
How to Become European? The Intellectual Legacy of Ernest Gellner

Jackie Assayag

CNRS/ Maison française d'Oxford, UK & EHESS, Paris

ABSTRACT

Ernest Gellner's fruitful work on nations and nationalism fits into the frame of the modernisation theory and the cultural programme on modernity which developed in Europe. Evidence of this is found in Gellner's reflection on the 'Habsburg dilemma', opposing the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein to the ethnologist Bronislaw Malinowski. Gellner saw the former as a representative of unrooted cosmopolitan idealism and the latter as an advocate of universalism, respectful of cultural diversity and experience. Gellner's neo-Weberian approach, based on a positivist and Eurocentric view of social sciences, shows its limitations when applied to the study of 'early' and 'multiple modernities', Islam and nationalism(s).

INTRODUCTION

«– But do you know what a nation means? Says John Wyse.

–Yes, says Bloom.

– What is it? Says John Wyse.

– A nation? Says Bloom. A nation is the same people living in the same place.

– By God, then, says Ned, laughing, if that's so I'm a nation for I'm living in the same place for the past five years.

– So of course everyone had a laugh at Bloom and says he, trying to muck out of it:

– Or also living in different places.

– That covers my case, says Joe».

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James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1984 [1922]: 329–330.

If I have entitled this article about the Intellectual Legacy of Ernest Gellner: ‘How to become European?’, it is for a fundamental reason which is inscribed in the map of Europe. It is a matter of boundaries, territorial and cultural boundaries, as well as those drawn in the mind, indeed, those produced by works of thought. In effect, simultaneously with political problems connected with the configuration of cultures and nations, arise those particular to intellectual or ideological attitudes adopted toward these cultures and nations. Hence the question: How did Ernest Gellner construct his Europeanness? Or, in other words: How to become Ernest Gellner?¹

I shall leave aside the trajectory of his life² in order to concentrate solely on his endeavour as an interpreter of works, cultures and nations. The catalogue is so extensive that I must obviously be succinct, subsuming my argument under the category of ‘boundary’, the boundary whose representation is known to be based on a notion of interiority, and exteriority, and of inclusion and exclusion.

I shall distinguish three boundaries, then. First, that which Gellner draws at the centre of the space and history of Europe through the ‘Hasburg dilemma’, and its *dramatis personae* that are embodied in his view by Bronislaw Malinowski and Ludwig Wittgenstein, his interlocutors for nearly forty years. Then, the boundary he traces or engraves between ‘Muslim society’ and Europe in their relation to nation. Finally, that which underlies his standardized model of nationalism and which establishes the great divide between here, Europe, and elsewhere, what is not Europe or ‘non-Europe’ or the ‘Rest’. The demonstration will be somewhat cursory. But the first two points will be more fully developed than the third one, which inevitably will look back here and there in the discussion. Regarding the Gellner's Eurocentric view, I take the liberty of referring to my recently published book, *L'Inde: Désir de nation* (Assayag 2001), which among other things confronts the Gellnerian paradigm in light of the South Asian case. It is sometimes fruitful to ‘provincialize Europe’ to borrow the subalternist title of Dipesh Chakrabarti's book (2001).

EUROPE: A TOTAL SOCIAL DILEMMA

An intellectual gigantomachia

In his last work, *Language and Solitude* (1998), Ernest Gellner took up once again his sarcastic dialogue, one which he repeatedly renewed, with two giants of the mind: the last great Central European polymath intellectuals, Wittgenstein and Malinowski, whom he raised to the status of great ancestors of the babelized European tribe³.

On the one hand, there is Wittgenstein, the most quoted (and the most Viennese) of the twentieth-century philosophers, who went farthest in the delegitimization of the semantics of intention; on the other hand, Malinowski, the ethnographer distinguished among all and founder of (British) social anthropology, who (re)legitimized the pragmatic study of micro-societies as structured and coherent totalities.

