# A PROLOGUE TO KENNETH MINOGUE'S *POLITICS* (1996)

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**Abstract**

*For two decades, Kenneth Minogue's Politics: A Very Short Introduction (1998) served as the foundation for my capstone course entitled Political Theory. During that time I developed a massive and detailed study guide to the philosophical and practical dimensions of the field—to which I linked readings, PowerPoint slides, study questions, and a bibliography. The study guide containing chapter outlines and notes, plus a few of my syllabi, may be found on-line, along with separate study guides to the various readings. My notes liberally expanded upon and added to the text. This prologue is a retrospective distillation of a course that was a central part of my pedagogical odyssey. These reflections testify to my continuing debt to mentors, colleagues, and students alike.*

**Key words**: Kenneth Minogue, political theory, despotism, ancient Greece, modern social science, liberalism, political science, ideology, political moralism

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In this brief book[1], Kenneth Minogue explores the changing scope and character of politics by tracing its historical evolution through its classical, medieval, and modern stages of development as articulated by a handful of great political thinkers. The guiding purpose of this work is twofold. First, it introduces the ancient Greek concept of politics (from *polis*, meaning "city-state") as a

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[1]Minogue, [illegible].

system of collective citizen participation in public affairs and contrasts it with despotism (from *despotes*, meaning "master"), which is a centralized system of magisterial rule over a subject or slave population. Secondly, it is an extended commentary and critique of the expanded role and meaning of politics in recent times. What he later calls *political moralism* results from an abuse or corruption of political practice that is associated with the age-old "*project of a perfect society*."

The modern idea of politics as the embodiment of a natural "will to power" is evident in these lines by William Cowper: "I am monarch of all I survey,/ My right there is none to dispute;/ From the center of all round to the sea/ I am lord of the fowl and the brute." This is the *libido dominandi* [lust to rule] noted in ancient times by St. Augustine. If we assume with Thomas Hobbes (and Thucydides before him) that political conflict is the result of everyone grasping for advantage – because of scarcity, passion for glory, or diffidence – the result of such a conception may be easily expressed as a variation of Parkinson's law. To paraphrase C. Northcote Parkinson: "Politics expands to fill whatever medium (or receptacle) is available to it." It thus becomes unlimited and imperialistic in character.

There appears to be a natural desire on the part of political actors to *simplify* collective life and reduce its unpredictability by asserting greater control over whatever marginal factors might interfere with or deflect them from their goals. So politics –

individually and corporately – becomes a grasping for ever greater power and/or preventing others from gaining the upper hand. Such political "realism" calls to mind the temptation in the Garden: "You shall be as God, knowing [determining for yourself] good and evil." Perhaps an appropriate alternate title for this book would be "The Despotic Temptation."

**1. WHY DESPOTS DON'T BELONG IN POLITICS**

Shakespeare wrote that "all the world is a stage." The question is: Who gets to direct the play and who writes the script? Politics prospectively gives voice to all individuals, groups, and interests within a civil society. But a civil society is a rare achievement. More prevalent in history has been despotism, which vests authority in the hands of a single master, who directs -- or tries to direct -- the actors as he wills. Thus the Persian system of rule as seen by the Greeks, particularly Herodotus, who contrasted the liberty of the Greek system of citizenship (politics) with the slavery of their foes. The Greeks prided themselves in their self-government, although from time to time they struggled with home-grown tyrants (from *tyrannos* which came to mean rule by will) or despots of their own. The extra readings – by Herodotus and Ryszard Kapuściński – also resonate with traditional American ideas about liberty vs. tyrannical or despotic rule.

Yet the opposition of these two types has been confused in modern political science by the view that authoritarian rule is also a form of government and not simply the negation or absence of politics. For example, the title of Merle Fainsod's *How Russia Is Ruled* (1953) was revised and republished after his death under the title *How the Soviet Union Is Governed* (1979). Totalitarianism has even been held aloft by some as an ideal for the sake of bringing order out of chaos and pursuing such worthy goals as peace, prosperity, economic and social justice – all in the name of the people. As Edmund S. Morgan and others have pointed out, *the people* and the voice of the people (*vox populi*) are modern inventions.

