Psychoanalytic Movement: the Cunning of Unreason

The Psychoanalytic Movement explains how the language of psychoanalysis became the dominant way in which the middle classes of the industrialized West speak about their emotions.

How did the language of psychoanalysis become the dominant idiom in which the middle classes of the industrialized West speak about their emotions? Ernest Gellner offers a forceful and complex answer to this intriguing question in The Psychoanalytic Movement. This landmark study argues that although psychoanalysis offers an incisive picture of human nature, it provides untestable operational definitions and makes unsubstantiated claims concerning its therapeutic efficacy. In a new foreword José Brunner expands on the central argument of The Psychoanalytic Movement. Placing Gellner’s work in the context of contemporary hostile critiques of Freud, Brunner argues that these two blatantly different thinkers might also be seen as kindred spirits.