling and demanding interference with others and a suspension of rules of propriety, is a habitual stance of the Far Left, and one which is in the end self-defeating and repellent. Cheap moral indignation drives out good." [Gellner 1987d: 112]

[23]) "An outside observer may be tempted by some comparisons. Britain is a free mixed-economy society, half-haunted by the guilt of capitalism. Czechoslovakia is a Stalinoid society haunted by the sins of Stalinism. De-legitimated capitalism faces de-legitimated socialism... Britain was the first industrial society, and the Czech lands were the first industrial area in Central Europe. So there are many parallels. Both societies are ailing." [Gellner 1987d: 132] As this essay has tried to point out, Gellner's attempt to present himself as an "outside observer" is somewhat disingenuous.

adoption since relatively few people are born trans-national and of these even fewer are intellectuals. Secondly, cosmopolitanism does not necessarily preclude local, particular, attachments. For if you are already metaphorically 'speaking each other's language' even if you do not literally speak each other's language, then there is no need to literally speak each other's language (if you see what I mean). This leads to the third observation: that there are different levels of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism could, for instance, be attitudinally defined as the ability to find common ground with an interlocutor presumably from another cultural environment on some underlying but not necessarily absolute level, or, on the level of identity-formation, as the ability to acquire and inhabit a complex identity composed of culturally multiple roles and personalities. However, since the ability to find common ground with a culturally different interlocutor implies a refusal to accept the absolute boundaries of one's own culture, and since the multiple roles in some sense cancel themselves out, both of these definitions do logically lead to a limiting concept of the cosmopolitan as an individual with no collective loyalties except to humanity as a whole.

This limiting concept of the cosmopolitan is essentially rationalistic: it is the Kantian vision of 'man as a *noumenon*', as a rational being who is free from his appetitive and social constraints and who can therefore freely act in a moral manner for the good of the human species as whole [see e.g. Kant 1928, 1952: 95-99; 1970]. Gellner, to some extent, discards the moral component of this image of the cosmopolitan; furthermore, as he likes to point out, Kant (and Hume) "under the fond delusion that they were analysing the human mind as such, *an sich*, anywhere, any time, were in fact giving very profound accounts of the general logic of the new spirit whose emergence characterised their age." [Gellner 1983: 20, see also *Reason and Culture* for a similar argument.] Gellner sociologises an even more rationalistic limiting concept on similar grounds: the starkly atomistic picture of the world presented in Wittgenstein's early masterpiece, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, was meant to depict "the very limits of the world... In fact, what [Wittgenstein] thought of as the limits of the world were but the shadows of one variant of the atomistic strategy in philosophy." [Gellner 1987b: 182-183] However, this resounding rhetorical relegation of even the early Wittgenstein to the obscure shadows of irrelevant intellectual history does not ring entirely true – as one realises from Gellner's own way of using of Wittgenstein's image of 'the limits of the world'. Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* used the image to make two related points: that the self, like the eye, cannot see itself, and that the philosophical self is a metaphysical subject which "does not belong to the world: rather it is a limit of the world." [Wittgenstein 1961: proposition 5.632, p. 57] Gellner replaces the 'philosophical self' with 'culture': as a result, in passages that (are meant to) echo and also distort Wittgenstein's description of the solitary self locked in its solipsistic world, Gellner provides new *social* images of the limits of the world. Thus, in "most of the closed micro-communities of the agrarian age the limits of the culture were the limits of the world, and the culture often itself remained unperceived, invisible". [Gellner 1983: 111] However, in industrial society where cultural homogeneity is at a premium, the "limits of his culture are the limits of his employability, his world, and his moral citizenship. (The peasant's world had been narrower than his culture.) He is now often liable to bump against this limit, like a fly coming up against the window-pane, and he soon learns to be acutely conscious of it." [Gellner 1987i: 16] There is a double movement involved in Gellner's use of the concept of the limit of the world: on the one hand, he transforms an essentially philosophical, indeed, transcendental, notion into a sociological concept

with which to clarify the radically difference between the agrarian and industrial worldviews; on the other hand, as an ideal-type image of the worldview generated by the conditions of industrial society, the 'terminal atomism' of Wittgenstein's delimited world is precisely the social and cultural space which Gellner himself came to inhabit, the world of mobile rational individualistic cosmopolitans.

However, Gellner did not think that this sort of cosmopolitan condition was a historical reality or that it was likely to become a universal condition. He did not believe in the 'convergence thesis', the idea that the structural similarities and economic interdependence between developed industrial societies would ultimately render cultural difference irrelevant and thus produce an essentially homogeneous global culture." [ibid.: 116-121] Gellner, then, found himself in the situation which he ascribed to Malinowski, in the position of a cosmopolitan who "could not conceivably see the human condition in general in such terms". And, like Malinowski before him, Gellner found a 'subtler and more complex' way to avoid falling back on the obvious alternatives which his Oxford training offered him, refusing to adopt either the sterile uncritically modernist worldview of economics or the equally unsatisfactory philosophy of his time with its reification of the customs and speech patterns of the 'community'. Gellner's 'subtler and more complex' solution to the dilemma was to translate the dilemma itself onto the material dimension of human history, to realise that the economists' model describing a world composed of the rational interactions and transactions of atomic individuals was an ideal-type image of *Gesellschaft*, a certain kind of society which emerged at a certain historical juncture, just as community-centric philosophy was in fact a certain idealised nostalgic image of *Gemeinschaft*, of the stable and relatively closed communities found in agrarian societies. The conceptual dilemma, the 'either/or', disappears, to be replaced with the concept of a transition from one worldview to another. The notion of 'transition' creates a useful space of ambiguity, a little bubble of time in which the past and the present co-exist, a zone of conceptual overlap in which one worldview can make sense of another radically different worldview. In this fruitfully ambiguous space Zeno's arrow both moves and is still, [Gellner 1987f: 64-67] the particle is also a wave, the observer is also a participant, and an anthropologist can understand (and even share) the inner life of another community without losing his own cosmopolitan identity.

A richer interpretation of Gellner's life and thought emerges from this insight, an interpretation which does rather more justice to the complexity of Gellner's intellectual interests and personal attachments than are allowed by more superficial understandings of Gellner as a functionalist with no respect for local conditions or as a rationalist with no regard for particular feelings. Ironically, the real reductionism lies in the image of Gellner as a reductionist, an irony he would have appreciated.

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The Bearers of Development of the Cross-Border Community on Czech-German Border

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Summary: This article summarises the information gathered during the sociological research on the bearers (agents) in the formation of the cross-border community on the Czech-German border. It is based on empirical surveys and sample studies that were carried out between 1989 and 2000 within the framework of the project The Development of the Cross-Border Community on the Czech-German Border, supported by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic (project no. 403/98/1420). The research attempted to address the following questions: how much and how intensive are the cross-border relations between the inhabitants of the Czech-German borderlands at the present time; what is the character of these relations and what are their aims; what circumstances influence them both positively and negatively; who are the agents in the development of the cross-border community; is it at all possible at present to speak of a cross-border community? (More detailed information from the empirical research and surveys are summarised in the collection "The Development of the Cross-Border Community on the Czech-German Border", Sociologický ústav AV ČR, 2000.) The study includes an overview of the main institutional agents in cross-border relations, and focuses mainly on sociological characteristics (motivation, value orientations, attitudes) of the individuals who on the Czech side maintain or initiate cross-border contacts. It also takes note of some political and historical connections in the creation of cross-border civic ties on the Czech-German border. In addition, the meaning behind the terms 'border' and 'cross-border community' are also considered, and the changes that have taken place on the Czech-German border during the 1990s in connection with the process of European integration are also evaluated.

The Current Controversy in Kinship

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Abstract: Two major positions have emerged in the debate about the nature of kinship. One argues that kinship can only be analysed from the framework of the biological necessities of human reproduction. The other argues that this position is nothing more than ethnocentric view of kinship derived from European culture and that only a broader cultural approach can provide a meaningful analysis of kinship. In this approach it is necessary to analyse kinship around the world from a perspective derived from within each different culture. Recent developments have pointed out the inadequacies of both of these positions and call for a new approach to kinship. This article suggests one possible approach that goes beyond the debate between biology and culture. It based upon the complementarity of human social behaviour.

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I would like to begin with a quote from a 1960 article in the journal, *Philosophy of Science*, in which Ernest Gellner began a debate about the nature of kinship. Gellner wrote:

> Suppose an anthropologist observes, in a society he is investigating, a certain kind of recurring relationship between pairs of individuals or of groups. (It may be a relationship of authority, or a symmetrical one of, say, mutual aid, or of avoidance, or whatnot.) Suppose the autochthonous term for the relationship is *blip*. The crucial question now is: Under what conditions will the anthropologist's treatment of the *blip*-relationship fall under the rubric of kinship structure? It will be so subsumed if the anthropologist believes that the *blip*-relationship overlaps, in a predominant number of cases, with *some* physical kinship relationship. [Gellner 1960: 187; Italics in original work]

That the anthropological study of kinship ultimately rests upon the biological foundation of human reproduction is not a novel idea. Since the modern study of kinship began in the middle of the 19th century there has been an intimate connection between kinship and biological processes. This relationship continues to be expressed today. A number of anthropologists (e.g., Fox, Goodenough, Holy, Scheffler) have agreed with Gellner that the processes of reproduction, birth, and nurturance, in one form or another provide the essential foundation of kinship. Furthermore, the biological processes often are taken to represent human nature and are seen to provide the necessary constant for systematic cross-cultural comparison. Culture, by comparison, is to be considered an epiphenomenon. It is useful for describing particular systems of kinship and describing human behavioural variety, but it is dependent upon human nature (defined in biological terms) and cannot serve as the framework for comparison. Comparative analysis is the foundation of science. In kinship, for Gellner, et al., this hinges on biology.

On the other side of the debate in the *Philosophy of Science* were John Barnes and Rodney Needham. They countered Gellner's position by arguing that kinship was primarily a matter of culture. It was the interpretation of the processes of reproduction and

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not simply the processes in themselves that constituted kinship. This position would then be expressed by David Schneider in one of the most influential publications concerning kinship since Morgan's *Ancient Society* in 1877. In his *A Critique of the Study of Kinship* (1984), Schneider [1987] argued that the biological framework – held out to be the natural foundation for the analysis of family and marriage relationships around the world – is, actually, an ethnocentric construct. It is a cultural construct based upon Eurocentric notions of reproduction and is not shared by other peoples around the world. The Trobrianders, for example [see Montague 2001], construe their fundamental social relationships without reference to biological processes. Malinowski had long ago pointed out that the male was not a part of the process and Montague makes it clear that the entire system of fundamental social relationships is construed upon cultural factors. People become relatives with rights and responsibilities that can be catalogued as a system of family and marriage relationships without reference to birth and reproduction. Thus, culture, not biology is to be considered to be the 'real' foundation of kinship. This led Schneider to conclude that the proper study of basic social relationships lies in eliciting individual cultural meanings and that kinship, as a field based upon natural physical processes, does not exist.

Schneider's critique was welcomed by those who saw the opportunity to free kinship from the bounds of biology. Feminist anthropologists applauded Schneider [Collier and Yanagisako 1987a] and began deconstructing the notion of gender. Gays and lesbians championed the notion that biology does not set a standard for everybody in their constructions of non-traditional families [Weston 1991]. By the end of the twentieth century, the debate about the nature of kinship had moved out of the academic world into the realm of the courts, politics, and the public discourse. This was partially due to the growing public demand for equal rights in homosexual marriage but another important factor was the spreading use of the new reproductive technologies (NRTs).

In 1978, the first 'test-tube' baby was born and an entire industry of reproduction was born. This brought new possibilities to fundamental social relationships and forced reconsideration of the ideas about basic human interactions. The use of gene transference, *in vitro* fertilisation, embryo transfer, gamete intrafallopian transfer, surrogacy, sperm banks, and frozen embryos have changed the 'nature' of reproduction. These technologies make it easy to separate sex from reproduction, allow a woman to conceive without intercourse, and permit a man to be genetically related to the child of a woman with whom he has had no physical contact. The NRTs also make it possible for children born from the same woman to have no genetic relationship to each other, for a child to have three biological mothers, and for a child to be born decades after the death of its (genetic) parents. All of this has raised the question, 'What is natural?' in kinship.

This is no longer an easy question to answer. If one woman has the DNA from the nucleus of her egg placed into the egg of a second woman from whom the nucleus has been removed, a third woman has the fertilised egg implanted in her womb, and a fourth adopts the child at birth, which of these is the 'natural mother'? Perhaps, all four can be considered the mother of the child. Then what are the social and legal responsibilities for each? These questions are difficult to answer because our traditional views of reproduction that served us so well before no longer apply. This has been made acutely clear particularly in the legislative and judicial system in the U. S.

Judges, juries, and legislators in the U. S. are being faced with increasing numbers of court cases in which the nature and obligations of kinship have come into question. Estimates now suggest that over 75,000 women a year are being artificially inseminated with donor semen and the practice has raised a number of interesting legal issues. In one highly publicised U.S. case, for example, a husband and wife agreed to use the husband's sperm and a surrogate woman to give birth to a child who would then be adopted by the wife. The couple searched for and found a woman whom they accepted as the surrogate. She signed a contract relinquishing all rights to the child once it was born and agreed to payment for her participation. The surrogate was then inseminated under clinical supervision. After giving birth, however, she decided to keep the child. She argued that as the biological mother she had legal rights that superseded her contractual agreements to relinquish the child. It was left to the courts to decide whether a biological parent can claim legal rights to a child after ceding them in a surrogacy contract. The court was forced to query whether motherhood, defined in terms of biological relationships, has precedence over the rights of legal contract [Fox 1993: 53-125]. The lower court rendered its verdict and gave the child to the adoptive parent on the basis that this was in the best interests of the child. It recognised the legitimacy of the contract. The State Supreme Court, however, found otherwise. It invalidated the contract, voided the adoption, and restored the surrogate as the mother of the child [ibid.: 115]. We can wonder what the impact would have been upon this case if the married woman had contributed the egg for the surrogacy.

In another case [Harrison 1995] a lesbian couple raised a child born to one of the women (Thomas S. v. Robin Y. 599 N.Y.S.2d 377 (Fam. 1993)). The biological mother had become pregnant via a gay donor who agreed not to seek "parental rights or obligations," while claiming the right to "make himself known to the child, Ry, if she asked questions about his identity" (188). Originally, the donor lived by the agreement. He visited the child occasionally at the discretion of the women and did not partake in any parental responsibilities. By the time Ry reached age ten, however, the man determined that he wished to play a greater role in parenting. When the women resisted this, he began paternity and visitation proceedings. What are his parental rights? Are they different from those of the biological parent of a child deserted at birth?

In the case of this child, the lesbian parents obviously do not conform to the idealised traditional Western family – the male-female dyad with their biologically related children – and the usual mother-daughter relationship required some redefining. Ry called both women 'mommy' [ibid.: 186]. Should the biological mother's partner be considered a co-mother and should both women be entitled to the rights of traditional parents?

In another case, a judge gave a biological parent custodial rights in spite of a long period of absence and virtually no contact between the parent and the child. Sarah, a young girl, was abandoned by her biological mother and housed by foster parents. Five years later, Sarah's biological mother returned demanding custody of the child. Although the foster parents tried to adopt Sarah, the court turned over custody "to the stranger who was her 'natural' mother" [Coontz 1992: 143].

The court in Sarah's case decided that the biological tie is the natural and primary tie between parent and child. In New York, the State Court of Appeals agreed with this interpretation and denied visitation rights to a previous lesbian partner of a woman with a child upon the basis of the absence of biological ties. But not all judges agree and courts have not decided cases in this way. Some courts in the United States have recognised a

lesbian partner as a parent. In a custody dispute in New Mexico, for example, the court recognised certain parental relationships between a child and the female partner of the biological mother [Harrison 1995: 184]. In this case, two women had shared parental responsibilities and the court decided that this gave the partner rights to continue her relationship with the child even after the women were no longer together.

Similar legal issues have arisen in households of gay men with children. When two men share in parenting of a child and each provide childcare and support are both to be considered the father of the child? And, in regard to the interpersonal relationships in this family, will each be addressed as 'daddy'? Increasing numbers of gay men are adopting children, sometimes contracting with women to bear children by insemination with their own sperm, then adopting and raising the offspring with male partners. In this mirror image of the lesbian couple, the child has two male parents. In terminological systems of different cultures around the world we know that people address the biological female parent and several other women by the same term and, likewise, her husband and several other males by the same term. People may begin to move towards that practice in the West. Obviously, anthropology and, in particular, kinship can provide important models for exploring these new family arrangements.

The households established by gay and lesbian couples have raised questions not only about the nature of parentage, but about the nature of marriage as well. When individuals in a same-sex couple set up a household, adopt or bear children, raise the children, and share all domestic responsibilities, should they be given the same rights as a heterosexual married couple? Should they be granted the right to make life-or-death medical decisions, claim inheritance, share pensions and medical benefits, and provide a defence against sexual abuse? The Hawaii Supreme Court ruled in 1993 that homosexuals had been unconstitutionally denied marriage licenses. The cases that brought the ruling were returned to lower court for trial and had not been resolved when California legislators in 1996 (fearful that Hawaii was about to legalise same-sex marriages) advanced a bill to deny recognition in California to those marriages performed in other states.

The debate about the nature of basic social relationships has also appeared in another area of kinship. In open adoptions, the adopting parents know the biological parents of the child. It is thus possible for both sets of parents to interact on a close, if not daily, basis and for both sets of parents to have a continuing relationship with the child. In the resulting kinship configuration, the child has two sets of parents and the parents have a family relationship with each other. Modell [1994] has referred to this set of relationships as the 'blended family' [ibid.: 236]. Since the passage of the first modern law of adoption by Massachusetts in 1851, the primary model that emerged in the courts attempted to make adoption a jural replication of the family based upon biology. By breaking the ties with the biological parents and creating ties with the adoptive parents, the family of the adopted child was to be 'as if' it were a biological unit. Open adoption challenges this model and "demands creativity about the rules of being related and the meanings of 'mother,' 'father,' and 'kin'" [ibid.: 56]. In the blended family members have had to redefine what it means to be a parent and to define the nature of the kinship relationships between parents.

The increased use of sperm banks has also raised issues in kinship. There is now an increased probability that individuals who are, unknowingly, half-siblings will meet and mate. This problem arises particularly because of a tendency for different women to se-

lect the same physical characteristics at a sperm bank and, consequently, the sex cells of a single male for insemination. The anonymity of donors, a standard practice in sperm banks, results in a number of half-siblings who are not aware of their genetic relationship. Should the children be informed about their heritage? If not, what does one do about the possibility of their meeting and mating? Do the laws governing marriage procedures need to be changed? What about the laws concerning incest? Furthermore, what about the man who donated to a sperm bank and has decided to contact his offspring? Should he have the legal right to do so? Similarly, what rights does a woman donor have? What about the children? Should they have the legal right to know their genetic parents? Do they have any inheritance rights? In Sweden, the child at age eighteen has a legal right to know who the semen donor was but the donor has no rights of legal paternity in the child [Strathern 1992: 25].