The idea of *the state*, as Minogue notes at the end of chapter five, is a modern invention. The political machinery of the modern state has enabled "enlightened despots" or "political moralists" to pursue their dreams of enhancing or reshaping society, economy, or culture. As the Rev. Frederick T. Gates, head of the Rockefeller-financed General Education Board, put it in 1913:

> In our dream we have limitless resources, and the people yield themselves with perfect docility to our moulding hand. The present educational conventions fade from our minds; and, unhampered by tradition, we work our own good will upon a grateful and responsive rural folk.[2]

Such dreamers are the ones who so often have replaced freedom – by eroding the distinction between the private and public spheres – with a subtle or even an open tyranny of regulations, subsidies, and petty bureaucrats for the sake of "progress" or "justice."

KEY IDEAS

- ✓ Despotism is the antithesis of politics, which is central to the definition of our civilization;
- ✓ Despotism is not a form of government (by implication, because it prohibits self-government);
- ✓ Politics has been magnified from a limited activity conducted by elites into an inescapable preoccupation;
- ✓ Despotism is an unequal relationship of master and slave in which the power of the master is unchecked;
- ✓ A civil order has been achieved only on three historical occasions: classical Greece, Rome, Christendom;
- ✓ The project of an enlightened despotism depends on that part of politics that is a theater of illusion;
- ✓ Private life is not possible without the overarching public world of the state [and *vice versa*];
- ✓ Ever larger areas of private life have come to be publicly regulated ["the personal is the political"];
- ✓ Totalitarianism destroys our inheritance of distinct and independent roles [cf. Lieber's institutional liberty];

[2]Gates, 1913.

- ✓ Participation in politics confers a kind of immortality [cf. Bastiat on the motives for legal plunder];
- ✓ Contemporary skepticism [historical relativism] is a false humility and a claim to superiority;

### 2. THE CLASSICAL GREEKS: HOW TO BE A CITIZEN

Minogue next turns to classical Greece, which represents the first of three historical occasions in which a civil order has been created. He neglects to mention ancient Israel, which predates each of them, but does give attention to the influence of Christianity in subsequent chapters. The Greeks invented politics as an art of persuasion as opposed to the coercion associated with despotism. They also distinguished between the public and private realms of life, regarding the first as a higher calling. Indeed, Pericles, in a reading selection by Thucydides, boasted of the wealth accumulated by Athenian mercantile trade and his fellow citizens' public spiritedness. On the other hand, the Melian debate showed Athenian democracy at its most ruthless.

Greek humanism promoted a view of life that placed man at the center (humanism), but regarded human nature as something buffeted about by fate and often brought low by pride (*hubris*). From such beginnings, Aristotle later developed a political science that strove to bring the various social classes and types of government into balance. But by the time he wrote, the decentralized, cooperative, intramural order of the Greek city-states had broken down as two of the leading cities—Athens and Sparta—each jealously sought to impose its own hegemony. Eventually, stronger outside powers, notably Macedon and later Rome, imposed their own imperial sway over the Greek city-states and the city-state system soon disappeared from the stage of history. Aristotle himself served as a tutor to young Alexander the Great.

The second through the seventh chapters proceed step-by-step from the Greeks to the Romans to medieval Christendom to Renaissance Europe to a consideration of the institutional structure of modern politics and, finally, to a discussion of the modern system of states. The first four chapters may be considered the introductory or grammar stage of our inquiry. Classical Christian education in the liberal arts was divided into three stages known as the *Trivium*: grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric. The organization of this book approximates the developmental pattern of this pedagogical method. Special note should be made of the handful of political theorists whose names come up time and again. The imprint of their (and our) ideas is evident up to the present.