A symmetry in the treatment of the two theorists, however, is not respected. Wittgenstein, to whom the largest part of the work (1998: Part II) is dedicated, embodies the pernicious error of a double alienation. Not only the alienation from language, in his earlier philosophy, that of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921), the teaching of which Gellner reduces to the adoption of an individualist, positivist, cosmopolitan and universalist stance, but also the alienation from culture in his later philosophy, that of the *Philosophical Investigations* (1951), the perspective of which could invite to romanticism, populism and communitarianism.

For Gellner, these two radical biases – solipsism and communitarianism – derive from the fact that Wittgenstein was a totally ahistorical thinker, that the philosopher lacked any sense of the diversity of cultures, or even of the existence of cultures. As his biography shows, he took no interest whatsoever in social or political questions. Of this disinterest results the transmission of the culturally ‘unthought’ (characteristic of the ‘Habsburg dilemma’, as we shall see) to his philosophy (1998: chap. 15). Viewed in these terms, Malinowski appears as an emancipator for the simple reason that he combined the elements of the two poles of the dilemma: empirical *and* organicist, holistic *and* synchronic, romantic *and* positivist, universalist *and* liberal, because linked to singularities, at the same time doing away with this dilemma (1998: Part

III); further, because he did not bring to a conclusion this liberation of language and of culture, and because it would ultimately be retracted.

Gellner asks how Malinowski was able to escape the tyranny of the alienating assumptions of language and culture to which Wittgenstein had succumbed. Not that they would have been less consequential in Cracow (where the former was born) than in Vienna (the city of the latter), nor because the trajectory of his life or his temperament would have inclined him more to doubts and to the exercise of rational thought. But, mainly, because he applied a biologically-based scientific philosophy to (remote) cultural objects. Combining empirical radicalism, learnt from his mentor Ernst Mach, with his penchant for ethnographic 'fieldwork', he developed a powerful new, scientific methodology which he transformed into a discipline, known as social anthropology (1998: chap. 25).

The Habsburg dilemma

The names of the philosopher of language and of the functionalist theorist of culture are associated with the products of the intellectual turbulence of the last years of the Habsburg Empire (1998: Part I). Transformed into Viennese socio-philosophical emblems, for need of comparison, then of deduction, each of them embodies a pole of the dilemma characteristic of Central Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, both Wittgenstein and Malinowski herald the challenge with which all Europeans are confronted even today, not to mention all world actors. In effect, the internal tension of this dilemma elicits the choice of one or the other type of modernity: 'open' or 'closed', as is frequently repeated by this declared admirer of Karl Popper, with whom he moreover shared his ideals as teacher.

Identifying and exemplifying in this manner the elementary polarity of the Habsburg Empire (and of Vienna) enables Gellner to highlight two theories of knowledge, two representations of language, two visions of the world and of reality, two theories of 'everything', as he sometimes wrote provocatively. Let us reduce the demonstration to a dichotomy, as Gellner was fond of doing (suppressing some tenth-odd objections). Wittgenstein (in his first pe-

riod) embodies the individualist, atomist, universalist vision, introduced to Western thought by the exiled Frenchman, René Descartes, and fictionalized by Daniel Defoe in the character of Robinson Crusoe. This vision was typified by David Hume, as well as other Scotsmen such as Adam Smith, then categorized by Immanuel Kant to be later reformulated by Ernst Mach, Bertrand Russell and Karl Popper in an epistemological frame, or again by Friedrich A. von Hayek and Ludwig Mises, this time in the field of bourgeois neo-liberal economy. Such a perspective has been identified, variably and according to era, with rationalism, empiricism, criticism and positivism, but also with *Gesellschaft* and industrialization, with market economy, political liberalism and cosmopolitanism. But, above all, it has always remained deliberately indifferent to kinship or to the call of the land.