Today, in the U.S. more than thirty states have passed laws guaranteeing sperm donors independence from the claims of their genetic offspring. In contrast, few states have passed any comparable laws for egg donation [Hoffman 1996: A7]. This is in spite of the fact that there are numerous known cases of *in vitro* fertilisation in which an embryo has been introduced into a woman who is not the genetic mother [Shanley 1993: 625]. In both cases, however, many questions have been left unanswered about the nature of the relationships among the individuals involved and about the legal implications of these relationships. Fears abound among recipients that a donor could turn up one day and claim a child while donors fear that a child conceived with their sperm or egg may end up "knocking on their door in 18 years, looking for financial or emotional succour" [Hoffman 1996: A7].

What we can see from the above situations is that we are living in a new world in which the relationships between parents and children and husbands and wives are in a state of flux. The NRTs and new family arrangements have produced situations with unclear legal rights and responsibilities for the people involved and the courts in the U.S. are now desperately searching for what is 'natural' to determine the legal priorities. One path this search is taking is the attempt to establish that the nature of kinship is biological, giving priority to genetics or gestation in framing law. But this is misguided. As Marilyn Strathern [1992] has cogently pointed out, what is natural in kinship has become indeterminate. The relationship between biology and culture has become so entangled that the conventional approaches exemplified in the debate initiated by Gellner in the 1960s no longer apply. We should no longer argue about whether it is culture or biology that is the basic nature for kinship. What we must face now, as Strathern [1992] and others have pointed out, is that kinship deals with both. But how?

I view the situation today in kinship as one similar to one that confronted physics at the beginning of the last century. Before the beginning of the 20th century, the study of the interrelationships between physical objects had been based upon a Newtonian absolute spatial framework. The development of new technologies around the end of the previous century, however, produced results that challenged this conception of space and led to the development of a relativistic space-time framework. At the end of the 20th century, new technologies have produced results that challenge the old theoretical models of kinship and call for new frameworks for understanding the fundamental interrelations between humans. I believe that kinship must also move to a relativistic framework. It is time to leave the notion of an absolute framework of human nature defined by biology and develop a relativistic, biological-cultural framework.

David Schneider paved the way towards the creation of a relativistic framework for kinship by his critique of kinship. He made clear the ethnocentric bias of the biological framework of previous kinship analyses. This was an important step towards a new framework for the 21st century. But he offered no relativistic alternative. His position of cultural relativism is not relativistic. It is what Latour [1993] has called 'absolute relativism' and I have referred to as 'localcentric' [Ottenheimer 2001] or 'monistic' [Ottenheimer 1995]. In his critique of the biological basis in previous kinship analyses, Schneider proposed a cultural approach. In this approach, the investigator derives the concepts for the examination of social relationships from the symbols in which the relationships are imbedded. That is, one derives the principles of kinship from the ethnographic data of the culture under investigation rather than assuming a definition of kinship derived from the culture of the investigator. At first glance this appears to be a relativistic antidote to an absolutistic, ethnocentric European biological approach. But, under close examination, it is not. It turns out to be simply a substitute of one form of ethnocentrism for another. Schneider's approach is not relativistic. It is not relativistic because it calls for only one, true framework for analysing a set of data.

When someone chooses to analyse social behaviour in terms derived from the culture under analysis, as Schneider suggests doing, one doesn't avoid ethnocentrism, one simply changes its location. The kinship analyst using the local culture's terms and framework in an investigation of social relationships is being localcentric rather than Eurocentric. The investigation, furthermore, if restricted to viewing the social data from the one perspective, is simply utilising another form of absolutism. The analyst is being constrained to the one 'true' way for analysing the data, only it is from within rather than from without the culture being analysed. If the claim is that there is only one true way to look at a culture, whether it is from within or without the culture, the approach is ethnocentric and absolutistic, not relativistic. The only change that has occurred in Schneider's approach to kinship is in shifting the focus of the analysis from being Eurocentric to being localcentric.

The distinction I am drawing between a relativistic and an absolutistic approach to data may be made clearer by reference to a widely known distinction in anthropology that has been made between the concepts: etic and emic. The words, invented in 1954 by Kenneth Pike [1967], were derived from the words phonetic and phonemic utilised in linguistics. In investigating a language, the linguist can utilise the external framework of points of articulation of the vocal tract to discriminate and describe the sounds of the language. Such a procedure is known as articulatory phonetics. The linguist can then use an internal framework to discover how the sounds are grouped to change meaning within the language. This procedure is known as phonemic analysis. This analysis requires an internal viewpoint. It necessitates knowing what meanings are assigned to the collection of sounds utilised by speakers of the language. No amount of investigation from the external viewpoint will provide this information. Pike extended the linguistic phonetic and phonemic approaches for more general purposes and coined the terms 'etic' and 'emic.' These were meant to represent the external and internal viewpoints, respectively, in an investigation of human behaviour. While Pike points out that "etic criteria may often be considered absolute" [Berry 1990: 85], there is no doubt that he saw one being derived from the culture of the investigator while the other is related to the internal characteristics of the system under investigation. For Pike, both "...are of value; neither is more important than the other" [ibid.: 86]. Furthermore, like stereoscopic vision, the two different

approaches provide distinct images of the data that together provide a greater dimensionality to the overall picture than either can provide by itself [Pike 1967: 41]. Pike thus saw the external and internal approaches to analysing human behaviour in relativistic terms. Each represented a particular perspective and each has value for interpreting or describing data. One of them is made into an absolute frame of reference when it is ascribed with a greater ontological status than the other and considered the one true way of analysing or describing data.

Analytical concepts in kinship can equally be derived from the culture under investigation or from the culture of the investigator. The former are, in Pike's terms, emic concepts while those derived from the analyst's cultural heritage are etic concepts. Etic concepts have been used for cross-cultural comparisons while the emic concepts have been restricted to the investigation of the culture under analysis. The former have been granted a scientific or even an absolutistic status by some anthropologists as if they were objective, culture-free concepts. Schneider evidently recognised that ultimately what is involved is two emic sets of concepts. He knew that the notion of an objective, culture-free analysis is an illusion and recognised that what are called etic concepts are nothing more than the notions from the external analyst's culture. Thus, what is involved are the emic concepts of the people of the culture under investigation and the emic concepts of the investigator. But, instead of treating the two in a relativistic manner, he denigrated the etic approach in kinship and conferred upon the internal viewpoint the greater ontological status; making it the one true approach. This is the critical point at which Schneider's critique of kinship fails. It fails because it does not provide a relativistic alternative to the Eurocentric, absolutistic work he so strongly decried. If anthropological analysis is to succeed in producing significant statements about kinship, or any aspect of human behaviour, the anthropologist must stop thinking in terms of one 'true' framework, whether it be Eurocentric or localcentric. I hope we can move beyond the ultimately unproductive argument over whether it is the culture of the investigator or the culture under investigation that has the 'truth'.

The problem with cultural relativism as a framework for the study of kinship may be made more apparent by returning again to the world of linguistic phenomena. Important contributions to the study of language have been made through the utilisation of articulatory phonetics. In this approach to language, sounds made by humans are investigated by reference to the physical makeup of the vocal tract. The sound /p/, for example, is described as the brief stopping of air pushed up from the lungs by pressing the lips together. This approach can readily be seen to be derived from European culture and, like the biological models for studying kinship, be considered to be Eurocentric. Suppose now that an ethnographer discovers a group of people who describe human speech to be the result of small, invisible spirits located in the vocal tract of each person. This provides us with a different, non-Eurocentric view of language. Do we now declare phonetics to be a vacuous concept without analytical utility since it is derived from a Eurocentric view of the way sounds are created by humans? Isn't that what David Schneider has asked us to do in the case of kinship? That articulatory phonetics has been developed within a particular culture should not mean that is has no analytical utility. Nor does the fact that this framework for analysing human speech has been developed within a particular culture confine it to an investigation of only the language of that culture. Nor does its source make it incapable of describing universal characteristics of language. We can recognise that it is both a framework developed within a cultural tradition and a

framework that can provide useful insights into the characteristics of language across cultures. It, as Pike recognised, provides a means for describing universal characteristics of language while neither being an absolute framework nor one which pretends to describe some absolute reality. Likewise, the study of kinship from a Eurocentric perspective can provide a means for analysing behaviour across cultures. It need not be abandoned because the analytical framework is derived from a particular cultural tradition.

The localcentric approach of Schneider is different from a Eurocentric approach to kinship in two major ways: (1) There is no assumption about biological relationships being the basis of the social world, and (2) there is no claim that the local framework has universal applicability. In fact, in regard to the second point, it is just the opposite. The claims are that the concepts of social behaviour are a cultural matter and that the cultural framework of the people from the society under investigation is the only appropriate one for the data. These differences, however, are of little consequence in regard to the major issue of this essay. The significant point for the argument over whether the approach is relativistic or not is that if the approach claims to be the one 'true' framework for analysis of the data it is not a relativistic approach. Whether the 'true' framework is localcentric or Eurocentric, cultural or biological, internal or external, does not matter. If either framework is claimed to be the only appropriate one, it is not relativistic. In Schneider's attempt to provide an alternative to the Eurocentric analyses of kinship, the conceptions, categories, and values of analysis have simply been shifted from one culture to another. We are still told the one, proper way of analysing the data. Thus, in spite of appearing so from its name, cultural relativism is not relativistic.

Not being relativistic is, in itself, no reason for criticising cultural relativism. But, lacking this characteristic, it fails to provide an important component of any attempt to make any scientific use of the data derived from cultural analysis. It lacks generalisability. If we are limited to the examination of each culture in the terms of its own categories and values, how is one to compare the categories derived from different cultures? How does one construct a framework with universal application for analysing kinship? To achieve the level of generalisation necessary for an adequate analysis of human social relationships, comparison of the different categories or units derived from the particular culture is required. In other words, once investigators have uncovered the categories or units from various cultures, what categories or units does one use to compare these? Obviously, units of comparison will have to be selected from some particular culture and applied to others. Thus, the problem of ethnocentric bias reappears at higher levels of analysis, and cultural relativism is unable to solve it. It provides no mechanism for comparing data cross-culturally. If the Eurocentric concept of kinship is meaningless because it does not provide the local interpretation of social relationships, the localcentric conception of social relationships is powerless because it is restricted to a singular cultural perspective regarding social relationships. If the Eurocentric conception of kinship is vacuous, the cultural relativistic conception is impotent.

To construct a productive framework that avoids the limitations of both absolutistic approaches of biology and cultural relativity, I have turned to a relativistic model based on the notion of the complementarity of light. It was the philosopher-physicist Niels Bohr who had first noticed similarities between contemporary physics and kinship. He recognised that understanding the interaction of subatomic particles and the comprehension of the fundamental relationships of human behaviour require relativistic frameworks. In both

cases, objectivity is not possible and uncertainty exists due to the intimate interaction between the observer and the observed. He also noticed a complementarity in both physics and kinship. Both the interactions among subatomic particles and the social interrelationships of humans demonstrate a duality that emerges in the interplay between data and the investigator. Quantum physicists recognise complementarity in the nature of light. Light manifests two distinct natures under different experimental conditions. Sometimes it acts as if it is made up of particles, and sometimes it acts as if it were made up of electromagnetic waves. Bohr recognised that the seemingly contradictory behaviours are the result of the dual nature of light emerging in different experiments. The experiment or framework one utilises in examining the nature of light will partially determine what the results will be. The different results are equally 'true'. The fundamental nature of light is considered to be both particle-like and wave-like. In a similar way, kinship reveals a complementarity in the nature of social relationships [Bohr 1938]. Like investigations into the nature of light, social research involves an intimate interaction between the investigation of the observer and the phenomena observed. Human nature must be considered to consist of an intimate interaction between biological and cultural aspects of life and frameworks utilised in the investigation of human social relationships reveal this distinct dualistic nature of life. We do the complexity of human behaviour an injustice and hinder the possibility of our understanding it if we assume, as we have in the past, that either one or the other represents the true nature of kinship.

What are the implications of this? The judges trying to determine the legal responsibilities of the various parties involved in a birth through the new reproductive technologies can no longer rely on any deductions based simply upon one culture's judgement about human nature. The world of the 21st century requires legislation derived from an understanding of kinship principles. This can only be achieved through comparative analysis of the different systems of marriage and filiation around the world and the recognition of the intimate relationship between biology and culture.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that, any significant statements about human behaviour in the 21st century requires a new understanding of the primary elements and relationships of human social behaviour. Kinship, as the study of these elements and relationships, must move beyond the absolutistic frameworks of the past and turn to a relativistic perspective. I have suggested one such framework. It will have immediate and important effects in the world well beyond the current controversy in kinship.

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The Problem of Time from the Perspective of the Social Sciences

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Abstract: This article presents a critical review of ideas about time in modern societies and especially in the social sciences. Man in modern society perceives, reflects and registers time in a series of contexts, whether this involves questions of thought, the physical body, nature or society. Current studies that address the question of time in many cases do so through a comparison of archaic temporal awareness and modern temporal awareness, and attempt to describe when and how this historical shift came about. According to O. Rammstedt four distinct historical types of understanding time can be distinguished: (1) occasional awareness of time based on a distinction made between 'now' and 'not-now'; (2) cyclical awareness of time; (3) linear awareness of time with a closed future, and (4) linear awareness of time with an open future. In contemporary social sciences four main theoretical perspectives can be observed. The first one assumes that the basic principles of order are or should be considered as unchanging. These principles express themselves as invariants. In the 20th century we can find it in structural linguistics, and in social sciences with a structuralist orientation. The second approach resembles the previous one in that it also considers the existence of unchanging principles of order. However, it differs through the assumption that these principles reveal themselves in time. The third approach can be considered *de facto* a sort of special degree of the second, i.e. closed historical concept. Unlike the teleological characterof the latter, however, it considers human intervention as a necessary condition for the achievement of a future aim. The fourth concept is founded on the idea that the basic principles of order can be revealed only in time. Unlike the second, however, it does not consider the main organising principles to be unchanging, but rather concludes that in each contemporary period they are open to change. This fourth approach, which can be described as 'temporalised sociology' and which is expressed in works of such authors as G. H. Mead, A. Schütz, N. Elias, N. Luhmann or A. Giddens is stressing a relatively open future, emergence, novelty and the concept of discontinuity. In the opinion of the author of this study another concept should be added to our understanding of time: i.e. 'irreversibility'. It is a feature of those systems that are far form being balanced and in which, in order to be able to predict future states, it is not enough to know the laws and the initial conditions.

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In *Reason and Culture*, Ernest Gellner writes that, thanks to a certain mechanism of evolution, one that has yet to be fully grasped, one remarkable feature of the human race is the striking variability of its reactions. The lack of any preliminary genetic programming of human reactions must in Gellner's view (who on this point makes reference to Durkheim) be compensated with certain social and conceptual limitations. The ability to react to socio-semantic limitations fortunately emerged in our behaviour alongside its pliability

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[Gellner 1992]. Human notions of time are, as will be demonstrated here, a part of these socio-semantic regulators.

As Helga Nowotny notes, time in the life of society has 'many faces' and assumes various shapes and forms of expression. It permeates every aspect of social life and is a basic component of all social phenomena [Nowotny 1992: 499]. In the words of Barbara Adam, time is predetermination and a necessity for all human societies, regardless of whether the language of that society has a special designation for it or not. It is an essential precondition of any thoughts on human society or social order, and on stability or change within them.

Man in modern society perceives, reflects and registers time in a series of contexts, whether this involves questions of thought, the physical body, nature or society. In addition, it represents the standard method of measurement, co-ordination, regulation, and control, which is today applied world-wide. In these diverse forms time is understood as a part of life in society that is inherent, and simply taken for granted. Paradoxically, despite the fact that we are surrounded by it, it continues to elude us. It is so deeply rooted in our existence that it is almost 'invisible' [Adam 1990: 9]. This fact leads to the problems associated with efforts to understand and investigate time.

The construction of ideas about time

Edmund Leach connects the heterogeneity of ideas about time with two basic experiences: (1) certain natural phenomena are recurrent; (2) for the human organism, changes in life are irreversible and death unavoidable [Leach 1961: 125]. The construction of ideas about time, in the form of certain typologies that become a part of our available stock of knowledge, is founded on certain, anthropological types of assumptions. Key among these is the elementary fact that man is a creature imbued with reason who is born and dies. The duration of human life is thus clearly oriented along 'time's arrow', which moves unwaveringly from a beginning to an end. However, of no less importance is the fact that in the world of life we live in, we are surrounded and influenced by a series of phenomena that are characterised by rhythmic alternations or repetition (e.g. the rhythmic alternation of the four annual seasons), which in turn enables us to measure particular and individual lengths of time (e.g. we can measure the length of our lives through the number of springs we have lived through).

The specific human relationship to what has been and what will be is important for the construction of ideas about time. In this connection the idea of John Ellis McTaggart is worth remembering, as he referred to two concepts of time: the objective concept, which distinguishes between early and late stages – these types of relationships are designated as B-time series – and the subjective concept, which incorporates the observer and the observer's past, present and future within the analysis – the A-time series. Series B is considered sufficient for a description and explanation of nature. In order to investigate the human world, however, it is necessary to use both types, as human awareness of time contains both the experience of real successions, and the ability to remember, reflect and expect. Series B (before/after) creates a time structure that refers to relationships and events that are identical for all observers. Conversely, in series A (past, present, future) the definitions of today, tomorrow and yesterday change in connection with the observer and the observer's awareness. Barbara Adam states that all societies make distinctions between events according to time series A and B, including those societies whose lan-

guages do not make corresponding distinctions in tenses or have no separate term for what we call time [Adam 1990: 21].

Norbert Elias [1992] views time as a tool for orientation, which is created on the basis of inter-comparisons between multiple, continuous actions. What we refer to as time is in his opinion a kind of relative framework, which aids people in creating orientation points within the continual flow of changes. This framework enables the inter-comparison of the individual phases of actions, and various, recurring or particular events serve people as socially standardised orientation points: the seasons, tides, movements of the sun and moon, the birth of Christ or the prophet Mohammed.

According to Elias, time is determined through the ability to inter-connect two or more different sequences of continuous changes, one of which serves as a measure for the other or others. The concept of time is founded on what is common to the sequences, regardless of their differences in terms of substance. The word time is a symbol for a relationship that groups of humans (thus groups of creatures with the biologically determined capacity for remembering and synthesis) set between two or more courses of events, of which one is taken as a relative framework or measure for the standardisation of the others [ibid.: 12]. For certain events to be asserted as 'time' requires a connection between a minimum of three continua: between people and between two or more continua of changes, of which one is chosen by a certain group of humans as the standard continuum, as the relative framework in relation to which the rest is measured (first man made use of the continual sequence of what we call natural events, and then to a growing degree made use of mechanical sequences formed by humans).

Many authors (e.g. E. Durkheim and P. A. Sorokin) set the question of temporal ideas in connection with the development of abstract thought. Unlike these authors, Elias considers it more apt to speak not of abstraction (it is difficult to say which specific phenomena time was abstracted from) but of synthesis. Time-like the concepts of nature, cause or substance – is a result of 'synthesis on a high level', which was reached in the process of development from particular to generalising syntheses.

Memory is of key importance in these thought acts. Concepts such as 'earlier' and 'later' are manifestations of the human ability to group together in their ideas that which did not actually occur together, and which was therefore not even experienced by people as occurring together. Memory plays a decisive role among all forms of determining time as an essential precondition for the human ability to create a synthesis (e.g. it would make no sense to say that it is now four o'clock if at the same time it were not possible to be aware of the fact that earlier it was two o'clock and later it will be six o'clock).