KEY IDEAS

- ✓ Politics is based on the persuasion (rather than the command) of citizens as equal, rational beings;
- ✓ The conditions of freedom are a life lived among equals under law, ruling and being ruled in turn;
- ✓ Pride (*hubris*) leads people to consider themselves gods and leads to destruction (*nemesis*);
- ✓ Laws and policies emerge from discussions of equal citizen-householders in the marketplace (*agora*);
- ✓ The household (*oikos*) is a world of natural necessity that may be transcended through political activity;
- ✓ Participation in the artificial world of the *polis* conferred a kind of immortality in history;
- ✓ History is the memory of words and deeds, accounting for the attention given to rhetoric;
- ✓ A constitution is the set of offices and laws by which a *polis* is governed, limiting and regularizing power;
- ✓ The secret of breaking the cycle of political decline is separating powers and balancing interests;

### 3. ROMANS: THE REAL MEANING OF PATRIOTISM

The Roman civil order was the product of a political revolution that replaced the early monarchy with a republic – as portrayed through vignettes drawn from Livy's *History* and the later commentary of Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy*. These readings are some of the stories Romans told of themselves. Others include Coriolanus and Horatius at the bridge. While their authenticity and accuracy are open to question, they provide considerable insight into the Roman character and their concept of virtue.

Several of the stories – Lucius Junius Brutus, Sextus Tarquinius, and the virtuous Lucretia; Brutus, Cincinnatus, and their treacherous sons; Appius Claudius, Virginia, and the secession of the plebeians; Cincinnatus and the wealthy demagogue Spurius Maelius – illustrate aspects of René Girard's theories of mimetic desire and mimetic rivalry. Indeed, the story of Appius Claudius, the corrupt lawgiver, echoes in the Virginia State motto and its flag. Here is a sample of study questions used for these readings: What was the relationship of Lucius Junius Brutus to the king? How did he avoid the fate suffered by the leading senators? What folkloric or mythological aspects of the story identify him as a type of divinely-chosen "savior-hero"? How did the sins of the son, Sextus Tarquinius, resemble those of the father? The subsequent revolt illustrates what Girard calls a mimetic contagion. Lucretia herself provoked the final crisis by deliberately choosing to sacrifice herself.

After the Etruscan monarchy was overthrown, the Republic was repeatedly and sometimes ferociously defended against all enemies, foreign and domestic, as the expression goes. Strife between patricians and plebeians – dramatized in the story of Virginia – led finally to the secession of plebs to the Sacred Mount (Aventine Hill). An earlier secession had led to reforms a decade after the Republic was launched. New reforms now gave the plebs their own assembly, the Council of the Plebs. Their rights were protected by the appointment of ten tribunes who could exercise a *veto* ("I forbid") to prevent harm to a pleb. "The plebs swore to

treat as accursed and to execute without trial any person who disregarded the tribune's veto or violated the sanctity of his person."

These revolutionary and near-revolutionary changes illustrate what Vilfredo Pareto called the "circulation of elites," concerning the manner in which new elites supplant old ones. A few years earlier, Gaetano Mosca, another Italian sociologist, had developed a theory of the ruling or political class. A third Machiavelli-inspired political sociologist, Robert Michels, developed the so-called "iron law of oligarchy" (rule by powerful minorities), which is well illustrated by the behavior of many leading Roman magistrates in Livy's account.

Machiavelli's interpretation of Livy appears both to draw upon and break with Plato's discussion of democracy and tyranny. The first three chapters of Book III of his *Discourses*, for example, are entitled "If One Wishes a Sect or a Republic to Live Long, It Is Necessary to Draw It Back Often toward Its Beginning," ""That It Is a Very Wise Thing to Simulate Craziness at the Right Time," and "That It Is Necessary to Kill the Sons of Brutus If One Wishes to Maintain a Newly Acquired Freedom." Machiavelli's positive view of a struggle between classes – as a safeguard of liberty and a check on tyranny – is developed by later thinkers, notably in James Madison's justification of a federalist system of checks and balances in *The Federalist*, especially nos. 10, 39, and 51. As to which side – the haves or the have-nots – causes the greatest tumults, Machiavelli gives his answer in the 5th section of *The Discourses*.