Malinowski, for his part, is the emblem of a communalist or communal, one might say culturalist, vision of a way of life and non-reflexive practices characteristic of an organicist type of organization. It was initially articulated in Germany by Johann Gottfried Herder, then by a number of romantics, among whom Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, whether populists or nationalists, and even rightists, all heralds of *Kultur* and *Gemeinschaft*, defenders of totality, holism, particularism and cultural specificities. Some were bards of ethnic groups and idiosyncrasies, others, or the same, partisans of blood, soil, roots, closed and comfortable communities.

The sacrament of the first vision is the free market of goods and ideas, and of the second vision, the village, folklore and festivals. The one is the philosophical expression of ‘open society’, the other upholds the interests of ‘closed society’. Although the tension between these two *Weltanschauungen* was particularly strong in the Habsburg kingdom, it was no less powerful in Poland and Cracow – that ‘suburb of Vienna’ where Malinowski was born into an impoverished Catholic family of gentry⁴ – or in Austria – where Wittgenstein lived in the midst of an extremely wealthy family of Jews converted to Catholicism⁵ –, notably at the time when the empire entered its *fin-de-siècle* decline between 1880 and 1918, confused by many with the ‘last days of Mankind’. Since that twilight, the confrontation between militants of ‘universalist individu-

alism' and partisans of a '*Blut und Boden* organicist conception' was, according to Gellner, the daily torment of the European social configuration. Hatreds in political life were nourished on its polarity since then, with all the more virulence as nationalism was born of the needs of a *Gesellschaft* which willingly spoke the idiom of the *Gemeinschaft* (1998: chap. 5).

Finally, the intellectual portraits drawn by Gellner are manifestly the masks he himself adopts or refuses in order to define both his experience and his intellectual and ideological profile: that of a liberal European of a rather conservative, realistic and positivistic type, but fully aware of cultural pluralism, and for whom nationalism is irrevocably inscribed in the sociological evolution of our times⁶. There are clearly strong Central European 'family resemblances' between the *dramatis personae* whom he characterizes in his theatre of the history of the last two centuries; characters whom he readily re-employs to highlight and demonstrate his thought in one work or the other in his confrontation with the modern forms of irrationalism, relativism and postmodernism.

Gellner is obviously not unaware of this play of masks since he calls himself a Malinowskian philosopher and a Popperian anthropologist⁷ or when he casts Freud as a shaman, Malinowski as a herald of cosmopolitan rationalism, and Wittgenstein as a prophet of anti-scientific relativism; all intellectual positions he adopts or criticizes through the scions of the Vienna of Franz Josef ... of which he is also a late product.

This polemical manner of opposing allegorical figures of thinkers and scientific protagonists, or of posing intellectual and ideological problems by transforming them into representations of exclusive worlds, gravid with political consequences, gives the impression of transplanting the 'Cold War' to the field of ideas – camp against camp: *tertium non datur*. Hence the sentiment, for an observer of an international order no longer that of Yalta, of being sent to a Tribunal of History where the judge would apply the 'criteria of demarcation' of which Popper is the grand commander. It is this theatre, which one might term Brechtian by reason of the '*Verfremdung*' (*i.e.* alienation) in relation to the consequently objectified (nationalist) phenomenon, which is dramatized in the production by Gellner, this (Central) European refugee to British soil,

where an aristo-liberal tradition of scholarship is known to prevail – in full academic dress. The impression nevertheless remains that such an engaged manner of ‘localized’ theorization does not always avoid again leading to old prejudices, as his Euro-centric treatment of the questions of Islam and nationalism show.