One complication in the attempt to grasp the entire problem stems from the fact that, from the very beginning, humans have referred to recurring natural phenomena as a measure of this tool of orientation. As a result, they tend to project specifically human – socially construed – ideas of time into non-human reality, to use this – by nature social – tool as the measure and explanatory principle for natural and cosmic events.

Like many other social products, the way in which time is determined evolved throughout the centuries to its current state in connection with the rise of certain social requirements. The first of these is the need to co-ordinate and synchronise the course of human activities in relation to each other and in relation to non-human nature. This kind of requirement does not arise in all societies with the same intensity; the larger, more populated, more differentiated and complex a society is, the stronger the requirement is,

too. It grows with the increase in urbanisation and commercialisation, which lead to the need to make use of a balanced, forward-running temporal raster as a general relative framework for synchronising the growing number of human activities. This task (on which, among other things, matters such as regular tax payments, interest, and the fulfilment of contracts and obligations depend) is taken up by central – church or secular – institutions that find support in physical models; this development is supported by the technical innovations of first tower clocks, and later pocket and wrist watches. This temporal awareness, that penetrates everything, becomes an integral part of the social 'canon' of relatively complex, urbanised societies and the personalised structures of their members. Time is endowed with a compelling force that stems from its social functions.

Elias considers the forms of experiencing time as aspects of social habit. Through numerous examples he demonstrates that people have not always experienced the mutual relationships of events in the manner that is typical for modern man. The human experience of what is today called time, transformed itself in the past and continues to change in the present. Contemporary man may of course assume that the models of self-regulation experienced now are normal, universal, human features, and need not be aware that this approach is the product of a long-term process.

Current studies that address this question in many cases do so through a comparison of archaic temporal awareness and modern temporal awareness, and attempt to describe when and how the change came about in which many varied 'local times' evolved into a single universal time, and the original multiplicity of the highly varied, locally differentiated ideas and systems of measuring time was replaced with the single, balanced, and meticulously segmented temporal raster of hours, minutes and seconds shared by all. In this connection E. T. Hall [1983] speaks of the 'polychronic' time of archaic societies and the 'monochronic' time of modern society, and M. Young refers to the transformation of the natural rhythm into a 'metronomic pulse'.

One of the attempts to describe the development in this area is the concept of the German author O. Rammstedt, who was led by the differences in the historical types of understanding time to distinguish four distinct forms [Rammstedt 1975: 47 et seq.]:

1. occasional awareness of time (founded on a distinction made between 'now' and 'not-now');
2. cyclical awareness of time (including the distinction of 'before' and 'after');
3. linear awareness of time (past/present/future) with a closed future;
4. linear awareness of time with an open future.

What is characteristic of the first of these forms is that time is viewed as an oscillation between opposites: night and day, winter and summer, drought and flood, youth and old age, life and death. The past has no depth; no matter how near or distant it remains only the opposite of the present. Edmund Leach [1961] refers to this 'flattened' time, which is ascribed by some cultural anthropologists to pre-literate societies, as 'alternating' time, as its flow is similar to the flow of an alternating current in an electrical circuit. This author is trying to underline the non-cyclical essence of alternating time with the claim that the geometric notion of time in the form of a circle is a thought foreign to 'unsophisticated' societies.

Leach's idea of archaic, alternating and non-cyclical time was criticised by Robert Barnes [1974], who claims that the typical form of the collective representation of time in

pre-technical societies is not one of zig-zaggy alternations, but is rather cyclicity, or periodicity. The defining feature of primitive temporality is in Barnes' view a non-cumulative repetitiveness rather than a pendular alternation. If we were to accept Barnes' argument, in the above-mentioned concepts of four historical forms of understanding time, we could dispute the idea of occasional awareness of time as the first phase, and view the second form, cyclical awareness of time, as the starting point.

In societies in which the awareness and conduct of people is to a substantial degree determined by the flow or cycle of alternating annual seasons and agriculture labour, tradition plays the dominant role. The life of the people is founded on the reproduction of models of behaviour, the content of which was established in the past by the society's ancestors. For this reason it is often said of individuals in archaic societies that they did not see the future, but rather shrunk towards it with their backs turned and their faces looking towards the past.

Cyclicity, however, also expresses itself on the level of historical consciousness. In the book *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Mircea Eliade [1993] attempted to reconstruct the manner of people's thought that was connected with the idea of some sort of eternal cycle occurring place in the form of recurring circular returns. Eliade demonstrates that our idea of a linear passage of historical time in the direction from the past to the present and into the future was not characteristic of people in archaic societies. Their perspective saw a history filled with eternal repetitions. In Eliade's view, what societies of the traditional agrarian type and the large old civilisations of Europe, Asia and America had in common was that while they did indeed have knowledge of a certain form of history they tried not to reflect on it; among these societies, the resistance to concrete historical time was linked with a desire for periodic returns to a mythical age at the beginning of time.

In this connection Claude Lévi-Strauss, in *La pensée sauvage* [1971], speaks of a 'never-ending battle' between synchronism and diachronism, which he illustrates in the example of the function of sacred objects that Australian aborigines call 'churingy': the task of these objects is to destroy time, to annul the results of its passage, to enable contemporaries to communicate with predecessors, and to enable them to connect with their predecessors in a synchronic manner.

These and other similar interpretations, as Alfred Gell [1992] has recently shown, contain certain pitfalls. The problem may be summarised in a simplified way through the following questions: Did the members of these societies really believe that time repeats itself cyclically, or were they aware of its irreversibility and tried by means of religious myths, rituals and practices to struggle against it in every possible way? Eliade's formulation of the attempt not to reflect on history and the desire for periodic returns, and Lévi-Strauss' idea of the ritual which is the 'tool for destroying time' testify rather to the second idea.

One way or the other, the onset of Christianity had a significant influence on the reconstruction of ideas about time. Here we arrive at another historical form of understanding time, which is a linear awareness of time with a 'closed' future. Unlike antiquity, which is attributed with maintaining a cyclical concept of historical time, the middle ages are characterised by a finalistic conception of movement from creation to the end of the world. The re-construction of the structure of temporal ideas in medieval Europe is connected with the transition from paganism to Christianity, in which the interpretation of time was based on three key moments representing the beginning (creation), culmination

(the coming of Christ and death on the cross), and the end (the last judgement). Owing to these 'strategic points', historical time is straightened, and becomes vectorial, linear and irreversible [Gurevič 1978: 87]. Historians dealing with these periods usually point out that through the influence of Christianity the archaic relationship to time was not so much uprooted as it was shifted into the background, and thus during the middle ages two concepts existed alongside one another: the cyclical time of recurring natural phenomena and agricultural labour, and linear time, bound up in Christian religious tradition.

The idea of a 'closed' future is also connected with the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, as it is connected with eschatological visions of the end of the world and history. The eschatological viewpoint influenced European thought for a very long time, became the source of inspiration for the philosophy of history and significantly stimulated reflections on the meaning of history. From the time of the Renaissance, however, secularising tendencies began to express themselves in eschatological thought. These came to a peak during the Enlightenment, which substituted the prospect of salvation with the idea of progress (the logical outcome of this secularising tendency was Marxism, in which the end of history assumed the form of a classless society).

The eschatological orientation towards the future is connected with the idea of a certain finale or end. Set against this is the final (fourth) form of understanding time, with the emphasis on an 'open' future. The idea of an open future is connected with the expansion of science and technology, which began its remarkable acceleration in the 19th century. As a result of this expansion, the horizons of the future and the past were transformed in a significant way. If for religious thought the past and the future were framed with a beginning and an end, at this point vast 'chasms' in either direction now opened up in front of people. Let us recall the kind of problems that were introduced at this time, for example, by the confrontation between opinions founded on biblical tradition and opinions founded on new discoveries in the fields of geology, palaeontology and archaeology. In the intellectual atmosphere in which Darwin's theory of evolution was born, the idea of an open future emerged, one with no pre-set scenario or pre-set outcome.

From the sociology of time to temporalised sociology

Although sociological research of time has a relatively long and interesting history, until the end of the 1970s interest in this phenomenon was rather marginal. Émile Durkheim and his colleagues played a pioneering role in this research. According to Durkheim, time expresses the rhythm of collective life. It is a category of our thought, which has a social origin in the sense that has been abstracted from the collective life of the people [Durkheim 1981: 588]. If in our thoughts we are dealing with time as a subject, this means that we have borrowed a model from society that we now project into all the other spheres and areas that surround us.

Durkheim's ideas had an influence on the fields of sociology (M. Halbwachs, G. Gurvitch), cultural anthropology (C. Lévi-Strauss), and historical science (the *Annales* school). They were unquestionably influential for P. A. Sorokin and R. K. Merton [1937], who considered social time to be one of the possible concepts of time alongside economic, psychological, and astronomical time, etc. In the view of these authors, social time – unlike time as it is considered in physics – has a qualitative character, it does not pass in a uniform manner, and it cannot be randomly divided. That through further historical development a quantitative concept of time came to assert itself against this qualitative concept in the awareness of modern man is a result of the processes of modernisation.

Georg Simmel (like many authors after him) drew attention to this fact, linking the establishment of clock time with the assertion of modern rationality, which tends to 'convert the world into an arithmetical problem and determine each of its parts with the help of mathematical formulas'. According to Simmel, this approach corresponds to the mathematical precision of practical life, which emerged with the introduction of a money economy. Given the arithmetic character of money, precision established itself in behaviour, agreements, and arrangements, which was expressed through the general spread of the pocket watch. The materialised form of these tendencies is represented in Simmel's view by the big city. The relationships and affairs of the big city are multifaceted and complicated. As many people with different interests came together, the relationships and governance of this kind of rugged organism became impossible without genuine exactness, as otherwise everything would collapse in indecipherable chaos.

Simmel's thoughts bring us to the issue of temporal order, the organisation of time, its distribution in social systems and controls. One of the first ambitious attempts at grasping the complex time structures of society was the work of Georges Gurvitch, *La multiplicité des temps sociaux* [1964], in which he speaks of the pluralism, or the multiplicity of versions of social time. In Gurvitch's view, the life of society in its various forms flows according to extremely varied and often divergent kinds of times, which often compete and are set mutually in conflicting relationships, and their unification (necessary, but relative) demands a maximum of effort and poses a problem for all of society. Each society, social class, individual group, or micro-social phenomenon (related to myth, religion, magic, economy, technology, law, politics, knowledge, morals or education) tends to occur in its own version of time.

No society, social class or structured group (regional, professional, family, etc.) can exist without attempting to control these numerous kinds of social time (which does not mean that they always succeed in doing so). Each social unit, class, group, micro-social element, relationship, or activity tends to occur in a kind of time that is particular to it alone, and conversely every society attempts to unify this plurality of times. The effort to install a relationship of cohesion and co-ordination among the different kinds of social time leads to the creation of a specific gradation of these times in which the individual social structures are gravitate and attempt to dominate. According to Gurvitch, everything is located in the constant motion of structurising, destructurising, and restructurising where they collide with one another and sometimes even 'explode'.

Interest in the phenomenon of time grew remarkably in the 1980s. A subject that until then had been often overlooked became almost fashionable. Numerous papers [Bergmann 1983, Elchardus 1988, Nowotny 1992], monographs [Schops 1980, Lauer 1981, Bergmann 1981, Hall 1983, Hohn 1984, Rifkin 1987, Elias 1992, Young 1988, Nowotny 1989, Dux 1989, Kellerman 1989, Pronovost 1989, Adam 1990, Ferrarotti 1990, Gell 1992, Baert 1992, Nassehi 1993, Sue 1994, Adam 1995, Schlote 1996], and essay collections [*Das Phänomen...* 1984, *Zeit als...* 1986, *Zeit – Zeitlichkeit...* 1986, *Die sterbende...* 1987, *The Rhythms...* 1988, *Zerstorung...* 1988, *Die Zeit...* 1989, *Im Netz...* 1989, *The Sociology...* 1990, *Ökologie...* 1993, *Zeit – Medien...* 1994] appeared, and many professional seminars and symposia were held, some of which had an interdisciplinary approach. That research in this field underwent such a rapid development can be demonstrated indirectly through the fact that the sociology of time (*Zeitsoziologie*) is today viewed as a type of independent discipline in the field of sociology.

There have been numerous attempts to address the problem of time in the framework of contemporary sociological theory, but the picture they form is more of a mosaic, whose individual parts are difficult to integrate. A large number of existing studies today offer a broad palette of often irreconcilable opinions, so the reader can easily get caught up in a labyrinth where there are few clear signs of direction. The theories are built around a common intention, but whoever might seek any lesson amidst this mass of ideas soon runs into a considerable problem: how to orient oneself amidst this variability, how to gain an orientation with the aid of this heterogeneous stock of thoughts, how to integrate isolated concepts and make a coherent and meaningful unit out of them [Adam 1990: 15].

Agreement reigns over the point that time has yet to be studied in a thorough and adequate manner, and it has yet to be adequately dealt with within the framework of social theory. Efforts to overcome this state of affairs have thus far been oriented towards solving three inter-related problems: (1) the constitution of time as a social category; (2) the functioning of temporal structures on various levels of social systems; (3) the place and role of time in general sociological theory.

Once questions concerning the relationship of time to sociological theory have been established, the entire discussion shifts to the meta-theoretical level. There it essentially deals with the problem of what the general sociological theory that time plays a decisive role in ought to look like. One author who at the beginning of the 1990s formulated a demand for a thorough examination of this issue is Patrick Baert [1992], who coined the term 'temporalised sociology'. This term refers to a direction in research that is somewhat distinct, though in no way runs counter to what the sociology of time actually is at present – it has become a sort of all-embracing term for a varied spectrum of theoretical and empirical types of research that today continues to expand in all directions, i.e. towards an ever greater variability in content and subject. Baert's primary interest is in the concept of time on the conceptual level, in planting it firmly within the framework of contemporary theoretical and meta-theoretical discussions, where process and diachrony should be fixed as the ontological foundation and methodological starting point of the analysis of social systems.

The essence of the problem we come to now can be conveyed through the distinction between four theoretical viewpoints. The first assumes that the basic principles of order are or should be considered as unchanging. These principles express themselves in time and space as invariants. Baert refers to this type as the concept of 'the eternal permutation of time' [ibid.: 5], because all changes that can be observed in time represent according to this concept a mere and imperfect 'permutation' or 'combination' of unchanging eternal principles. The roots of this approach go back to the Greek atemporal tradition established by Parmenides and Plato, in which a distinction is made between the world of permanent, eternal principles, which can be grasped by reason, and the world of transient phenomena, which we perceive through our senses. The Greek idea of an unchanging atemporal world had an influence on European thought for a very long time. In the 20th century we can find it in structural linguistics, and in social sciences with a structuralist orientation. The basic idea of structuralism in the social sciences is founded on the assumption of an unconscious, atemporal logic, which is to be revealed as common to all cultures in the present, past and future.

The second approach resembles the previous one in that it also considers the existence of unchanging principles of order. However it differs through the assumption that these principles reveal themselves in time. It is a concept that lays emphasis on the passage of time, but it is also true of this concept that the future it will reach is closed. In comparison with the preceding concept of 'eternal permutation', time in this concept gains in meaning, but the meaning is relativised in that the passage of time does not create any new principles and does not count on the appearance of anything new and unexpected. In this case Baert speaks of a 'closed historical concept' [ibid.: 6], where the term 'closed' refers to the postulated unchangingness of the main principles. The forerunners of this concept can be traced in the teleological aspects and in the finalistic principle of the teachings of the Old and New Testaments (which was the antithesis of the primarily atemporal worldview of Greek civilisation). A similar view of the world appears later in the philosophy of history, the pioneers of which include personalities such as Turgot, Condorcet and Herder. The closed historical approach maintained a dominant position in the science and philosophy of the 19th century.

The third approach can be considered *de facto* as a sort of special degree of the second ('closed historical') concept. Unlike the teleological character of the latter, however, it considers human (usually scientifically founded) intervention as a necessary condition for the achievement of a future aim. This third concept can be traced in the ideas of Saint-Simon, Comte, and even Karl Marx, and later Karl Mannheim, too.

The fourth concept – similar to the second, 'closed historical concept' – is founded on the idea that the basic principles of order can be revealed only in time. Unlike the second concept, however, it does not consider the main organising principles to be unchanging, but rather concludes that in each contemporary period they are open to change. It therefore exhibits a fundamental difference in that it postulates 'an open future'. This concept became an integral part of Western thought only during the 19th century, and Darwin's theory was considerably instrumental in its formation. H. Bergson may be considered as another of its pioneers, with his ideas on cosmic vitalism and time as an invention. From earlier periods in the evolution of sociology, G. H. Mead may be viewed as a representative of this stream, among authors of a later date, A. Schütz and N. Elias represent it, too, and in contemporary sociology it can be traced primarily in Luhmann's sociology, founded on the theory of 'autopoiesis', and Giddens' theory of structuration.

The question of time is present throughout the work of George Herbert Mead. He connects the essence of time with the terms 'emergence', 'event', and 'novelty'. Emphasis is placed on 'the emerging' and 'the new'. In this case, the theory of relativity played an inspirational role, wherein each experience is dependent on the perspective and location of the observer, as did Whitehead's philosophy [Mead 1967: 523 an.], which attempts to grasp reality through the event as a concept. Mead follows up on Whitehead's ideas by showing that the unity of reality is created by events. The limitless number of possible simultaneities between each single event and other events creates numerous temporal orders of this event and countless thought perspectives from which these temporal orders may be viewed. Events are imagined not as a mere part of a single flow of time, but rather as something that construes time. With each new exceptional event a new present is constituted, out of which is arranged both everything that has passed and the future anticipated course of events.

Alfred Schütz subscribed to the Weberian interpretation of 'understanding' sociology founded on the concept of action, out of which the agent of the action derives a certain sense. One of the perceived weaknesses in Weber's approach is that it is founded on a certain concealed assumption, as it does not ask about the constitution of sense for the agent of the action. It is this problem that Schütz focuses on, applying in his reflections impulses arising out of the philosophical work of E. Husserl and H. Bergson. Sense in Schütz's view is constituted through the formation of relationships between data of consciousness. This leads him to an opinion that may be concisely expressed as: *Sinnproblem ist ein Zeitproblem* – the problem of sense is a problem of time [Schütz 1960: 8]. He believes that with the aid of a general theory of consciousness, such as Bergson's philosophy of duration or Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, it is possible to solve the riddle that the phenomena of the establishment of sense and its interpretation presents us with [ibid: 10]. He claims that with the help of a phenomenology of an internal consciousness of time it is possible to examine the problem of subjectively inferred sense. On this basis he then deals with the question of understanding the action of others and the meaningful construction of the social world. Given that for Schütz the question of sense, and thereby also the entire constitution of social reality, is a question of time, it is possible without exaggeration to say that it is with Schütz that the tendency towards a radical temporalisation of the theory of the constitution of the social order begins, a tendency that is continued by major representatives of contemporary sociology such as N. Luhmann and A. Giddens.

Another notable example of temporalised sociology is the civilisation theory of Norbert Elias. One characteristic feature of Elias' sociological thought is its orientation around process, an orientation towards researching the trends in the development of social and personality structures. Elias' interest is attracted by processes of continual, long-term changes. These are processes that occur, but not deliberately or according to plan, and which also have no absolute beginning (zero point) from which to unfurl, and no end to inevitably head towards.

