Conditions Of Liberty: Civil Society And Its Rivals

Ernest Gellner

In this view, civil society points to a condition of refinement, a departure from a state in which humanity was slave to its instincts and passions, to one in which it is governed by reason and rationality. This is a mere prototype of course, as many who have sadly contemplated the horrors of the past century might readily attest, but it should help in underscoring the point that most times, civil society is merely that to which groups or peoples aspire. Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals. New York: Lane, 1994. Goody, J. R. “Civil Society in an Extra-European Perspective.”