ISLAM AS ANTI-EUROPE

The Gellnerian anthropology of Islam

It must be observed that Gellner's anthropological model of Islam is distorted, thought and constructed as it is on the converse model of Christianity, its ‘mirror image’ as he wrote⁸. This is not without detriment to the history of both, while also hypostatizing one of the oldest memories to haunt the Occident: that of the Saracen. First, because he situates Islam only in the Middle East, in opposition to a repatriated Christianity which, for its part, is exclusively in Europe – thereby betraying a good thousand years of oriental Christianity – but also south European, Balkan, Near Eastern, indeed Eurasiatic Islam. Secondly, because he qualifies its essence as religious – it would have inspired all behaviours, public and private – in contrast to Christianity, which would always have been preoccupied with rendering to Caesar what is his. Third, because he posits the *a priori* existence of Islam as a conceptual totality and system of ideas, to the point of considering it as a totalitarian organization in which social structure, religious beliefs and political conduct interact; a morphology which would consequently lend it an ‘elective affinity’ with Marxism⁹! Finally, Gellner grounds ‘his’ Islam in the dichotomous sociological model, characteristic of French colonialism (the Maghreb), which opposes the centralized and hierarchical organization of the town to the egalitarian and segmentary tribal organizations which move about on the desert periphery. Certainly, the matrix is favourable to a series of suggestive oppositions between orthodoxy/non-orthodoxy, *shari’a*/custom, but also *’ulama*/saint, puritan/divine inebriate, erudite/popular, citizen/warrior, settled/nomadic, etc.

Nevertheless, a number of anthropologists and specialists of Islam have taken up the simplifying character of such a binary system, preferring it to the study *in situ* of the diversity of Muslims in space and time¹⁰. Thus, the picture of ‘Muslim Society’ (title of

Gellner's main work) offers him less the opportunity to analyze a historical configuration and clusters of single individuals who are its agents or actors determined by institutions of knowledge or power, than representing for him an occasion to stage a powerful dramatic composition in an impressive Oriental setting with inevitable typical characters, contrasted and colourful figures playing out a scenario predetermined by the assumptions of the narrator. Actors who neither speak nor think, but act 'within an immobile structure' in conformity with an 'ethos' which reduces them to scarcely more than tokens of an acephalous society. As for the 'Islam observed' by Clifford Geertz in Morocco (1968), but not in Indonesia by Gellner, it is first and foremost a political theatre from which emanates a strong emotional charge, a classical gesture the schematization of which brings to view a drama of religion illustrating a struggle for power between mute natives; in short, like the novelist Balzac describing a painting by Delacroix¹¹.

On the whole, the exposition of religious facts in Gellner's work proceeds from a Marxian type of sociology according to which religious ideologies only receive their full significance from economic or political structures. This methodological orientation, which carries out a semantic reduction of the social in the name of an anti-hermeneutic conception of objectivity¹², ultimately gives all credit to the authority of the anthropologist alone; an authority which remains ever inaccessible to its protagonists, degraded to 'social idiots', to use an expression from ethnomethodology.

The Gellnerian sociology of Muslim nationalism

A majority of sociologists and anthropologists have legitimately rejected the abusive generalization of the models of 'modernization', inasmuch as the accent placed on the process of secularization has failed to recognize the complexity of religious change, in industrialized Europe as in all other regions of the world¹³. It is precisely the continuation of this thesis which serves, in Gellner, to show the exceptional character of Islam¹⁴. Above all because, 'since the agrarian stage', the boundary between high and low cultures was vague, this type of society was 'ideally prepared' for the melding 'required' by the era of industry (Gellner 1983: 76). Thus, this religion was able to maintain over the course of time its unique capacity to survive and respond to the 'Juggernaut of secularism'.

In the West, the nationalist movement would have reinforced the secularization of political discourse by placing an idealized ethnic culture, and not Christianity, at the centre of the idea of nation, which, let it be said in passing, even a cursory reading of Kantorowicz's works on patriotism would belie. In contrast to Europe, the Muslims (?) would always have been able to invoke their great tradition of erudite jurists (*'ulama*) and the law (*shari'a*) as symbols of nationality. The national renaissance in the Muslim countries was thus promoted to a purified religion as an alternative to the idealized folklores, the collection and diffusion – if not the invention – of which have played a central role in the construction of European nationalisms.