Within the framework of system theory, Niklas Luhmann [1988] examines the problem of time from various viewpoints. He examines questions of the constitution and social production of time, world time (*Weltzeit*), temporal order, counting time, and chronology. His interest lies in the problem of temporal linearity and cyclicity, temporal horizons of the past and future, social changes, the temporal structures of the individual partial social systems, and so-called temporal anxiety (*Zeitknappheit*). Sociology under the influence of Luhmann deals with time on three levels of social systems – interaction, organisation, and society [Bergmann 1981].

Anthony Giddens considers the fundamental problem of sociology to be the problem of order, which he conceives as a problem concerning the arrangement of society in time and space [Giddens 1988: 161]. According to Giddens' theory of structuralisation, each moment of social reproduction encompasses three intersecting, and interpenetrating levels of time: (1) the temporality of direct experience, that is, the continual passage of everyday life – that which Schütz, along the lines of Bergson, refers to as duration (*durée*); (2) the temporality of being (Heidegger's *Dasein*), that is, life and its cycles; (3) *long durée* (Fernand Braudel's term) – the 'long term' of institutional time, connected with the development and reproduction of social institutions [ibid: 89].

A significant feature of modernity in Giddens' view is that with it there occurs a 'transformation' of time and space [Giddens 1998: 23]. If in pre-modern cultures time was always calculated in connection with a specific place ('when' was tied to 'where'), modernity leads in the first place to the 'emptying' of time and space (into the form of abstract co-ordinates), and in the second place to their separation (which at the same time, however, becomes the precondition for their new rearrangement). This separation is significant primarily because (a) it abolishes its traditionally fixed nature (i.e. it frees it from the bonds of local limitations), (b) it makes it possible to combine the local and the global in a manner unthinkable within traditional societies, and (c) it creates conditions in which time and space can again be combined to form a unified, worldwide framework. Expressions of these tendencies can be registered even in the early stages of modern society, but the present stage, which Giddens refers to as 'radicalised modernity', leads to a situation in which they become significantly deeper.

A concluding note on irreversibility

The first and most important term used in temporalised sociology is in the view of Patrick Baert 'a relatively open future', and the idea of discontinuity that is connected with this. Other important terms include 'emergence', 'novelty' (used by G. H. Mead), and Bergson's term *durée* – duration. This list should in our view be expanded to also include the term 'irreversibility'.

In the work, *Where are the Social Sciences Heading*, by Immanuel Wallerstein et al., the problem of irreversibility receives a great deal of emphasis, although it is illustrated through the example of the natural sciences. According to the authors of this study, Newtonian physics describe stable and temporally reversible systems, which of course represent only a specific and limited part of reality. For example, Newtonian physics describe the movement of the planets, but not the evolution of the planetary system. They describe a system in balance, or a system near to balance, but not systems that are far from being balanced, and thus circumstances that are equally as frequent if not more frequent than balanced systems. The circumstances of the system that is far from being balanced are not temporally reversible conditions in which in order to be able to predict future states it is enough to know the laws and the initial conditions. The system that is far from being balanced is rather an expression of where time is headed, the role of which is fundamental and constructive. In this kind of system the future is uncertain and the conditions are irreversible. The laws that we can form thus only enumerate the possibilities and not the certainties.

As a consequence, irreversibility is no longer considered a flawed scientific discovery, the outcome of an approximation resulting from insufficient scientific knowledge. Scientists today are working on an expansion of the laws of dynamics so as to include irreversibility and probability. It is assumed that only in this way can scientists hope to gain an understanding of the mechanisms that – on the basic level of description – propel the restless universe we are rooted in [Wallerstein 1998].

Since the time of Emile Durkheim the attention of sociologists has been turned towards the problem of social time, primarily on the level of its symbolic representation – the level of 'symbolic' time. This established a certain split, separating this time from natural (cosmic) time. Focusing attention on 'symbolic' time has proved to be a productive and important step for other sociological research, but at the same time this step established a dualism, separating society from nature (or, non-reflexive systems). Even

today we can come across social theory that is only very slightly oriented towards dealing with time in any expression other than a 'symbolic' one. But there are problems that cannot be solved within the framework of the social sciences alone. One such problem is the above-mentioned issue of irreversibility. S. W. Hawking, the well-known astrophysicist, in this connection refers to three arrows of time: thermodynamic, along the direction of which disorder increases; psychological, whose direction is given by the fact that we remember the past and not the future; and cosmological, which is defined according to the expanding direction of the universe. Hawking asks why all three are moving in one direction, and how is it that any meaningful arrow of time can exist at all? In his attempt at an answer Hawking connects the direction of time's arrows with the direction in which the universe is expanding [Hawking 1991: 141 et seq.].

Even though for the time being there is no consensus over the question of whether the theory of time is an essential condition for the construction of a general sociological theory, it is possible to state that the problem of time is a transversal sociological problem that is present in every sociological theory and every piece of research, even if at times in the form of a concealed assumption. This also explains why at present the opinion is spreading that a better understanding of time can contribute not only to revealing partial deficiencies and problems in the social sciences, but also to the overall development of theory and research. Sociological studies, as radical critics put it, will remain bad until sociologists gain a better understanding of the essence and function of time. With respect to the traditional dualism of social and natural time it is furthermore necessary to draw attention to the growing conviction that this is not only a matter of some specialised branch of the social sciences but rather something that in its very essence is interdisciplinary.

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The Curious Side of Modern Czech Nationalism

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Abstract: The essay deals with some specific aspects of the Czech national idea and movement which set it apart from other national movements in Central Europe. It points out the contradictions inherent in the self-image of the Czechs and in their interpretation of their own history. It also draws the attention of the reader to the original contributions to the theories of nation developed by Czech thinkers, especially T. G. Masaryk and his disciples.

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The building process of the modern Czech nation was similar to the nation-building processes everywhere in Central and Eastern Europe: an ethnic group was brought to the awareness of its collective identity ('awakened') by an elite which eventually presented claims in its name to constitutional and international recognition. The 'totem', that is, the principal identity sign in this case, as in most other cases in the region, was the 'tongue', the specific Czech language. Yet there were notable differences, to the point that the birth of the modern Czech nation can be viewed as a phenomenon *sui generis*, a kind of historical curiosity. It is possible to ascertain such differences in several aspects.

Cautious beginnings

The first generation of the Czech 'awakeners', active at the turn of the 19th century, did not have any explicitly political goals in mind and was rather sceptical on this subject. Many saw the population, the existence of which they wished to bring to the attention of the European public, as a precious historical and cultural relic rather than a political agent. The Czechs in their view had a great past, but there was ambiguity about their future. The Czech ethnic group was situated the farthest west of all Slavic tribes and was virtually encircled by German-speaking elements. In Austria, of which it formed a part, the official language was German. German was adopted by all Czech classes above the peasantry, since its command was the condition for social advancement. Objectively, the chances of the emergence of a self-contained Czech nation were not very favourable at that time. To some contemporary observers it even appeared that, given the geopolitical location of the Czech group, it was likely to end up inside a German nation-state – when such a state would be created – in circumstances similar to those reserved for the Basques in France, or the Irish, Scots, and Welsh peoples in England/Great Britain; that the Czechs would ultimately be identified as *tschechisch sprechende Deutsche*, Czech-speaking Germans, similar to the tiny Slavic group of Sorbs living in Saxony who also referred to themselves as *wendische sprechende Deutsche*.

On the German side, this expectation prevailed even in the circles that otherwise were sympathetic to the efforts to preserve Czech language and culture. It persisted until the revolutionary wave of 1848/49 and its aftermath. In his analysis of Slavism in Bohe-

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mia, Count Joseph M. Thun recommended to the Germans that they should wait and see whether, after all, the Czechs as a nation would not die out. He nevertheless explicitly rejected any measures that might speed up this process [Thun 1843]. At the height of the revolutionary movement, May 2, 1848, the leading German liberal daily, *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, stated that the Czechs in Bohemia did not have any other choice but to either become Germans or not to exist at all, meaning thereby the necessity for them to become part of the German nation-state, to remain part of German history. After the revolution failed, Karl Marx, in a commentary written for *The New York Tribune*, dismissed the possibility that the Czech ethnic group could ever develop into a full-fledged nation, and argued that such a nation was a figment of the imagination of a handful of learned Germans who had gone insane, citing the Czech historian and politician František Palacký as an example [*New York Tribune*, March 5, 1852]. Marx of course had his own agenda to pursue. National movements of ethnic minority groups inside larger states, like the Czechs in Austria or the Scots in Great Britain, were, in his opinion, impediments to the centralisation and the establishment of unitary bourgeois systems, which in their own turn were the precondition for the full development of capitalism, the growth of the industrial proletariat, and the socialist revolution.[1]

Great-German illusions and the Czechs

Whatever the idea may have been that the interested German circles in Austria and the neighbouring countries entertained about the nature and the prospects of the Czech national cause, by the time of the revolutionary upheaval of the 1840s it was too late to stop or re-direct its course. The predominantly historical and scholarly involvement of the early 'awakeners' had in the meantime been supplanted by outspokenly political concerns and commitments of the younger generations of leaders. More importantly, however, the movement had succeeded insofar as the Czechs 'woke up', became politically mobilised. Their appearance on the scene of the 1848 revolution, with a specific set of demands, testified to this fact unmistakably. The very first representations from the Czech lands made at the imperial court in Vienna saw a co-ordinated action by both the German and the Czech groups, but soon the two parted ways. The 'Czech Question' in Austria was thus tabled, never to disappear from the agenda.

In any event, it is questionable whether the solution which the partisans of the Great-German idea held in store for the Czechs relative to their place in Europe was realistic. The formula that had worked in France and England could in this case not be adopted, for the simple reason that the German counterpart to these two nation-states did not exist at that time. The German nation-building process, too, was different from that observed in Western Europe. The awareness of the Germans of their collective identity as

[1]) It is interesting to note that in presenting Palacký and other Czech leaders as learned Germans who had gone insane ("Mr. Palacký does not even know how to speak Czech!") Marx adopted the Great-German perspective on the German question, implying that it is the knowledge and the use of the German language that makes Germans and Germany ("*wo immer die deutsche Zunge klingt*" – "Germany is in all places where the German tongue sounds" – as the lyrics of the national anthem have it). Marx's Great-German (*gross-deutsch*) bias would not be too hard to document. His apparent scorn for the contemporary German intellectual and political scene, in fact, was an expression of his love-hate (*Hassliebe*) relationship to his native country, of a deep disappointment that it could not measure up to France and become an architect of world history.

a nation preceded the constitution of a German state, whereas the modern French and English nations developed within pre-existing state frameworks. German experience in this respect was more or less typical of the entire Central and East European region; most nations there were entities in search of an institutional home, which accounted for much of the virulence of the endemic national conflicts.

Under these circumstances, the Great-German advice given to the Czechs was reminiscent rather of the proverbial blind man wanting to guide another blind man, with the easily predictable result. The German national state, as inspired by the Great-German idea and designed by the German liberals at the Frankfurt Assembly in 1848, never took shape. Instead, the so-called Small German formula was adopted, twenty-three years later, under a staunchly conservative leadership, which had no room for experiments of this kind. The appeal to the Czechs during the Prussian-Austrian war of 1866, approved by Bismarck, to rise against Austria, with the promise to help them obtain 'satisfaction of their rightful national aspirations', was no more than a propaganda warfare gimmick (which, by the way, fell on deaf ears among the targeted population). Bismarck's own very concept of Germany with Prussian predominance and his concern for the balance of powers in Europe made the inclusion of Austria or of a significant part of it, which the Czech lands indisputably represented, wholly illusory.

Yet this unrealistic proposition, doomed from the start, is not completely devoid of interest to an analyst today. The attempt to square the circle, to solve the antagonism between two nationalities by inviting one of them to freely give up its collective identity, contains an implicit recognition that the creation of a more or less homogeneous nation-state was not possible for the Germans in the Central and Eastern European area if this state was to comprise all German-speaking elements living there. The next logical step in this line of reasoning would have been the admission that not the ethnic but only the political concept of a nation was suitable to the given conditions. The German national movement, however, was neither willing nor able to make such a step.

Thus the solution of the German problem on the basis of the Small-German recipe, while it removed much of the ambiguity in the relation between the Germans and their neighbouring nations, including the Czechs, in no way signified the end of what could be called 'the German Question in Europe'. It left millions of individuals who identified as Germans outside the German national state, and therefore politically homeless. These gradually developed into the German version of *irredenta* which, not unlike its Italian analogue, would not settle for less than an all-inclusive yet ethnically pure Germany. They were not content with the role which the leaders of the German empire assigned to them: to ensure, by the weight of their numbers and their privileged position in Austria, that Vienna would never stray from the path of close alliance and co-operation with Berlin. They did not feel safe in an environment where they, though the most numerous and influential ethnic group, nevertheless constituted a statistical minority. Their apprehensions were especially strong in the lands of the Bohemian crown where they faced a clear Czech numerical superiority.

The Peculiarities of the Czech Case

Although the Czech national movement shared most of the problems and challenges of other national movements in the region, in some ways its position was different, especially as the Czechs themselves perceived it. They did not see their nation as uprooted, or uncertain about the boundaries of its homeland, for two important reasons: first, the

Czech political leadership, until the Austrian-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 and even for a long time afterwards, considered Austria as the only conceivable political framework; second, within this framework the Czechs believed to have formed, since time immemorial, a distinct component, the Kingdom of Bohemia and the crown lands of St. Wenceslas. In fact, regaining for this component the status which it had enjoyed in the distant past was for a considerable time one of the principal aims of Czech politics. On this issue the Czechs could even count on support from the Bohemian nobility, both German- and Czech-speaking.

For the Czech nationalists, however, the glorious past of their country was not only a source of pride but also served immediate political purposes. It was supposed to legitimate Czech claims to the control of this homeland. In order that they should serve this end, simple historical facts had to be put in a certain perspective, had to be 'edited'. This again was nothing specifically Czech; re-interpreting history was an activity in which all national movements of that time engaged to a greater or lesser degree. German nationalists in the Bohemian crown lands – to cite an instance directly connected with the subject of our discussion – sought to justify the privileged, indeed the dominant, position of the German-speaking group by emphasising the continuity of German settlements and their contribution to the history of the country. These endeavours ranged from stressing the economic and cultural significance of the German colonisation of Bohemia under the Premyslid kings in the 12th century – which no serious historian could possibly dispute – to fabricating theories such as the claim that Bohemia originally had been inhabited by Germanic tribes, the Bavarians, who later moved to the west, leaving Bohemia vacant, ultimately to be invaded by the Slavs.[2]

Among the Czechs, imagination did not run so wild as on the German side, yet there was a good deal of simplification of facts and of the projection of modern concepts, such as nation, into rather remote historical periods (this latter transgression, however, could be blamed on all nationalist interpretations of history in the 19th century). The Czechs, being a clear majority in the Bohemian crown lands, appeared to have it easier when they demanded a larger share of power than the imperial court in Vienna and the Austrian government were willing to award to them. Nonetheless, the majority argument, while certainly valid in the contemporary political dialogue, could hardly be convincingly employed in an historical context, although attempts of this kind were often made on the Czech side. It was difficult to legitimate Czech aspirations to leadership in the St. Wenceslas crown lands in the 19th century on the grounds that the Czech population there outnumbered the German in historical periods which did not know, let alone practise, the majority principle in the decision process and during which the nation, that is in

[2]) It may be of interest that this particular theory, based mainly on the apparent but rather tenuous etymological likeness between the term 'Boios', the name given to the Celtic population of Bohemia of Roman time, and the designation 'Baiuvaren', given to the Teutonic tribe that settled Bavaria in the course of the great migration of peoples at the dawn of the Middle Ages, was resuscitated by the Nazi ideologists in the 1930s to support Hitler's claim to the *Sudetenland* and the rest of Czechoslovakia. As if in the last gasp of scholarly objectivity and intellectual honesty, the historians' college of the Prague German University (Professor Wostry) rejected the theory, but it did not prevent Hitler from using it in his speech of March 1939 in which he justified the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, and the breach of the Munich Agreement which this move signified, before the German public.

the politically active segment of the society, was limited to a very small percentage of the total.

Anachronisms and Misapprehensions

An example of such a rather liberal approach to historical facts can be seen in the manner in which the mainstream Czech nationalism interpreted the events of the period that it considered to have been crucial for the situation of the Czechs in modern Europe: that of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) and its sequel. It cannot be argued that the focus here was misplaced. This dramatic, turbulent chapter of history indeed profoundly marked and transformed the Czech society. The defeat of the revolt of Bohemia's Protestant estates against the Habsburg rulers in the battle of White Mountain, November 8, 1620, and the subsequent destruction of the country's elites by executions; the confiscation of their property and mass exodus; the drastic reduction of the status that Bohemia until then had enjoyed within the Habsburg empire, by the Renewed Provincial Constitution (Obnovené zřízení zemské) introduced in 1627; and the unprecedented devastation of the entire Central European region during the three decades of war at the end of which less that a half of the original population remained; all that affected the Czech nation in the most adverse way.

However, the Czech national movement of the 19th century understood this social catastrophe as the outcome of an episode in the long history of the struggle between the Germans and the Czechs over the control of Bohemia and its crown lands. This interpretation borrowed, somewhat freely, from the theory advanced by František Palacký in his seminal work *The History of the Czech People in Bohemia and Moravia*. Actually, it was a projection of a problem of a society of the industrial age into the world of the late Renaissance. Overlooking, or at least underrating the fact that the social solidarities of the 17th century were different from those of two hundred years later, as well as the essentially religious nature of the conflict, Czech nationalists created a skewed picture of what had really happened to their country during and immediately after the Thirty Years' War. This picture, unfortunately, gained considerable credence in wide circles of the Czech public, since it was peddled by popular press and literature as well as by many teachers at the institutions of education of all grades.

If the full long-term impact of the events of this critical phase of history upon the Czech society is to be correctly assessed, a different approach has to be adopted. To be sure, these events wrought havoc upon the Czech language and culture. Yet the Draconian punitive measures of the victor were not the work of the rival German ethnic group nor were they aimed at the Czechs as a nation, but at Protestantism; they hit the German-speaking Protestants with equal ruthlessness. Of course, taking into account the fact that over 80 percent of the Czech population at that time belonged to denominations other than Catholic, they came very close to becoming a threat to the very existence of the Czech national collective, if not a genocide. Nevertheless, considering the later political development of Central Europe, the real calamity visited upon this region in the wake of the Thirty Years' War has to be seen in the loss of religious pluralism brought about by the Counter-Reformation.

This loss was compounded and made quasi-permanent by the stipulation of the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 endorsing the principle *cuius regio, eius religio* – 'the ruler determines the religious affiliation of his subjects'. Although it eventually brought peace to Europe in that it established tolerance among monarchs and countries, from the point

of view of the evolution already reached by the Czech lands, it represented a step backward. There, religious tolerance and freedom on an individual basis had been achieved as early as the turn of the 17th century. It had been instituted by the 'Imperial Edict' of the Emperor Rudolph II in 1609 ('Majestát') and by local agreements among the estates such as the 'Bohemian Confession'. At that point virtually all inhabitants of the lands of St. Wenceslas crown could choose the church to which they wished to belong. It can be assumed that this state of affairs, had it continued, would have had a positive effect upon the development of Bohemia and its crown provinces; that religious pluralism, not unlike in England, might have paved the road to political pluralism and modernisation.

As a matter of fact, the benefits which could have been reaped from the preservation of religious pluralism would have been of a double nature. The national conflict that later was to dominate the Czech political scene could have been eased or dampened. The late 16th and early 17th century had already witnessed less of it, due precisely to religious diversity. It is possible to apply to the conditions, then prevailing in Bohemia, the theory of cleavages developed by political sociology [Lipset and Rokkan 1967]. In the terms of this theory, what happened there was that to the already existing ethnic and national cleavage another cleavage was added, namely religious. However, these two cleavages were not 'overlapping' – not all Czechs were Protestants nor were all Germans Catholics – but 'crosscutting', that is, both professions of faith were represented within both groups. This type of a situation is generally conducive to greater social stability and favourable to the development of a pluralist political order and democracy. It could be argued, too, that – allowing for the differences between the two historical periods – the early 17th century nearly succeeded in solving the national problem in Bohemia which the 19th century was to find, for all practical purposes, intractable.

Alternative Concept of the Czech Nation

Learning from history is not too frequent a phenomenon, even with movements which, like the Czech national movement, so heavily depended on historical argument and justification. By the time this movement took shape, religious tolerance was no more an urgent issue, religious pluralism having been restored by an act of the enlightened absolute monarch Joseph II. Yet it did not translate into more tolerance in politics. German nationalists and their Czech counterparts continued to dream about ethnically homogeneous nation-states in a region which was the least suitable for their establishment. They did not realise that in seeking to homogenise the population of their country, by turning Czechs into Germans or vice versa, they became heirs to the tradition of Counter-Reformation, substituting religious exclusivity for ethnic exclusivity. In fact, nationalism in 19th century Europe did in many respects replace religion weakened under the impact of secularisation which was one of the aspects of the modernisation process. The societies of the Central European region made no exception.

Nevertheless, it was precisely among the Czechs that the established nationalist notions came to be challenged. In the 1890s, a small group of intellectuals under the leadership of T. G. Masaryk, then professor at Charles University in Prague, opened a debate on what then was called the 'Czech Question', and the 'Meaning of Czech History'. They questioned the widely accepted idea of the nation as a community circumscribed by facts and forces external to its members and outside their control, such as race and language, and whose interests take precedence over the rights and interests of the individuals as well as over those of other nations. They doubted whether the mere existence and aggran-

disement of a nation so conceived could justify the necessary sacrifices on the part of its citizens or command respect and recognition of mankind. Masaryk argued that a nation is not an accidental cluster of anthropologically similar humans but a body of conscious individuals bound together by a shared system of values. This bond he called a 'programme' [Masaryk 1895].

This debate, which was very lively and occasionally became even acrimonious, centred of course on the Czech nation and its situation in the world. Mainstream patriots were rather shocked that anybody should dare questions its *raison d'être* or ask whether working for it was worth the trouble. The idea of a programme as an identity sign of a nation, however, had far-reaching implications. It reduced the importance of nature-given similarities between and within ethnic groups – among others, it pointed to the illusory nature of Panslavism – and allowed for free choice of national affiliation based on the choice of the programme. A nation so defined could not be other than political. This was not compatible with the until then generally accepted image of the Czech nation and of the duties of a Czech patriot. Developed further by Masaryk's disciple Emanuel Rádl [Rádl 1929], the theory provided a basis for a separate school of political philosophy notably remote from those that had inspired mainstream Central European nationalism. Its input, too, represents a specific Czech aspect of this phenomenon.

Masaryk did not succeed in converting the core of Czech nationalists to his views. This is curious since he later became the principal architect of an independent national state of the Czechs and made reality the dream of several generations of Czech national leaders. As if by a paradox, the success of his liberation campaign during World War I, instead of lending authority to his views on the problem of modern nations, rather reinforced the established nationalist opinions and prejudices. This despite the fact that the First Czechoslovak Republic, not unlike Austria-Hungary, was a multiethnic state where political nationality would have been a more appropriate formula than the actually adopted distinction between the state-bearing Czechoslovak nation and minority nationalities. Such an option would have engendered more loyalty among the minority groups and provided more internal stability. Seen from this point of view, the political entity founded by Masaryk in 1918 was not truly 'Masaryk's republic'.

The Three Tragedies

Consistent application of the principle of political nationality, of course, would have had even more beneficial effects in Austria prior to the 1914-18 war. It could have saved the Danubian empire; actually, it was the only way this empire could have been saved. The preconditions for the pursuit of this course were all given. To the letter the Austrian constitution did not discriminate between individual nationalities; all were Austrian citizens, subjects of His Apostolic Majesty, the Emperor. The name of Austria, being a geographic term, had the inestimable advantage of being also nationality-neutral – something that later could not be asserted about, for example, Czechoslovakia.

However, the long-standing everyday practice of government and administration in Austria belied these principles and made it difficult to take advantage of them, in a similar way that the prerogative of the imperial court to determine the country's foreign policy and decide about war and peace flawed the image of Austria as a constitutional state. The privileged position of German as the official language could be justified as a practical necessity in a multinational empire; less so the circumstance, for example, that the institutions of higher-education teaching in German represented 75 percent of the univer-

sity system although only one third of Austria's population declared German to be their language of communication (*Umgangssprache*) in the 1910 census. The recruitment for civil service positions at higher levels, for example in the diplomatic sector, clearly favoured German-speaking candidates over members of other nationality groups. (A channel of upward occupational mobility though, open to all ethnic elements virtually without restriction, was the military career.) The overt sympathy of the emperor for everything German did not help, either, the delicate climate reigning among Austria's most numerous nationalities; his statement, "*Ich fühle mich als ein deutscher Fürst*" – "I consider myself to be a German duke" – was very unfortunate indeed.

Yet, as far as the perceptions of the Czechs and their attitude towards Austria are concerned, the ambiguous and inconsistent dealing of the Viennese government with the 'Czech Question', that is, with the political and cultural aspirations of the Czechs and their status within the empire, was by far the most damaging. Admittedly, the task was not easy on account of the nationalist passions on both the Czech and the German side, especially the latter. For while the spokesmen of the Czechs may at times have complicated the negotiations through excessive demands or unrealistic expectations, the systematic stubborn resistance to any meaningful compromise shown by the German nationalist faction rendered a solution nearly impossible. The opposition did not include all German-speaking elements in Austria, but a coalition to this purpose was repeatedly formed by the representatives of the constituencies in Vienna and the border regions of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia (later called '*Sudetenland*'), that is, by the districts where the contacts between the Czechs and the Germans were the most immediate and frequent, and where an arrangement, eventually agreed upon, was the most likely to be put to a test.

This opposition frustrated several attempts at the resolution of the 'Czech Question' among which the project of the so-called Fundamental Points of Agreement sponsored by the Hohenwarth ministry in 1874 was the most significant. Its failure caused great bitterness among the Czechs, which did not turn so much against the German foes of the project, whose hostility they had taken more or less for granted, as against the imperial government that on this, and other similar occasions, yielded to the oppositional pressure. The resentment was all the more acerbic since the proposals were usually not defeated by a majority vote in the Imperial Council (*Reichsrat*) but abandoned by the sponsors after their adversaries set the mob in motion and provoked riots in the streets of Vienna. One of the most fateful mistakes of the Austrian establishment in handling the Czech issue was committed when emperor Francis Joseph I reneged on his promise, given in 1870, to be crowned as King of Bohemia. He did so obeying a secret clause of the Austrian-Hungarian Compromise Treaty of 1867 whereby he had committed Austria not to grant any other component of the Habsburg monarchy a status comparable to that of Hungary. After these experiences, the Czech national movement, for which until then the preservation of the Austrian state framework had been a near axiom, embarked upon a different path later called 'catastrophic'. The Czechs were willing to identify as Austrian citizens, but not as citizens of a lower rank.[3]

[3]) Thus the inability of the Austrian powers to come to terms with the Czechs, in combination with the lack of genuine loyalty on the part of a considerable and influential segment of the most favoured ethnic group, the Germans, eventually spelled a tragedy. However, it was not to be only the Austrian tragedy. The subjectively homeless, uprooted orphans of the Great-German dream, unsure of their collective identity, alas, were predestined to bring about greater calamities than just

More Curiosa and Some Hope

The circumstance that Austria in the end was subverted by the revolt of its erstwhile most loyal ethnic component may be viewed as one of the curious sides of Central European and Czech nationalism. There was yet another curiosity connected with this event: the destructive act itself and the creation of an independent Czech national state were carried out by a politician and thinker who rejected the nationalist ideology of the 19th century. Yet, as we have already observed, the success of his liberation campaign did not convince the majority of the public in his country about the correctness of his idea of a nation. That, too, was somewhat curious. The new state, measured by Masaryk's own yardsticks, could be legitimated only if it were more equitable than that on the ruins of which it was founded and if it succeeded in solving the problems which Austria proved unable to handle. This could be affirmed only in part; Czechoslovakia after 1918 was a free society, more egalitarian and democratic than Austria, but it had to wrestle with a new set of nationality conflicts.

An impartial judgement about the First Czechoslovak Republic's performance in this respect, of course, has to take into account that it had a very short time to prove itself. International development since the end of World War I was on the whole unfavourable to the pursuit of policies inspired by Masaryk's principles. It rather confirmed and reinforced the traditional assumptions and stereotyped images of mainstream Czech nationalism. Germany soon revealed itself again as a threat to Czech independence and even to its plain survival as a nation. The transfer of the German-speaking population from the Czechoslovak territory after 1945 was motivated and justified by this traumatic experience. In fact, however, it was a reversed copy of the German attempt to achieve something which the given ethnic structure of Central Europe would never permit: the formation of a homogeneous comprehensive nation-state of one nationality.

The social, economic and moral ravages of the real socialist experiment that followed upon the heels of this drastic operation – and to a significant extent was facilitated by it – taught the Czechs a costly lesson about the problematic blessings of ethnic purity in a society that treasures freedom. They also highlighted the fallacy of the dichotomy between individual and national liberties, typical of Czech traditional nationalism. The Czechs realised that mere international status of a sovereign state does not guarantee freedom to its citizens; that a nation is free only if each of its members is free. Forty years spent in the role of a Soviet satellite, too, brought again to their attention the merits of the alternative concept of national solidarity presented by Masaryk, a solidarity based not on external anthropological or linguistic affinities but on a consensus about basic social values.

Accepting this concept implies giving up the idea of the state as a fortress of an exclusionist human group keeping out everything that is different, and consenting to a life in ethnic, racial and cultural plurality. Such a step, made a century earlier, might have saved Austria, then a political and social configuration of undisputed promise. If imple-

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preventing the accommodation of a small Slav nation within the Danubian empire. Two generations later, one specimen of this hapless group became the absolute ruler of Germany and put the dream of a homogeneous all-comprising German national state in Central Europe in reality the only way it was possible: be means of deportations, concentration camps, and gas chambers. The tragedy turned out to be triple: it affected not only Austria and the Czechs but also Germans themselves as a nation.

mented more consistently, it might have lent more stability and internal security to the First Czechoslovak Republic. However, what is more important than these historical revelations is the fact that in adopting this perspective on the nation and the relations among nations the Czech society will prepare itself in the best possible way for the international order of tomorrow, concretely, for membership in an integrated democratic Europe.

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Ethnic Polarisation in an Ethnically Homogenous Town*

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Abstract: The study analyses ethnic relations and ethnic identity based on the example of Bratislava in the 20th century. The obtained ethnological material allows the author to conclude that the change of political system had affected the ethnic structure of the studied town. This was due to the migration of population as well as to elements of social engineering, which accompanied practically any change of the regime, but also due to so-called 'migration on the spot', i.e. a declared adjustment to political winners. In the first half of the past century, Bratislava was a tri-lingual city located at the borders of (Czecho)Slovakia, Hungary and Austria. After WWII, the city changed (at least statistically) into an ethnically homogenous environment, in which the Slovak ethnic group made up more than 90 percent of the whole population. In spite of this, the individual's identity and relations among citizens continued to be influenced by their ethnic affiliation. Its significance was already manifested during the first days of November 1989, but particularly in the following years. The identification with an ethnic group again became a differentiating factor (or even a polarising one) in urban population. It seems that ethnicity is likely to affect the character of the studied town in the nearest future too.
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This article will summarise the problems of ethnic relationships among the residents of Bratislava during the 20th century. The lives of the citizens in this period have been repeatedly and significantly influenced by political twists that changed the society. They also affected their personal integrity (and ethnic identity). The analysis is based on documents drawn from ethnological research and data from archives and period newspapers.

The town we will talk about is situated on the borders of three countries, and hence also three languages. It had several names. The German name, Pressburg, was its official name until the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but it was also known under the Hungarian equivalent Pozsony, or Slovak, Prešporok. (This detail itself signals the ethnic plurality characteristic of this place up to the year 1938.) The change of the historical name was among the first steps of the newly established Czechoslovak Republic (1918). The name Bratislava refers to its historical roots in the Great Moravian Empire and it illustrates the government's systematic intention to eradicate the non-Slavonic character of the town. This was the first step towards its future ethnic homogeneity. The residents responded by forming two informal ideological groups, known as the 'Prešporok' and the 'Czechoslovak' societies. They differed in their attitudes toward the present or former governments and also in their approach to the past and future of the place in which they lived. Although the regime tried to diminish the use of the former Hungarian names of the town and the institutions, old German and Hungarian residents (but also some newcom-

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ers) are proud even today to call themselves 'Pressburgers' or 'Prešporaks'. They, traditionally, speak all three town languages, often favouring the 'traditional' German or Hungarian languages. Also, this makes them different from 'Bratislavers' (Slovaks or Czechs) coming mostly from the Slovak countryside. The differences were not only formal, they were also manifested in their approaches to the modernisation of the old town quarters: "Some did not like what recalled the past, and some did not want any changes even if they were for the benefit of Bratislava" [Kočí and Dvořák 1991: 20]. The press of the period shows both views: official enthusiasm for building (and destroying the past) and disagreement with the replacement of historical objects with modern ones: "Old buildings are demolished and new, modern, hygienic ones are built to replace the small, unhealthy, wet flats. The old spirit of Bratislava, the former county town, disappears and it becomes the real capital of our country. The newspapers of the old Bratislava residents do not favour such development, therefore they express their fear" (*Slovenský denník*, 29 April 1937).

During the 20th century the ethnic phenomenon now and again played a decisive role in shaping the town structure. It seems that the presence of several ethnic groups softened the ideological polarisation of the residents and enabled them more often to express tolerance in solving conflict situations. Conversely, when as a result of social processes one ethnic group gained hegemony due to government pressure (at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries it was the Hungarian ethnic group, after 1938 the Slovak population), the position of members of different nationalities deteriorated and intolerance increased. The tendency of the development was clear: the pluralist society (also due to forced migration) was changing (at least in the view of statistics) into an ethnically homogenous one. According to the census after World War II, over 90% of the population declared Slovak nationality. In spite of this, ethnic tensions survived silently (especially aimed at the Roma people and Jews, to a lesser extent the Czechs) and came into view after November 1989.

From the middle of the 19th century Bratislava was an important centre of state institutions. This resulted not only in an increase in population, but also in an expansion of administrative institutions, industry and ideology. Bratislava became the destination of newcomers drawn by new job openings and cultural opportunities, but many of them were attracted by the vision of power and functions. Satisfying the demands of the loyal supporters of each new system was inevitably detrimental to the 'former' ones, who had to leave their posts, usually gained not so long ago (under the previous regime). Therefore, with each change, the representatives of the new power perceived the often ethnically defined groups of Bratislava residents as their enemies. Their posts, flats, and properties were offered to those who were expected to support the new regime. Such lures and sanctions enforced not only the real movement of the population, but also a 'migration in place', that is, a declarative assimilation into an ethnic, social or other politically preferred identity of the actually protected status. Ethnological research shows that such shifts were not rare: "If the main required qualification for a function is a certain confessional, social or ethnic (political) identity, which, in the given society, can be also acquired in a different way than by birth only (e.g. by accepting christening/converting, marriage policy, declaration of national or class identification), usually nothing encumbers the acceptance of such a function." [Chorváthová 1993: 93-94]

The multicultural character of Bratislava survived until World War II, although its ethnic character, at least statistically, changed greatly. From its origins until the middle of

the 19th century it was mainly German. The Austro-Hungarian compromise (1867) and the ensuing legislature brought about increasing Magyarisation. Table 1 shows that in the given place this process was most detrimental to the Germans, the most numerous population till then. The establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic prompted another change in the ethnic structure. The number of members of the (Czecho)Slovak nationality increased in a short time because of people who had declared themselves of German or, most of them, Hungarian nationality till then. Jews constituted about 12% and they declared themselves German, Hungarian and to a lesser extent Slovak [Hromádka 1933: 80]. According to Elena Mannová, the turning points in the ethnic development of Bratislava were mainly the 1890s, and the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic. To support her statement she quotes the memoirs of Ivan Dérer, who came to study in Bratislava in 1893. He says that the prevailing population was German, and only state administration was already mostly Hungarian. In the 1890s "the growing Hungarisation, the deliberate state policy of Hungarian governments, ousted the Germans from their leading positions and in the first decade of the 20th century the proportion rapidly changed in favour of Hungarians". The Jewish population contributed to the changes, because "the older Jews declared themselves of German nationality, while the younger generation was swimming in Hungarian rivers." [Mannová 1999: 55] However, I think that the turning point in changing the ethnic structure and the production of polarity in the town was the decade 1938-1948, when new tendencies in the development were established, and they function until today.

There were two main elements in forming the structure of Bratislava: the natural attraction of the administrative, political and industrial centre and the pressure of governments, including principles of social engineering. All regimes and state forms that followed until 1989, used such pressure (not with the same force). The arrival of members of certain ethnic groups, and after 1948 social groups, were motivated by promises of privilege, and their loyalty was expected. On the other hand, those who were seen by the new power as a potential threat, left the town 'willingly', or more often by force. Such contrary movements were permanent; however, their intensity grew from the end of 1938, when on Slovak territory "...totalitarian political culture was established with all its malpractice, only its types and manners changed" [Kučera 1993: 57]. The climax of social engineering was in 1938-1953, during the fascist regime and the outbreak of communist totality. We can speak of an exchange of populations. During one and half decades a forced departure of Czechs, the deportation of Jews, the expulsion of Germans, and the drift of a part of the Hungarian population took place. Members of the 'bourgeoisie' had to leave the town because of so-called 'Action B'. In the first place, they were representatives of a town creating urban middle classes. As a natural result, all official statistical data from the beginning of the 1950s have confirmed the domination of the Slovak population. It might be useful to define this borderline also in terminology, and from this date to distinguish between pluralistic Prešporok and monoethnic Bratislava.