However, to assert in this way that Islam is the only one of its kind raises at least three questions. First, this model simplifies to the extreme the religious phenomena in the West, as in the rest of the world, by overlaying the genealogy of the relations between secularization and 'religion' particular to Europe. Second, it conceals the permanent capacity of non-Muslims, for example, Hindus and Buddhists, but also Catholics and Protestants to project religious influences into the public sphere. Finally, Gellner prejudges the strength and unity of Islam by ignoring the pressing calls for ethnic or secular nationalisms in the Muslim world. Worse, this approach endorses the proclamations of Islamic fundamentalists, traditionalists or 'salafists' according to whom 'Islam' does not authorize any separation between political and religious spheres, nor any differentiation in the unlimited scope of their authority. For, if conservative theological nationalism or the quest for revitalization has shown great influence in recent years, it owes this certainly less to its unique disposition – which, moreover, would be shared by all Muslims – than to the battle raging between rival interpreters of Islam, from Algeria to Iran, from India to Sudan, from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia¹⁵.

NATIONS AND NATIONALISM: A EUROCENTRIC HISTORY

The study of nations and of nationalism in the social sciences has for the most part been conceived on the basis of cultural experience in Europe. In so doing, the emergence of the (European) nation-

state has been commonly described as dependent on three processes of centralization and homogenization: the formation of supra-local identities and cultures – the nation; the rise of powerful and authoritarian institutions in the public domain – the state; the development of particular ways to organize production and consumption – the economy (Grillo 1980: 1).

History as recounted by Ernest Gellner

In what without doubt remains the most influential book on the question of nationalism (1983), Gellner linked these three processes by proposing that modern industrial society depends on economic and cognitive growth, which itself requires a homogeneous culture. The essential factor in this model is the centralization of resources by the state to put in place a system of education which imposes a literate and standardized culture.

The assumption of this structural-functionalist view¹⁶ is that a shared culture or an ideology is necessary for the integration of the social system. But, who does not see that social constraints on work as well as the imposition of force suffice to produce ‘social order’, very well dispensing with a common culture or a moral consensus? Is there not, moreover, a certain naivety in thinking that the nation-state has made ‘high culture’ accessible to *all* through its educational system? And a certain ethnocentrism in believing that integration proceeds by way of *one* consensus on values in all societies? Above all, the trinitarian view of Gellner's human history in its extreme simplicity has something in common with dogma: the dogma of an economic materialist, in reverse, imagining that history is structured by an evolution leading from hunters-gatherers of pre-agrarian production to the social classes of the modern industrial world. According to Gellner, mankind would have passed through three fundamental stages: pre-agrarian, agrarian and industrial¹⁷.

However, it is widely known today that no generic type of hunter-gatherer society exists. As to agrarian societies, all forms of kinship, religion, social or political organization are conceivable. Not having been subjected to regimes of history and spheres of culture, the agrarian entity appears as a catchall category, rather like ‘the night when all cows are black’. As for the other end of

'human evolution', is it necessary to hold forth about the explanatory value of a category which subsumes all modern industrial societies? This continuum, one of the poles of which is modelled in a positive manner, the other of which can therefore only be negative, appears as a false symmetry, a methodological error, an abstraction without any original historical substance.

In addition, the extreme history recounted by Gellner seems to be indifferent to the action of agents and to the work of social actors. It is the triumphal recital of a fetishized historical force, capitalism, which celebrates objective parameters by ignoring the significant innovations of individuals or groups who, through their daily practices, make history. Obligated to seek social determinisms under ideological appearances and historical representations, Gellner's thought avoided the analysis of nationalism as such. Indifferent to the diversity of discursive formations and to the density of cultural productions¹⁸ not at all mindful of contradictions arising in the tracks of homogenization, paying no attention to the forms of struggle or of resistance, his theory of nationalism espouses the (evolutionist) history of the expansion of capitalism, presented in a deliberately provocative manner in the form of trinitarian catechism.