In spite of political pressure and the ensuing changes, research and memoir literature, memories of citizens and the period press, all without any difference, characterise interpersonal relationships at the end of the monarchy and especially during the Czechoslovak Republic, as tolerant. Such an evaluation is not restricted to official sources only, but concurrent testimonies are also expressed by the representatives of minorities (Czechs, Hungarians, Germans, Jews). Ethnic tolerance is symbolically expressed in the official tri-lingual names of streets, and for example in the informal atmosphere of wine

vaults: "One table was Hungarian, the other one German or Czech or Slovak – and all sing in all languages, because here everything is equal (...) a Czech talks to a German, a Slovak to a Hungarian and a Slovak to a German and there is no animosity, no anger." [Přibík 1930: 24-25] The situation can be indirectly illustrated through the town promenade. In Prague and Brno there were two town promenades, distinguished along ethnic principle – a Czech and a German one [Torberg 1975, Bočková 1993: 30]. In Bratislava, the difference was social: the "Gentlemen's promenade was intended for middle classes and students, and the so-called 'Anča promenade' was a walking place of soldiers and servants [Luther 1991: 155 et seq.]. The shift from liberal to totalitarian systems was accompanied by the onset of until then only marginal elements. According to the historian Ivan Kamenec: "The element of fear literally irrupted the fate of Slovakia and Slovak policy at the end of the thirties of the twentieth century and stayed there firmly rooted for over fifty years. It is clearly demonstrated in official state policy and in the attitudes of the whole society and individual persons." [Kamenec 1992: 38] Our knowledge of Bratislava confirms the adaptation of the population to the changes in the situation. The actual attitude might not always reflect their personal beliefs, but the response of individuals is also influenced by their surroundings, tradition and their social culture. In undemocratic countries this works in addition to legislature, which can define a certain ethnic group as an enemy or even publicly condemn it to liquidation.

Actual attitudes of different generations and groups of the Bratislava society were united by a common denominator: *the similarity of human adaptation processes in culture, the way of life and morale in an existing, although always different political situation.* Tolerance in interpersonal relationships prevailed in democracy and it seemed that any other solution to a situation would be 'bad' or 'foolish'. However, the change in regime very quickly influenced the behaviour of the citizens. Under totalitarian conditions intolerance prevailed, and again (within the context of the period, with no comparison to other periods) models of behaviour, based on mistrust and hiding identity, seemed to be a 'natural' and generally accepted response to the situation. This trivial, logical explanation suggests that the differences between historically different periods, though very close in time, resulted from migration processes following each social change. It seemed that the different response was caused by different people, newcomers, and the young generation. However, the analysis of statistical data showed that such an explanation was not satisfactory. A part of Bratislava society manifested the above-mentioned 'migration in place', and a formal declaration of the 'suitable' identity. The pressure of social engineering has changed not only the structure of the town as a whole, but also the individuals living there.

Such changes were present also in democratic society, but they became prominent in authoritarian regimes, which were in power in the period 1938-1989. When studying the models of interpersonal relationships until 1948, possible conflicts seem to have ethnic origins: Slovak-Czech; Slovak-Czechoslovak; Slovak-Hungarian or German. The attitudes to the numerous Jewish minority (14,900 citizens according to the 1930 census) were not always positive. Hungarian and German 'old' inhabitants sometimes had conflicts among themselves or with the representatives of the Czechoslovak government. Bratislava gradually changed into an ethnically, culturally and politically homogenous, but socially intolerant city. Political changes within one decade reached different social groups, which resulted in general conformity: After 1950 more than 90% of citizens declared Slovak nationality (although in private some of them declared Hungarian, German

or Jewish origin); socially (at least according to the official data) the working class and its culture prevailed; 99% of the citizens voted for the candidates of the National Front etc.

Already towards the end of the monarchy and during the First Czechoslovak Republic the enemies had been defined on an ethnic basis. The repressive measures of the government in 1938-1945 threatened not only property or social positions but even lives. Sanctions were aimed especially at 'Non-Slovaks' – Czechs, the Roma people, Hungarians. (Jews were in a special position. As Petra Lárišová [2000] illustrates, in the 1940 census it was obligatory for them to declare themselves Jewish, regardless of the ethnic or religious identity they declared in the past.) The government was less strict with Slovak ideological enemies. Attempts to hide an 'inconvenient' personal identity from the official bodies, but often also from the neighbourhood or one's own family, belonged among the basic conditions of survival. The same guideline was applied in 1945-1948, but this time Germans and Hungarians were labelled as the 'enemies'. Only those who could prove their anti-fascist attitudes were exempted [Palečková 1946: 42].

According to the historian Dušan Kováč "one generation went through so many radical changes that it made their attitudes to the state and the regime relative" [Vagovič 2001: 11]. Such relativity was reflected also in the attitude to one's own personality. Threatened people chose various alternatives to defend themselves. They changed their ethnic origin (sincerely or shamming), they were baptised or they declared themselves atheist, they 'updated' their surnames, later they concealed their bourgeois ancestry and manifested their proletarian origin. Different groups (till then 'safe' or 'positive' ones) found themselves in similar situations after World War II and this was reflected in the (similar) responses of their members. Fear, inspired by historical experience, forced them to conceal their 'dangerous' identity from the authorities, the neighbourhood and often even from their children. They wore the masque of loyalty to the regime even in the privacy of their families. However, such a disguise was usually accepted as a temporary arrangement. Among confidential friends they often stressed the values of their 'true' identity and they planned the return to the original ('real') status as soon as possible. According to some authors, there were many who could not remove the masque even when the changed situation not only allowed it but even promised benefits. Marián Leško believes that "each human act has feedback on the person who has done it. If somebody wears a masque to disguise himself in the neighbourhood for a long time, he cannot be surprised if the masque grows into his/her face" [Leško 1993: 84]. We observe adaptation to the new regime more often than maintaining as 'uncomfortable' values. Such behaviour continues in various forms in the lives of threatened groups after 1938 or 1945, after February 1948 and in the period of 'normalisation' after August 1968. Havel's 'life in a lie' is not a specific feature of a socialist regime, but a common model of survival under totalitarian conditions [see Možný 1991].

I have already noted that the borderline dividing the 'loyal' and 'former' people ran mostly along the ethnic lines, after February 1948 it was formed by class criteria, though when needed ethnic criteria were applied, too (the struggle against bourgeois nationalism, Hungarian irredentism, 'German fascists', Zionists etc.). This means that, for example, the events in the periods 1914-1918, 1938-1945, after 1948, 1968, 1989, in spite of apparent diversity, had for entire groups of Bratislava residents comparable effects:

1. They always brought a restructuring of the population according to certain criteria, given by the governments;

2. They started the adaptation of the individual to new conditions;
3. The system of values gradually changed. The 'limits of social tolerance' modified as well. What had seemed not so long ago as improbable or even impossible, became a reality in new circumstances [Salner 1998: 111].

A global view of the twentieth century allows us to summarise that in spite of formal differences we can always differentiate between two groups of town residents: the active minority represented by those whose ambition (as parts of social movements) is to lead the society. It does not matter if they try to stabilise or change the existing situation. A quantitatively decisive element of the Bratislava (and Slovak) population is the passive and changing 'silent majority'. Alongside historically determined differences, in retrospect they are united by a single fact: *At first only through external manifestations, later through forms of everyday life and a system of values, they as a whole adapt to the winner* [ibid.: 112]. We find such attitudes in all studied periods. It results from the experience shared by generations. Folklore ('high spikes are the first to be cut', 'to piss against the wind does not pay') corresponds with the conclusions of the political scientist who states that Central Europe (including Slovakia and Bratislava) represents a very unfavourable environment for heroic acts [Šimečka 1990: 191].

A brief analysis of the town society at the end of the monarchy signals its pluralist character. Intensive Hungarisation after the Austro-Hungarian compromise in 1867 could not change the existing situation. Although statistically the number of Hungarians more than doubled in two decades, the ethnic diversity survived, because German, Slovak and Jewish residents retained an important footing in society. In a simplified way, shifts in the first two rows of data in Table 1 could be interpreted as only the result of government pressure and fears of the discriminative effects of the policy of Magyarisation. This explanation is out of the question if we take into account the results of the 1930 census. It shows that adaptation to the 'winner' continued under democratic conditions and the ethnic tolerance of the First Czechoslovak Republic as well: in a short time the number of Slovaks doubled (and the number of Czechs increased, too), while the proportion of Germans and especially Hungarians fell considerably. Fear was not the only reason, it became prominent only later [see Kamenec 1992]. The fact that people were not afraid of declaring their nationality openly is evident in the wide range of activities of various associations in which not only the 'state building' nationalities participated, but also minorities. According to Elena Mannová, after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic, "Hungarian and German associations watched for the development of the state policy and their activities sparked only after 1920. An association boom burst in the twenties in Bratislava, too, there was a vast increase mainly in the number of Slovak but also German, Hungarian, Jewish... associations." This is illustrated by the fact that in 1931 there were almost ten times as many associations in the town as in 1900, although the population only doubled [Mannová 1991: 69]. To understand these changes, we must take into account not only social processes but also subjective factors:

Table 1. The development of ethnic structure in Bratislava (%)

Year	Slovaks	Hungarians	Germans	Other	Total
1890	16.6	19.9	59.9	3.6	50,546
1910	14.9	40.5	41.9	2.7	78,223
1930	29.8	16.2	28.1	25.9	123,844
1950	90.2	3.5	0.6	5.7	170,000
1970	91.5	3.5	0.4	4.6	290,000
1990	90.4	5.3	0.2	4.1	442,000

Note: The various censuses were not conducted in a uniform manner. Therefore, I use their results to illustrate different trends.

At first sight, there are striking changes between the different regimes. Data on the First Czechoslovak Republic show an increase in Slovak nationality and a decrease in formerly prominent nationalities. This development was undoubtedly influenced by mass immigration, which largely changed the character and structure of the town. The more so as a part of the Hungarian speaking and associated citizens responded to the change of regime in 1918 through their departure. It is difficult to say to what extent their decision was influenced by propaganda and the dramatic circumstances accompanying the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic [see Luther 1993]. The days following the take-over after the 1919 New Year's Day remained in the memories of contemporaries as "days of unleashed passions, threatening especially the safety of property" (*Slovenský denník*, 14 February 1937). It took several years before the political situation in Bratislava settled. Increasingly, Slovak and Czech languages could be heard in an until then mostly German-Hungarian town. Many 'Pressburgers' conformed to the changed situation (at least outwardly). Moreover, nobody discouraged them from identifying more with the pluralist (three-language and multiethnic) town than with their ethnic or state nationality. This is indirectly proved by the fact that in spite of the seeming majority of Czechoslovak citizens there were complaints in the local newspaper that Hungarian was more common in public then Slovak. A certain polarity within the Bratislava population is shown through their division in 'Pressburger' and 'Czechoslovak' societies. They both had their own associations, social centres, cafes, sports clubs etc.

It is not clear to what extent the migration, fear, indifference to ethnicity or expedient expectations of 'reward' for identifying with the coming regime caused the increase in the number of citizens of 'Czechoslovak' nationality. It seems that in the period of the 1930 census, the officially declared tolerance became a legitimate and social norm. Public activities formed an essential part of everyday life in Bratislava and they showed that the citizens conformed to the (democratic) winner. However, the coming years proved that such a model of behaviour was not 'inbred'. I have already mentioned that tolerance follows not only from common moral or other principles, but also from the general social atmosphere, determined mostly by governing forces. This is manifested in the wave of violence immediately after the establishment of autonomy, which practically in one day replaced the until then peaceful co-existence of different groups. In the beginning, it functioned especially on the official level, but citizens joined in very quickly and changed their interpersonal relationships.

Signals that fascist ideas had become established in Slovakia could be seen already some time before they were officially codified through the constitution of Slovak autonomy (6 October 1938). They were clearly manifested in the platform of Hlinka's Slovak

People's Party, and in a short time they became a part of the views of the 'silent majority'. Political conflicts moved to the until then neutral and apolitical pubs, cafes, and wine cellars. Already in the spring of 1938, Slovak and Czech guests responded to the growing nationalism of wine-cellar owners by "straying to German wine cellars only by mistake or unfamiliarity with the local situation" (*Slovenský denník*, 1 July 1938). A contemporary (1910) described the tense atmosphere with the example of the Štefánka café: "When a Hungarian ordered a song, Slovaks started booing at their tables, and when a Slovak ordered a national song, the Germans started booing..." The rising authoritarian regime systematically suppressed the plurality of the society. Implementation of the slogan 'one nation, one party', a ban on most of the associations, attacks against different ethnic or religious groups caused Bratislava to soon become a monolithic environment. People's behaviour was largely determined by fear.

The effect of the totalitarian way of thinking manifested itself already in the period of autonomy through aggression against Czech and primarily against Jewish minorities. A newspaper, which not long before was democratically oriented, now claimed that "88,000 Jews have to be expedited from their warm posts as businessmen, doctors, lawyers etc. and given jobs in the healthy open air" (*Slovenský denník*, 4 November 1938). The next day the newspaper reported on 'spontaneous' attacks on Jewish shops in Bratislava. The citizens conformed to official opinion. Some of them in the hope of a better future, others in an attempt to save their lives, manifested loyalty to the regime, documented their Aryan descent, and looked for their German ancestors. Utilitarian behaviour was prominent, but not the only response to the period. More rarely there were people who at risk to their own existence tried to help these who were threatened. However, it was more often that fear or the attraction of power overwhelmed even those who were not exposed to direct pressure. The official ideology became a part of everyday life; sometimes only through formal manifestations in public, but often also by accepting the morals of the ideology and aggression against citizens who found themselves on the 'wrong side' of society (usually not of their own will). The aryanisation of Jewish properties played a special role, which incited a chain reaction of corruption and denunciation [Kamenec 1991: 56 et seq.].

This tendency became even more apparent after World War II. Attempts to adapt to political changes accompanied the situation after the liberation of Bratislava on 4 April 1945. The newly restored Czechoslovak Republic imposed sanctions against all Hungarians and Germans in Bratislava on the presumption of guilt. One part of them was forced to Bratislava. As in the past, a part of the 'silent majority' actively attacked the persecuted group. The recollections of Czech, Jewish, Hungarian and German citizens reveal a thankfulness, but more often they are embittered by the unfriendly acts of their neighbours and friends. Complex and painful events were until recently suppressed or simplified and the processes determining the lives of individuals and whole groups were characterised by a few words or even anecdotes. Janko Alexy's opinions are significant from the future point of view. According to him "in 1945 wine cellars disappeared from Bratislava, when their German owners left the territory of Slovakia" [Alexy 1957: 173]. Andrej Plávka characterised the expulsion of German viticulturists with the statement that their fears were baseless and "some of them stayed in Bratislava and most of them peacefully and lawfully left the country" [Plávka 1976: 33]. The threatened persons chose the same stereotypes of self-defence as their forerunners in distress: departure, adaptation to the new situation, efforts to hide a 'dangerous' identity.

The official approaches mentioned until now had common characteristics. The enemies of the regimes were defined ethnically: at first as non-Hungarians, later as Czechs, Gypsies, and Jews, after World War II as Hungarians or Germans. Various ideological conflicts resulted in the ethnic unification of Bratislava, culminating in the events after 1945. However, this was not the end of social engineering. After February 1948 'the government of workers and peasants' changed the criteria for selecting enemies and persecuted persons who had felt safe under the until then valid (ethnic) criteria, because they belonged to Slovak or Czech nationality. (Later the situation became even more complicated through lawsuits with 'bourgeois nationalists'.) Bratislava was badly affected by so-called Action B, the government's decision on the 'relocation of reactionary people out of big cities', which affected thousands of families. The town became more proletarian, at first formally, later also really. The former manifold character of Bratislava was disappearing faster than ever before, on the other hand the behaviour of people was overwhelmed by double-dealing. Internationalism represented the officially announced policy of the 1950s and ethnicity allegedly lost its former place in the lives of people and society. (The return of the ideas of Slovak nationalism in the 1960s was only a short-term interruption in the given status.) The subjective declaration of non-Slavonic nationality almost did not exist. In 1990, one of my old friends proudly declared his Hungarian origin. When it surprised me, he answered that he had always been a Hungarian, but it was good that nobody knew about it. A similar approach was common also in German or Jewish families.

The 'velvet revolution' in November 1989 meant for the majority of ordinary citizens a psychological shift. It was no mere coincidence that Martin Bútora and other speakers so often used words like 'fear' and 'breaking the spell'. Even at the first meetings, there were tendencies to vindicate the Slovak State and calls for independence emerged later. Immigrants from the USA and Canada expressed such views (for example the famous ice-hockey player and representative of the World Congress of Slovaks Peter Šťastný or the Protestant priest Dušan Tóth). Matica Slovenská and the Slovak National Party were especially active in this field. There was a tendency to call attention to the significance of Slovak history, to identify the enemies of the idea of independence and to find somebody to be blamed for the present situation. (The situation had a response in the political and cultural initiatives of Hungarian citizens and the revival of German and Jewish activities). A double-paradox situation arose:

a) People, who in the years of the totalitarian regime had hidden their ethnic background, started to manifest it openly as a basic part of their identity;

b) National conflicts entered the town, which until then appeared to be ethnically homogenous. Political parties, individuals, and informal associations took an active part in them. In 1990-1992, they were apparent on the political scene, but most often, they were presented in the form of various street demonstrations, which were given special significance at that time. Emphasising Slovak nationalism, and blaming the 'Czech colonisers', 'Hungarian irredentists', and the members of Roma and Jewish communities became a constituent part of the period.

The 'demonstration identity' was a part of people who allowed themselves to be convinced that they were right, they were numerous and influential until they came to the conclusion (they persuaded themselves) that the street (this means the participants in ideologically homogenous demonstrations) represented the whole. It means they had the

right (and means) to establish their ideas as generally valid and correct norms. Bratislava, the capital city, is the seat of major government bodies so it was natural that people gathered here more often and in greater numbers to pronounce their attitudes toward the thematic event. The quantity and diversity of these activities was reinforced by the fact that its population (also due to its multitude) was politically more differentiated than in other parts of Slovakia. German, Hungarian or Jewish associations and institutions revived or enlarged their activities, as did the representatives of Slovak nationalism, associated mainly with the years 1938-1945. Such activities resulted in growing tensions. The revived ethnic differentiation of the supposedly homogenous town became an integral part of the period.

The image of Bratislava in 1990-1992 is inevitably connected with public demonstrations. Activities that were originally anti-communist, acquired an ethnic (anti-Czechoslovak, practically anti-Czech) character. The ideological explicitness of such actions is significant. Even the place where the gatherings took place reflected the ideology. SNP Square, the scene of revolutionary demonstrations in November 1989, 'belonged' as of March 1990 to the supporters of an independent state. In their speeches 'for' an independent Slovak State, they often used ethnic arguments (for example, cases of injustice committed by Czechs, Hungarians, Jews etc.) The supporters of an undivided republic gathered on the embankment of the Danube under the statue of the Lion, the symbol of the Czechoslovak Republic. The conflicts in the ethnically homogenous and at the same time ethnically divided town culminated on 1 January 1993. A boisterous celebration of the establishment of the Slovak Republic was held on SNP Square, while under the statue of the Lion a nostalgic farewell to the extinct federation took place.

A more detailed analysis shows that the conflicts proceeded according to a consistent model or scheme. Both the 'nationalists' and the 'federalists' organised their gatherings on their own 'territories'. Aggression erupted when one of the groups (usually the supporters of independent Slovakia) had the feeling that their 'territorial borders' were violated. This happened especially when the 'federalists' organised their gatherings for various reasons at SNP Square and not 'under the Lion', or when the representatives and symbols (Václav Havel, Czechoslovak flags) of the enemy appeared by chance or consciously at nationalist meetings. Such events illustrate that the tensions of Bratislava (Slovak) society in the 1990s were based on ethnic factors. Their strengthening led to a polarisation, which sometimes grew from differences in opinion to physical conflicts.