Finally, it is clear that Gellner exaggerates the success of both globalization and homogenization. He simplifies their nature and their history, ignoring the modes of regulation of *capitalisms* or, for example, the transition from fordism to flexible accumulation, undoubtedly determinant in the orientation of globalization since the 1970s. His argument synthesizes and obliterates a variety of local histories under the mechanical law of universal history. He thereby forsakes understanding, on the analytical plane, the forms of nationalism which do not enter into this explanatory scheme, if only for two reasons: the relations between the 'religious' and the 'secular' differ in multiple ways in time and space; the instrumentalized relations of state and culture, characteristic of a certain western modernity, have not existed everywhere in the world¹⁹.

CONCLUSION:**«EARLY» AND «MULTIPLE MODERNITIES»**

In conclusion, let us recall that the idea that other forms of nationalism and nations exist began to appear two decades ago, as well as ‘early’ and ‘multiple modernities’²⁰ which borrow nothing or little, if not in an oblique manner, from Europe; something, moreover, which Gellner grudgingly recognized late in life in a interview: ‘my theory of nationalism is a bit europeocentric’ (Rupnik 1995: 277). The one and exceptional place and period where the imagined and the social engineered monoglot community of the nation state appeared to have driven out other was Europe, in its so-called ‘modern’ nation building area between 1792 and 1945. This national building conquest of Europe was an anomaly in world history but became the modern norm. With its attendant overseas empires, it defined the modern area of the so-called ‘globalization’²¹.

In effect, the national phenomenon outside Europe has been increasingly studied and non-European researchers intervene in ever greater numbers in the debate²². Thus, one is beginning to consider: that the diverse (non-European) nationalisms are not content to ‘pirate’ the nationalism (as used to say Anderson [1981]) which was supposed to be ‘invented’ in Europe (according to Hobsbawm [1990]); that it is not a question of a simple ‘discourse derived’ from the Occident alone (Chatterjee 1986; 1993); that the processes of ‘vernacularization’ were developed before the appearance of industrialization or of print-capitalism²³; that there did indeed exist indigenous information networks and local public spaces of debate well before colonization (Bayly 1996); that the formation of nationalism and the edification of nations were often contemporaneous experiences in the homeland and in the colonies – the homeland itself resulting of a process of interior colonization of social space and minds (Cooper and Stoler 1989; Van der Veer and Lehmann 1999; Van der Veer 2001). Finally, that all modern nations are on several accounts products of colonization insofar as the national units are structured in relation to the global organization of ‘world systems’ (Balibar 1988; Geertz 2000).

In short, and to return to Ernest Gellner, the negative construction of the others, those ‘within’ or those non-Europeans, is finally

that which founds and supports European identity itself. This is shown not only by the integration of new nation-states in the Europe of the twelve, but by the question of the extension of the boundaries of Europe – without speaking of the internal boundaries with immigrants (the so-called countries from the South) in Europe.

NOTES

¹ An earlier and much longer version of this paper was published, under the title: 'Comment devient-on Européen? Wittgenstein et Malinowski ou la méthode d'Ernest Gellner', in *Annales, Histoire, Sciences sociales*, 2002, 1, pp. 159–186. As I am not a 'gellnerianologist', I should stress that in offering the following critique I do not intend to make a gratuitous show of academic ingenuity at the expense of what remains a superb analysis. My concern is rather to criticise a dominant intellectual tradition in contemporary social and political anthropology.

² For an illuminating view of his biography, see the interview with John Davis in *Current Anthropology* (Gellner 1991). Regarding the Prague's roots of Gellner, one can read Jirí Musil (1996) and more broadly, about his life, edited articles by Hall & Jarvie (1996), Kuper (1999), and D. N. Gellner's 'Preface' (Gellner 1998: vii-xii). One can also underline that the most important thinkers on nationalism in the 1960–70s, Ernest Gellner and Miroslav Hroch, were Czechs. Ian C. Jarvie compiled a complete bibliography (till 1996) of Ernest Gellner (Hall and Jarvie 1996: 687–718).

³ His last book (1998) throws new light on these two leading thinkers of their time, Wittgenstein and Malinowski; for an extensive review of this controversy, see Chris Hann (1996), and for a review of the book, see Petr Skalník (2001). One another book was also published after he died, under the title *Nationalism* (1997).

⁴ About Cracow roots of Bronislaw Malinowski, one can read Andrzej Flis (1988); on the impact of Polish culture, see the edited volumes of R. Ellen *et al.* (1988), R. J. Thornton and P. Skalník (1993), and the article of Chris Hann (1996).

⁵ Actually, Wittgenstein have been living for long outside Vienna, even when he was young; he spent 19 years in England but he did not succeed to settle comfortably somewhere (Bouveresse 2000: 7–17).

⁶ Ernest Gellner defines himself: 'I am a mild socialist in the sense that I consider the generalised 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 atomised society, I hold an effective welfare state to be both a moral imperative, and a precondition of a stable order. Passionate and messianic socialism [...] is, demonstrably, the biggest enemy of freedom in industrial society' (Gellner 1996: 671).

⁷ This is a reversal of the Adam Kuper's wording (1999: 141).

⁸ Main views on Islam of Ernest Gellner are exposed in *Muslim Society* (1981). For a devastating critic of Gellner's view of Islam, one can read Talal Asad (1986; 1996) and Abdellah Hammoudi (1996).

⁹ For a comparison between Islam and Marxism, see Gellner (1997: chap. 14).

¹⁰ This is the approach, for example, of Maxime Rodinson (1993a and 1993b).

¹¹ Gellner used to compare the ethnographic map of the first period of European nationalism to a painting of Oskar Kokoschka and the map of modern ethnopolitic world to a painting of Amedeo Modigliani (1983: 157-158); but, in spite of his criticism of postmodernism, he never thought to compare it to the 'dripping' of Jackson Pollock...

¹² One can read his virulent critic of hermeneutic and postmodernism (1992).

¹³ Challenging stereotypes of Islam as antagonistic to modernity, democracy and secularism, some studies suggest the possibilities for modernity, democracy and secularism in the Muslim world – see Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori (1996) and, for Indonesia, see Robert W. Hefner (2000) – and beyond.

¹⁴ Regarding the peculiar character of Islam, see *Nations and Nationalism* (Gellner 1983: 76).

¹⁵ An extensive and suggestive description of the islamic scene and its pious and militant networks by Gilles Kepel (2000).

¹⁶ Chris Hann showed that Gellner prioritised the study of 'structure' and 'function', rather than cultural 'costume', by rejecting vehemently Wittgenstein relativism (2001).

¹⁷ This simplistic view of history is developed by Gellner in two books (1988, 1997).

¹⁸ Gellner was very reluctant to focus on this approach but, thank to Benedict Anderson's 'imagined community' (1981), this is now the mainstream of the studies on nationalism. For an attempt to combine the positivist, structural-functional, definitional determination of the nation with the cultural, discursive, interpretative, hermeneutic and emotional aspect of nationalism, see Jackie Assayag (1999, 2001).

¹⁹ One can refer to the path-breaking book of José Casanova (1994).

²⁰ This two concepts of 'early modernities' and 'multiple modernities', coined by S. N. Eisenstadt (respectively 1998 and 2000), are very useful tools for going against the view of the classical theory of modernization and of the convergence of industrial societies prevalent in the 1950–1960s, and indeed against the classical analysis of Marx, Durkheim, and (to a large extent) even of Weber, at least in one reading of his work.

²¹ These themes are discussed further in William H. McNeil (1986) and A. G. Hopkins (2002) and C. A. Bayly (2002)

²² See, for example, Stein Tonnesson and Hans Antlöv (1996, especially the selective bibliography, pp. 348–352) and Jackie Assayag and Véronique Bénéï (2003).

²³ On pre-modern globalization, see Jackie Assayag (1998) and on globalization/vernacularization in Asia, see Sheldon Pollock (1999).

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