Identification with an ethnic group became again an important public element of an individual's identity and an expression of the differentiation (in some moments even the polarity) of the town's population even during the demonstrations in November 1989 and especially in the following years. After 1993, it seemed that Slovak-Czech conflicts would become the subject of academic discussion rather than a part of everyday life. Ethnicity as an element of one's own identification or the means of defining the enemy (directed especially against Hungarians and Roma citizens; sometimes also against Czechs) does not lose its meaning. It works as the factor in the differentiation of the whole (and also in forming and uniting smaller groups). It may be assumed that in the near future also ethnicity will influence the mutual relationships of the Bratislava population; it is difficult to estimate whether tolerance or polarity will prevail. I believe that the 'silent majority' will again conform to the winner, so political and economic factors will play the decisive role.

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Ladislav Holý and Ernest Gellner

Representatives of Two Incompatible Approaches to the Study of Central European Society?

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Abstract: This study aims at comparing the method of work employed in the Central European region by two outstanding British social anthropologists of Czech origin. Ernest Gellner and Ladislav Holý, the two personalities who are the focus of this study, were in terms of their opinions very different from one another. Central Europe had a distinct significance for each of them, and they addressed it with different questions. The purpose of this text is not merely to outline what it was that divided them, but also to seek points in which their thoughts converged; to determine whether the common field left any traces in the subject of their interest, and whether the results of their research corresponded in any way at all. Given that both Ladislav Holý and his ideas received much less attention after his death than the views of Ernest Gellner did, the article devotes more space to the theoretical viewpoints of the former. The ideas Holý presented in the Czech academic press during the early 1990s, which are poorly accessible to the international academic community, are especially highlighted.

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Apart from Ernest Gellner, Ladislav Holý is probably the most outstanding scholar with links to Czech society to have influenced developments in British social anthropology in recent years. As far as theory and methodology in social anthropology is concerned, however, Holý and Gellner were at opposite ends of the spectrum of opinion. Holý also made very different use of his experience of Czech society and the research material that he gathered here in the early 1990s, the last years of his life.

Ernest Gellner saw events in Central Europe as warp and weft for overviews of macrosocial processes in broad historical perspective. Ladislav Holý took a different approach, carrying out an in-depth probe into the basic cultural assumptions behind Czech thinking, and analysing Czech behaviour and the Czech symbolic world at the end of the 1980s and in the period of post-communist transformation.

While Gellner approached events in Central Europe as part of all-European and world history, Holý's study of a precisely limited social collective actually cast doubt on the idea that post-communist transformation in the different countries of Central and East Europe followed an essentially similar course. Holý argued that on the contrary, post-communist transformation was in many respects a different process in each country, with the difference arising from the specific historical experience of each country and the specific features of the culture of their populations. Here Holý, like Geertz, Schneider or Spiro, used the word 'culture' to mean "collectively held notions, beliefs, premises, ideas, dispositions, and understandings" [Holý 1996: 2].

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While Ernest Gellner undertook a broad European-wide comparative study, Ladislav Holý concentrated on one 'in-depth' case study. While Gellner chose the grand historical retrospective, Holý kept to empirical data obtained in field research and went back to the past only occasionally, and only as the necessary explanatory context of certain present-day events. Gellner took a theoretical approach to his material that was close to what he himself called 'rational fundamentalism' whereas Holý drew on the theoretical background of interpretative anthropology for his researches, and called his anthropological writing, 'the interpretation of interpretation'. While Gellner explored the social climate in Central Europe primarily by looking at the intellectual legacy of its social elites, Holý tried to reveal the underlying cultural assumptions behind the everyday thinking and behaviour of ordinary citizens, politicians and journalists.

Gellner continually returned to Central European themes throughout his life. For him these themes were associated above all with the spiritual and intellectual legacy of the generation that had preceded him, and had drawn on the specific climate of the Austrian monarchy at the turn of the 19th/20th century. A full-blown Central European theme is to be found in his book *Words and Things* of 1959 [Gellner 1959], and among his later more minor works we should mention the studies *The Uniqueness of Truth, Past and Present*, and *Anthropology and Europe*,[1] which has also been published in Czech [Gellner 1994]. Holý, by contrast, only turned to a Central European theme in his last years, devoting several small-scale articles to the area: *Culture, Market Ideology and Economic Reform in Czechoslovakia* [Holy 1992], *The End of Socialism in Czechoslovakia* [Holy 1993], *Metaphors of the Natural and the Artificial in Czech Political Discourse* [Holy 1994] and *The Metaphor of 'Home' in Czech Nationalist Discourse* [Holy 1998]. Ladislav Holý also published a study in Czech, i.e. *Svoboda, národ a jednotlivec v české kultuře* [Freedom, Nation and Individual in Czech Culture] [Holý 1991a].

Ernest Gellner and Ladislav Holý were then to crown their Central European studies with book-length studies. In Gellner's case this was the book *Language and Solitude: Wittgenstein, Malinowski and the Habsburg Dilemma*, devoted to conflicts and syntheses in the thought of key figures of the 20th-century academic and philosophical scene who drew on the intellectual legacy of the Habsburg Empire shortly before its collapse [Gellner 1998]. In Holý's case it was the synthesis of his fieldwork, published in book form as *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation. National Identity and the Post-communist Transformation* [Holy 1996].

Ernest Gellner's ideas and methods have already been the subject of much scholarly attention in recent years. A series of commentaries on posthumously published texts in the collection *The Social Philosophy of Ernest Gellner*, which John A. Hall and Ian Jarvie originally compiled for his seventieth birthday [Hall and Jarvie 1996], is particularly stimulating. I shall therefore limit myself in Gellner's case to very brief characterisation and pay more attention to the methodological approaches of Ladislav Holý, as he tried to introduce them to Czech readers in small articles and interviews in ethnological journals and other periodicals. These texts are today almost forgotten and so I shall try to summarise them and on this basis to open the way to proper understanding of the fieldwork research encapsulated in *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation*. In the last

[1]) Both these texts came out after publication in academic journals in 1995 in Gellner's book *Anthropology and Politics* [Gellner 1995].

section I shall try to answer the question of whether Gellner's and Holý's work might not (contrary to appearances) in some ways mutually intersect and complement each other.

Thematically, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation* is isolated in terms of Holý's overall career and output, which was primarily concerned with African studies. Holý had been interested in African themes even before he emigrated from Czechoslovakia. He conducted his first research projects with the African Toka and Berti tribes as an employee of the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore Studies of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. He also worked closely with the Náprstek Museum in Prague, and taught kinship systems at the Charles University Faculty of Arts. Even at this early stage he was already strongly influenced by the British social anthropological tradition. It is therefore no wonder that his work in the 1960s was very often concerned with questions of social structure, kinship systems, social stratification and later value systems. His ideas on where to draw the line between ethnography and other social sciences, which he presented together with Milan Stuchlík in the article *Co je a co není etnografie* [What is and What is not Ethnography] [Holý and Stuchlík 1964], were also focused on developments taking place in the social structure of pre-industrial and industrial society. While this text is now very dated, its argument was noteworthy and it was definitely one of the most interesting contributions to Czech ethnography of the 1960s. Ernest Gellner regarded it as a clear sign that even at this point Ladislav Holý's approach was close to that of British anthropologists.

In 1968 Ladislav Holý left Czechoslovakia. In 1968-1972 he directed the Livingstone Museum in Zambia, and from 1973 lectured in social anthropology in Great Britain, first in Belfast and later at St. Andrews. In Africa and Western Europe he moved directly into the centre of discussion on the colonial inheritance, colonial research projects and colonial situations, on hard and soft data, quantitative and qualitative data, and on interpretative anthropology. Ernest Gellner also made major contributions to this latter discussion, but unlike Gellner, Holý found the new movements a source of major inspiration. While in his youth he was strongly influenced by British approaches, after his departure from his homeland he also drew considerable inspiration from American cultural anthropology. Holý saw the role assigned to culture in anthropological study and the relation of culture to social structure – one of the central subjects of British social anthropology – as a characteristic aspect of the new paradigm emerging from the discussions just mentioned. When in 1991 he tried to describe the new situation to Czech readers, he wrote that:

> "In 1881 E. B. Tylor defined anthropology as the *scientific study of culture*. While in the United States *culture* remained the subject of *cultural anthropology* almost without interruption, in Great Britain from the 1920s, what became established was *social anthropology*, which one of its modern pioneers A. R. Radcliffe-Brown defined as the comparative sociology of primitive societies. Social anthropologists focused on social structure and the main problem of research was to discover how different social structures were organised and how they functioned, how the social system was maintained in dynamic equilibrium as a result of political, economic, kinship and other bonds existing between the main segments of society, and by which specific mechanisms group interests were controlled and prevented from upsetting the stability of the whole social systém... While American cultural anthropologists regarded the social system as a part of the whole culture, British social anthropologists considered culture as a derivation of the social system." [Holý 1991b: 5][2]

[2]) Holý's own italics.

In one article Holý illustrated this view of the history of anthropology using the example of the understanding of myth. He argues that whereas Bronislaw Malinowski "saw myth as a *social charter* that rationalised and legitimised existing social relations", this conception of myth was overturned in the course of the 1950s under the influence of French structuralism, and in the work of Lévi-Strauss, myth becomes more an ideological instrument "that makes it possible for man to cope cognitively with basic contradictions in his own life experiences" [Holý 1991: 6]. Progress did not, of course, end here, but continued in the direction of the interpretative method. In interview given to the journal *Slovenský národopis* [Slovak Ethnography] Ladislav Holý described his own route to interpretative anthropology:

> "Milan Stuchlík and I were at that time working on the same problems. What interested us was the question of which groups, structures of relationships and culturally constructed wholes formed the basis of recruitment to different kinds of activities. I did research on this problem in the Sudan, and my first work on the Berti was concerned with how far kinship and local or neighbourly relations determined recruitment to political, economic and ritual activities. That was why the book was called *Neighbours and Kinsmen*. The Berti themselves did not make a semantic distinction between these two terms, but they very clearly distinguished between them on the level of social action, and I tried to explain why they could talk about one category using the concepts of the second category. Milan did something similar in Chile, with the Mapuche, where he also used this concept of recruitment. Later we both came to Great Britain – I myself one year earlier – and we were together in Belfast. We were both influenced by phenomenology and both interested in the same problems, specifically the problem of the extent to which the knowledge people have determines or affects what they do. Our fundamental premise was that what people do not know – what is not part of their knowledge – plays absolutely no role in their real behaviour. It was actually our attack on positivism. We had combative discussions with the functionalists and the structural Marxists, who explained everything in terms of the structure of relations of production. We argued that a person who has no inkling of relations of production and macro-economic forces cannot be determined by them. What determines his behaviour is only what he knows himself, and to explain his actions by the existence of some sort of 'objective' forces is complete nonsense – a typically positivist approach. This is because it explains his actions in terms of a reality that has some kind of meaning only for us, since forces of production and macro-economic processes are concepts by means of which we create and understand reality. We are therefore making a category error if we impute our own ideas to someone who has an entirely different idea of the world. He acts on the basis of what he knows about the world, and not at all on the basis of what we know of the world." [Chorvátová 1991]

Holý's concept of interpretative anthropology gradually acquired clear form in his books *The Structure of Folk Models* of 1981, *Actions, Norms and Representations: Foundations of Anthropological Inquiry* of 1983 (both with Milan Stuchlík) and *Comparative Anthropology* of 1987. These were all primarily concerned with method, and the seriousness with which Holý kept returning to the question of methodology sprang from his view that a researcher's approach to his subject (man) expressed his assumptions about the place of man in the world [Holy and Stuchlik 1983: 1]

The Structure of Folk Models of 1981 is a collection of articles, with a long introductory chapter of the same name jointly written by Holý and Stuchlík. This chapter is on the one hand a polemic with positivist anthropology and on the other an attempt at incorporating part of its methodology within the framework of interpretative anthropology. In their theoretical work, the authors did not try to invent a new science, but painstakingly sought for continuity between earlier research results and the new approaches. Their aim

was not to reject the earlier results, but instead to provide them with a new basis and give them a new status. In the case of *The Structure of Folk Models*, they wanted to create a new status for phenomena by applying the conceptual distinction between structure and culture, model and social action. Here they tried to show "...that one of the essential characteristics of social reality is that it is constituted reality: a process and result of social life, consisting of intentional performances of members of society." [Holy and Stuchlik 1981: 1]. It is precisely this property of social reality that gives rise to a series of methodological problems for social scientists, since in their research they encounter various different kinds of reality. The concept of 'model' is here defined as just one part of differentiated reality. It is the part that relates to the analytical or explanatory constructs of the observer. The models that people create in order to understand the world that surrounds them are considered by Holý and Stuchlík to be the main subject of anthropological research. This subject clearly comes from "a different world" to that of the natural sciences and to investigate it necessarily requires different rules of procedure. From this perspective, to talk about anything that Radcliffe-Brown might call *the natural science of society* would be beside the point. The introductory chapter to *The Structure of Folk Models* can be seen as a justification of the interpretative approach and an attempt to establish its primacy in anthropological research.

Holý had to complete *Actions, Norms and Representations* by himself following Stuchlík's death. He focussed here on the question of the relationship between how social systems (structures) work and what people do and why they do it. As a field researcher Holý knew that field data about structure and about human activity rarely fitted together. The social bonds described in accounts of the social structure of a given society can form a certain norm, but this is breached by almost every concrete social act on the basis of the specific cultural assumptions of an individual or group. The three words of the book's title represent the basic levels on which Holý believed social reality could be explored. Right at the beginning in the introduction, Holý emphasises that a good anthropologist intuitively investigates all the levels and this is indeed the only correct approach. Very often, however, the anthropologist is not aware of their ontological status, mixes them up and so ends up with a series of imprecise or confused conclusions. According to Holý one frequent lapse is the expectation that people will act on the basis of social structural relations. When the anthropologist discovers that this is not the case, he searches in the society for malfunctions to explain it. In fact, he gets close to teaching his natives what they ought to be doing on the basis of his academic conclusions on structure. Holý therefore presents evidence that people's specific behaviour is not blindly determined by structural relations, but is primarily determined by cultural choice. To simplify matters, we might say that one of the intentions of the book is to rehabilitate culture in relation to structure.

Comparative Anthropology, which Holý edited and for which he wrote an article entitled *Description, Generalisation and Comparison: Two Paradigms* [Holy 1987: 1-21], had a different purpose. It discussed the status that the comparative method – a key instrument in positivist anthropology – ought to have in interpretative anthropology. Here Holý emphasises that positivist anthropology rests on the assumption that while cultures differ, they also have much in common, and also that social facts are things that exist independently of each other. Both these assumptions make possible a third, i.e. that individual cultures are comparable to each other. Comparability means that general features of different cultural phenomena can be found and generalisations can be made on the character of social facts. The correctness of such a generalisation can be again tested by

comparison. As Radcliffe-Brown said, "without systematic comparative studies anthropology will become only historiography and ethnography [cited in Holy 1987: 2]. According to Holý, questions of data-collection in positivist anthropology mainly related to efforts to ensure that the social facts gathered were comparable, valid, free of observer interference and so suitable for purposes of generalisation. From the point of view of methodology, the gathering of facts or descriptions did not appear problematic in itself; what were problematic were the generalisations obtained by comparison, because the better, the more detailed and the more extensive the data, the more debatable was its comparability [see also Uherek 2001].

For Czech readers Holý later offered the following brief summary of the basic ideas contained in these three books:

> "In the traditional conception of anthropology, culture (a system of symbols and meanings) was regarded as a field including religion, ritual, magic, mythology and art. In traditional studies kinship, economics and politics were not considered to be systems of symbols and meanings, since it was believed that they were based in really existing genetic relations, objectively existing relations of production, distribution and consumption, or on objectively existing power relations. Current anthropology has rejected this view, since it assumes that every system (...) is a system of symbols and meanings, i.e. a cultural system.
>
> Symbols and meanings are parts of human understanding, interpretation and expression. In other words, they are parts of the cognitive and communication processes through which people give meaning to their experience and the social reality in which they live, and through which they can share these experiences and this reality with others. If we talk about meanings, we are also talking about the means by which people understand the world in which they live and by which they make themselves understood. We are, however, at the same time talking about processes by which people not only understand the world, but actually create it: if this world exists only in the parameters of symbols and meanings that are cognitively apprehensible, and if these symbols and meanings are the result of human thought, then the world that people mutually share and about which they communicate exists only as their own creation or cultural construction." [Holý 1991b: 6]

Ladislav Holý is not arguing that the world does not exist or is unknowable, but that its meaning for man is a social construction and it is meaning that makes the world what it is for man.

It will now already be clear what Ladislav Holý came back to Bohemia to study. He came to discover what kind of discourses were going on here roughly in the period 1987-1992, which symbols were being used in these discourses and, especially, what it all meant for the actors of the events themselves. We can interpret any kind of gesture in many different ways. Ladislav Holý could have interpreted the gestures and speeches of the actors of the November 1989 events in many different ways from the comfort of his study in St. Andrews, but it was not his aim to interpret gestures and speeches. He was interested in the meanings that the actors of the events were investing in those gestures and speeches, and in how they saw the world around them through these meanings. His aim was to interpret the interpretations of the actors of the events, and during the 1970s and 1980s he had in fact begun to believe that this was the greater part of the work of a social anthropologist. As he put it,

> "The aim of anthropology (...) is not to study social and cultural phenomena (the human world) as objective facts that can be considered independent of the defining activities of people. These social and cultural phenomena are the result of human ideas and actions, and must therefore be studied from the point of view of the experiences of the people themselves and the meanings that they themselves attribute to their experience. Today if anthro-

> pologists study sexual roles, for example. i.e. the differences between the participation of men and women in social, economic, political or religious institutions, they cannot start from the premise that *men* and *women* are simply given natural objects independent of any culture, and that we know what a *man* is and what a *woman* is. The primary anthropological task is to discover how gender and sexuality are conceptualised in a given culture and how the categories of *man* and *woman* are culturally constructed." [Holý 1991b: 6; see also Holy 1987: 10].

For Holý these postulates signalled the end of ideas about the methodological unity of the natural and social sciences. From this point of view the social sciences have a different set of methods reflecting their subjective character. For Holý the new paradigm also meant a radical shift from anthropological generalisation to description. The internal understanding of a culture from *the point of view of the actor* and in the terms used in the culture assumed a key role. The question of how to collect data in a way that most facilitated comparison is losing its meaning, since generalisation has been abandoned as the aim of anthropological knowledge. In contrast, the crucial question is now how to collect data of a kind that will legitimately show how reality is constructed by the actors studied and what meanings social phenomena have as a result of their construction and interpretation. This question cannot, however, be answered purely by participation in the activities of the social actors. Simple observation is more suitable. The aim of anthropological work is not then generalisation, but adequate description of culturally specific cognitive worlds.

For Holý field work cannot mean the testing out of a theory but is actually the procedure needed to create the theory. The process of creation of the theory should also take place without previously adopted analytic categories, and on the basis of categories obtained from the conceptualisations of the social actors themselves. This implies that every social situation should have its own theoretical modification. Generalising theory is abandoned and in its place there emerges a 'science' of the culturally specific [see also Uherek 2001].

Holý's views on the aim and methodological equipment of anthropology were reflected in the form of his research in Bohemia and the way in which this research was presented in his texts of the 1990s.

The centre of the research was not to reveal what Czechs are like, but to interpret what Czechs say about themselves on the question of what they are like and why they say it, why they use certain symbols in a certain situation, why they express their opinion that the past can be atoned for, why they regard the metaphor of the centre as positive and so forth. Czech conceptualisations of Czechs are also examined in the specific context of a specific situation. The time framework that interests Holý is the present, but even because in completely new situations old symbols are used filled with a new meanings, he sometimes goes back to earlier history. Sometimes he also does this for the sake of comparison. He is fascinated by the similarity of the rhetoric of revolutions at different times in Czech history, and how at different critical turning-points people speak in very similar ways about the moral decline of the previous period, and how positive traditions are unearthed. The similarities and differences in what Czechs say they are doing, led Holý to try to formulate at least a few basic cultural premises that are accessible in the form of concepts and that make up constructs through which Czechs attempt to interpret the world in which they move, and through which they mould it in accordance with these cultural premises.

In 1993 texts by Ladislav Holý and Ernest Gellner appeared side by side in Chris Hann's collection *Socialism. Ideals, Ideologies and Local Practice.* By coincidence both chose the same theme – the fall of communism, its context and causes – offering us a chance to examine whether their different methods and ways of perceiving facts led to comparable results. It should be said that they did not. Gellner talks in broad historical perspective about the fall of a system that combined elements of capitalist industrialism and pre-capitalist centralism, which in the pre-capitalist era had been associated primarily with the question of land ownership [Gellner 1993]. He talks about the problem of power, compulsion and control of resources. He shows the shortcomings of communism as a system and demonstrates that these systemic shortcomings doomed it to extinction. In contrast Ladislav Holý takes a specific example from the Czech *milieu* and explores what students and intellectuals symbolised for Czechs and the meanings that Czech citizens invested in the event when on the 17th of November 1989 the police attacked students in Prague during a permitted demonstration. In this text he also describes he role ascribed in Bohemia to actors and writers and why they were able to become an important motor of events of 1989. He looks at a further series of specific historical episodes in a similar spirit and tries to identify the meanings they had for the Czech population and why people reacted as they did. From these concrete episodes he then derives the causal chain of events leading to the fall of communism in one specific country. Since particular meanings are attributed to the event by particular actors, the interpretation is derived from the position of the actor. In Gellner's conception we are looking at the disintegration of systems or structures, while in Holý's conception we are looking at a chain of episodic events, in which people react to specific stimuli on the basis of the meanings that they attribute to them; interpretation from the position of the actor reveals the cultural premises of a given society.

Did Holý really, however, conduct the interpretation from the position of the actor? There is no simple answer to this question, but I can document the fact that Czech intellectuals at least, as one section of the actors from whose position the interpretation was supposed to be conducted, very often did not recognise their own positions in Holý's exposition. The discussions that Holý had with Czech ethnologists at meetings in 1991-1992, for example, ended without much mutual understanding having been achieved.

It would therefore seem that Gellner and Holý's conclusions and methodological approaches, if not in mutual contradiction, rather passed each other by, (just as Holý's conclusions and the thoughts of the actors of the events described rather passed each other by as well). Nonetheless, Holý's *The Little Czech* has one major aspect in which there is some meeting between his view of the reality studied and Gellner's.

Holý's book can be read as a book about Czech cultural premises, or as a book about the fall of communism and consequent social transformation, but it can also be read as a book about Czech nationalism.

While Ladislav Holý derived a whole range of meanings of individual terms from their everyday use in the Czech *milieu*, 'nationalism' was not one of them. I believe that one reason for this was the fact that in Bohemia this word has a strongly negative connotation and is rarely used in accounts of the behaviour of Czechs. In Czech usage nationalism means social deviation and is not employed in the same way as it is by Western researchers. On the other hand, human action and behaviour of the type covered by the term in Western academic literature is completely commonplace. Holý seems therefore to

have included nationalist thought and behaviour in Bohemia under concepts already defined by professional western scholars.

Like many other researchers, Holý too distinguishes between the "Western concept of the nation as an association of people living in a common territory under the same government and laws and the eastern concept of the nation as an organic, ethnically based community." [Holy 1996: 47] Holý's argument here, which refers to the works of H. Kohn, A. D. Smith and G. Csepeli, also has some correspondence with the distinction Ernest Geller made between the universalistic-atomic and romantic-organic vision in his book *Language and Solitude* [Gellner 1998: 21-29]. It is precisely on the basis of a theory of nationalism corresponding to the Gellner approach that Holý persuasively argues that the two types of nationalism involve different interpretations of the basic function of the state, and different conceptions of the relationship between nation and state. Where Gellner used similar conceptual tools to show how the nationalist and universalist concepts influenced the thought of intellectual elites, Holý by detailed analysis shows how eastern, ethnic nationalism can define national groups irrespective of state frontiers and redefine new frontiers on purely ideological principles. Holý offers a subtly account of the mechanisms by which a nation can set itself in opposition against a state to which it has been subjected for years, excommunicate the state from the nation and by change in the state structure redefine the unity of the nation and state. In relation to the events preceding the fall of communism in 1989, he also persuasively shows that the rising tide of national feeling and the popularity of nationalist arguments was not the result of the fall of communism, but came before it. Holý presents a great deal of cogent evidence for the claim that at least in Czechoslovakia the overthrow of communism was carried out in the name of an oppressed nation decimated by its own state. Through simple description of the events he shows that central national symbols accompanied every demonstration from 1987 and that national argument was the link that bridged differences of opinion and social barriers. "The people who opposed the communist regime in demonstrations styled themselves not citizens, democrats, or workers but Czechs." [Holy 1996: 48-49] On the basis of analysis of discourses of the time, Holý finds, by contrast, that discussion of civic society and a vision for the ordering of the new state began to appear in Czechoslovakia in greater measure only in the last phase of the fall of communism, at the turn of the years 1989/90. Here Holý is interested in how Czech nationalism is constructed. He derives a basic characterisation by analysing how Czechs defined themselves at the expense of Germans and Slovaks.

Like Gellner, Holý in his conclusions creates paired categories resembling the Gellnerian individualistic/atomistic and organic dichotomy [Gellner 1998: 3-6]. He talks about an nationalist-egalitarian discourse that is collectivist and in which individuals are emanations of the collectivity, and an individualist discourse, which treats individuals as autonomous and separate. According to Holý, while these two discourses are in dispute, in Bohemia they to a certain extent intersect and counterbalance each other, because they are emerging in the same social climate and operating in one society. Through Holý, then, the Habsburg dilemma described in Gellner's book *Language and Solitude* revives in contemporary Central European everyday life, finds its parallels and influences the life of the individuals. In times of social crisis the nationalistic discourse prevails, and in times of social prosperity the individualistic discourse [Holy1996: 201].

The theme of nationalism is very fully developed in Ladislav Holý's book. His account of the nation as a supra-personal entity, discussion of the relation of the nation to

tradition, and reflections on national leaders in the Czech environment have intellectual power. Gellner's abstract postulates on the workings of Central European nationalism have thus been elaborated on the basis of detailed field work – perhaps partly due to Holý's inconsistency in using ready-made concepts of nationalism rather than the social constructions created directly in the field by the actors studied.

In his commentary on Gellner's text *Words and Things*, Chris Hann wrote that "neither Malinowski nor Gellner have themselves consistently practised what they have preached." [Hann 1996: 46]. The same might certainly be said of Ladislav Holý. I believe he would have been pleased to hear it, since his last social theory (which Gellner would certainly have passionately attacked) is based on the idea that people do not do as they say and that their actions are not inevitably connected to bonds within the social structure.

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Ernest Gellner: Language and Solitude: Wittgenstein, Malinowski, and the Habsburg Dilemma

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Language and Solitude: Wittgenstein, Malinowski, and the Habsburg Dilemma is the very last book written by Ernest Gellner. It can be seen as a summary of the lifelong academic efforts by this arguably most original thinker of the 20th century. Here Gellner makes his final and unequivocal, albeit not always explicit, statement about anthropology as the most efficient way of grasping our visible and invisible social world. Although one cannot find it explicitly in his writing, Gellner defines humans as primarily knowledge-seeking beings (we might coin a Latin neologism of *homo gnosticus*). For Gellner, knowledge and cognition is the highest manifestation of being human. Already in his initial work in academia, i.e. the late 1940s and the early 1950s, he began to distinguish between "two fundamental theories of knowledge" which are "profoundly opposed" and which at the same time do not concern knowledge only but "human life" as such and "theories of society, of man, of everything" (p. 3). The one, represented by Wittgenstein's linguistic philosophy, with which Gellner acquainted himself when he was a student at Oxford, seemed wrong to him already then but he could not prove it easily.

Only when he discovered social anthropology, a new discipline created by Malinowski (and continued by his disciples Firth and Schapera at the London School of Economics) by way of transcending ethnology as it was practised there earlier by Malinowski's teachers Westermarck and Seligman, did Gellner identify a tool which enabled him to show effectively why the 'individualistic/atomistic' conception of knowledge represented by Wittgenstein was wrong. Even Wittgenstein's very linguistic theory was wrong according to Gellner. Anthropology enabled Gellner to identify the opposite theory, an 'organic' vision of the world in which knowledge is a 'team game', and concepts are the property of 'entire cultural/linguistic community', not of isolated individuals. As he put it "[C]ultures freeze associations, and endow them with a feel of necessity. They turn mere worlds into homes, where men can feel comfortable, where they belong rather than explore, where things have their allocated places and form a system" (p. 5). Gellner expresses this credo unequivocally:

- No single individual is capable of excogitating the system of ideas required to make a world: only the unconscious cunning of a culture and a language is capable of such an achievement. Man cannot act on his own, but only when sustained by and interacting with other participants in this collective game. The ideas of a culture, of a historic tradition, of an ongoing community, work through him (p. 6).

At end of the book he was perhaps more careful but still clear about the fundamental difference between the two worldviews:

- The real intellectual problems that modern society faces consist, in very large part, of the relationship between the two styles, between universalism-atomism, which helps explain the success of the new science and thereby itself acquires a certain authority, further reinforced by the superiority of the market form of production over centralised and socially oriented ways of running the economy, and, on the other hand, by the yearning for 'meaning', social coherence, the fusion of value and fact, the absorption of the individual in a supportive and loving community, which in turn blends into the natural background. These are the terms of reference for our problems. Anyone who simply proposes one of them and ignores or dismisses the other, has little to tell us. That might have been possible once, but it is so no longer (p. 190).

Throughout his stormy career, Gellner never agreed with the artificiality of the thinking of linguistic philosophers, and with their knowledge for the sake of knowledge. He disagreed with overstretched fundamentalism, exaggerated cultural relativism, with hermeneutics, postmodernism and culturalism. He wanted to appreciate also the other side of the coin. For him neither Lévi-Strauss nor anthropological Marxists unseated Malinowski from the virtual priesthood of anthropology. Social anthropology to him was the empirical knowledge of

relations between real people who associate in communities and societies. In social anthropology, with its theory and practice of fieldwork, he found the means of how to argue simultaneously in favour of the uniqueness of truth and for the invincibility of scientific knowledge, which is aimed at life and practice. In this sense he was a materialist.

Social anthropology proved to be an organic combination of the two approaches to the realities of modernity. After all Gellner's main contribution is his very original understanding of modernity by way of analysis of nationalism. Nationalism, as he put it so succinctly in a paper he gave in Piran in September 1995, less than two months before he died, was defined by the relation of polity and culture: "The state is legitimated by its role in protecting a culture and a culture is completed by having its own state. This is the basic doctrine of nationalism (...) boundary of the political unit and the cultural unit converge. (...) The marriage of state and culture is the basic principle of nationalism." Indeed, as if telepathically with Malinowski who in his time never managed to complete his 'scientific theory of culture', Gellner had to make an enormous step forward and recognised the crucial role which anthropologically conceived culture plays in understanding society, especially the modern society equipped with the nation-state polity.

At this stage the reader should be reminded that during his life Gellner had not one but four fieldwork experiences: the first was the post-Munich Britain where he arrived in April 1939 as a boy of a little over thirteen years and again as a 20-year-old demobilised student when he returned from Prague early in 1946 (Once in Britain he continued his high school – in Prague he studied at an English high school – education at St. Albans County Grammar School with excellent results and then went on to study at Oxford's Balliol College for a year before enlisting for active service in the war against Germany, fighting at Dunkirk and liberating Plzeň/Pilsen as a member of the Czechoslovak Brigade which fought alongside the U.S. and British armies. After demobilisation, Gellner studied for few months at Charles University and then decided to return to Oxford.). The second fieldwork of Ernest Gellner was the proper anthropological one, in the Moroccan Atlas, the results of which were published as *Saints of the Atlas* (1969). The third piece of fieldwork of Ernest Gellner took place in Moscow, U.S.S.R., in the late 1980s when he spent his sabbatical at the Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences. Finally, Gellner's fourth field experience was carried out in post-communist Prague where he moved after his retirement from Cambridge and spent the last three years of his life. As a matter of fact he died *in Prague*, in his flat on Prokopská 9 on 5 November 1995. In effect, Gellner was a refugee and a migrant all his life, obviously with the exception of the first 13 and half years. Throughout his life he cherished the impressions and fictions of Prague and Czechoslovakia, which he acquired before his escape to freedom. Ironically, in Britain he was always viewed as a refugee intellectual, obsessed with a weird continental way of thinking and remembering things that the British did not (want to) know (I am grateful to Professor Brian McGuiness for explaining to me Gellner's position in British society and academia.). In Prague at the end of his career and life, for a change, the Czech people saw in him as a British philosopher with something of a Czech-Jewish background which was not widely known.

Whereas British philosophers point out Wittgenstein's quest for the ultimate confines of knowledge, Gellner stressed the extreme individualism and non-practicality in Wittgenstein's theory of knowledge. Gellner believed that what he calls the Habsburg dilemma consisted in an unresolved tension between these two gnoseological poles. "It was with the rise of nationalism", Gellner writes, "that the deep confrontation (...) really came into its own within the Danubian empire. The opposition between individualism and communalism, between the appeal of *Gesellschaft* ('Society') and of *Gemeinschaft* ('Community'), a tension which pervades and torments most societies disrupted by modernisation, became closely linked to the hurly burly of daily political life and pervaded the sensibility of everyone" (p. 12). It appeared that the most eager partisans of the Austro-Hungarian Empire turned out to be the liberals of Jewish descent, "standing out-

side the faith with which the state was once so deeply identified" (ibid.) and whose cosmopolitan culture was quite opposed to the ethnic demands of the awakeners. Romantic-populist ethnographers, in opposition to the 'bloodless cosmopolitanism', glorified peasant folk culture. Rationalistic individualism and romantic communalism stood in seemingly irreconcilable, dilemmatic, opposition.

Malinowski, whom Gellner compares with William the Conqueror, and his titanic thrust towards the establishment of social anthropology nearly *ex nihilo* served Gellner for the sketching of the other alternative, which was seemingly also an absolute one. It was the romantic communalism of co-existence of cultures without their being hijacked for political goals. Malinowski experienced its functioning during the last few decades of 'Kakania' (The famous Austrian writer Robert Musil coined Kakania a bit derogatively echoing the k.u.k. – *königliche und kaiserliche* – monarchy better known as the Austro-Hungarian Empire.). Ruled fairly benignly by Franz Josef I of the Habsburg dynasty, Kakania eventually succumbed in the wake of World War One to its own conservatism and the external forces of modernity. Malinowski was a holist, who saw "life as participation in a collectivity, which alone gives life its meaning" (p. 181) and did not believe in politicisation of ethnicity. Rather he welcomed cultural diversity and advised that political sovereignty of nation-states should be curbed.

Possibly the most exciting part of Gellner's last book, where he comes out of the closet so to say, is the section on Malinowski's politics. By employing experience with native nationalistic ethnography of the Carpathians Malinowski revolutionised it, Gellner argues, by putting it in the Trobriands to the service of his scientific empiricist quest. Malinowski transformed ethnography into anthropology, thereby changing it, in Gellner's words, "from time-machine into a history-exterminator" (p. 140). Anthropology was a strictly empirical science, mostly concerned with the non-European, in his time colonial, peoples. By the 1930s, however, Malinowski understood that anthropology can be also a practical science and he put it, at least at the London School of Economics, to the service of understanding social and cultural change, mainly in Africa. Later, when he faced the practical and theoretical anthropological task of understanding the problem of war (World War Two started in Poland, his native country, when Malinowski was on sabbatical in the U.S.A. and he never returned to England because of it), he combined his cosmopolitan liberalism with the political necessity of curbing the sovereignty of nation-states which, if equipped with exclusivist and supremacist, highly politicised, nationalism, caused wars. The solution to the seeming dilemma he saw, according to Gellner, both in the practice of cultural autonomy (as he knew it from Galicia under Austrian rule) and in the British colonial policy of indirect rule. As Gellner puts it, what attracted Malinowski to indirect rule was the fact that "it limits the political power of local rulers" while continuing to "encourage, foster, and sustain the cultural expression of the indigenous society, including its political hierarchy" but its "power is markedly restrained" (pp. 142-143). Gellner in a way complements Malinowski by saying that the answer to the moral repellence of colonialism is not its abolishment but rather the demand that everybody should be colonised.

"[U]niversalisation of colonialism is just as good as its abolition", writes Gellner, and hastens to explain that colonisation of everybody means to "deprive their political units of sovereignty – whilst allowing them absolute cultural freedom of expression, thereby incidentally depriving boundaries of some of their importance and symbolic potency" (ibid.). Gellner laments that Malinowski's precepts were not adhered to, post-World War II and post-1989 nationalism unleashed wars. Gellner (ibid.) believes that culture is not necessarily territorial and its enhancement could be, so he hopes, combined with the defusing of nationalist frenzy. It is possible to reduce political institutions to "mere administrative conveniences (...) emptied of their emotive potency". This legacy of Ernest Gellner, inspired so decisively by Malinowski's anthropology, is the 'only hope' for humanity.

Anthropology, through its meticulous collection of synchronic field data, is simultaneously a search for meaning, social coherence,

amalgamation of values and facts, it is the absorption of the individual into a supporting and loving community, which further combines with the natural environment. By accepting the non-Witgensteinian alternative, represented by the Malinowski's social anthropology, Gellner does not at all commit the error of absolutisation. He was indeed a maverick, combining unusual qualities into a unique synthesis, very much like his intellectual 'grandfather' Malinowski: "empiricist organicist, a positivist romantic, and a synchronic holist" (p. 135). As Steven Lukes explains in his foreword, Malinowski "recombined elements of both - romantic and positivist, organic and liberal - thereby prefiguring and expressing a version of Gellner's own position" (p. xiv). It is thanks to Malinowski's anthropology that Gellner managed to understand and explain the Habsburg dilemma, unresolved *à l'époque* because of the false necessity of the choice between the two absolutes. Gellner's legacy consists in his assertion of the need to submit to the logic of technological modernity, which originated in the West before its further global distribution. On the other hand however he stresses its transcendence by the anthropological approach to the realities of human life. Thus Gellner does not reject the solitude of individualism for its methodological failure but rather because the knowledge thus gained does not offer any exit useful for the practice of humanity. Social anthropology, starting with Malinowski, through its empirical study of human society and culture in all their manifestations, shows the path towards the fulfilment of and transcendence of simple biological needs by values inculcated by culture. Gellner put it very succinctly at the end of his last book (p. 190):

– A satisfactory life is one which is provided with the means of playing out a part in a culture/play, a part agreeable to the actor. This fact is obscured in our society by the egalitarian levelling out of roles that has allowed people to pursue recognition mainly through the acquisition of goods. This creates an illusion that those goods are, in themselves, desired and satisfying.

Petr Skalník

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