After nearly five centuries, the republic was destroyed during a century of intermittent, then almost continual, civil warfare after the city-state began acquiring an empire and, with it, corporate farms (*latifundia*) that displaced the class of independent farmers who were the foundation of the civil order. In many respects, the Roman republic and the Roman empire were both revived and extended historically through the rise of Christendom. Geographically, the area is still designated *Rum* (Rome) by Arabic and Farsi.

The great achievement of the Romans was a very simple, logical system of language (Latin) and law that reflected a high sense of order. As Francis Lieber and others have noted, the Greeks were brilliant but lacked a strong root while the Romans were accomplished borrowers who created a magnificent synthesis. The Romans were concerned with such issues as the legitimacy of rule, distinguishing *potentia* (physical power) from *potestas* (the right to exercise it). Authority (*auctoritas*) was a spiritual quality – a "moral fluid" – that derived from a patriotic attachment to tradition and the pride of a noble ancestry. Later, after he became emperor, Augustus commissioned the poet Virgil to write a defense of the new system by basing it, like a good lawyer, on historical precedent. Thus revolutions often came disguised as restorations of the older ways. The Roman religion was a civil religion that bound citizens to the city but as Rome became more cosmopolitan its vacuous ceremonies failed to satisfy the people, who then became increasingly susceptible to the mystery religions of the East.

KEY IDEAS

- ✓ As St. Augustine observed, the politics of Rome was based on love of country (patriotism);
- ✓ Latin is the language in which ancient politics was preserved and transmitted to us;
- ✓ Rome served as a model for Dante's imperial peace and Machiavelli's republican *virt*ù;
- ✓ The Roman republic preserved the scaffolding of the monarchy, including the *imperium* and *auspicium;*
- ✓ The republic reconciled patricians and plebeians through a treaty (*foedus*) [creating a mixed government];
- ✓ Two types of power are distinguished: *potentia* (physical, coercive) and *potestas* (official, legitimate);
- ✓ *Auctoritas*: a reservoir of ancient custom or ancestral precedent entrusted to Senate oversight;

- ✓ Virtue and freedom declined together when the republic fell into corruption;
- ✓ Machiavelli believed a conflict of interests was healthy if subordinated to the public interest

#### 4. CHRISTIANITY AND THE RISE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The third civil order to arise was born out of the crumbling remains of the western Roman Empire through the spiritual challenge to the imperial order posed by the Christian faith and, earlier, Judaism, both of which articulated world-and-life views based on divine revelation that were radically at odds with the classical outlook. By the time of the English Civil War of the 1640s, the idea of the Hebrew Republic began animating a distinctive tradition of what Francis Lieber later styled Anglican and American liberty. Readings by Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin and his followers laid the groundwork for understanding the theological sources of our political institutions.

In *The City of God*, Augustine's story of the pirate and Alexander, for example, might remind readers of Frederic Bastiat's observations on legal plunder and Gordon Tullock's rent-seeking. Questions for the students included: How did the two cities originate from two kinds of love? What does Augustine mean by *libido dominandi* and how does it differ from Christian citizenship? How does he use the story of Cain and Abel to develop his theme of the two cities? What was God's reward for the natural morality of the Romans? How did their virtues serve as an example to the saints? How do the aims of human civilization stand in relation to the blessings of God? What are the areas of agreement and the areas of disagreement between the two cities?

Thomas Aquinas raised the issue of glory—Hobbes called it vainglory—and recognized a connection with tyranny. In fact, Christian theories of resistance to tyranny and even tyrannicide were already extant in the Middle Ages at least a century before

Thomas. John of Salisbury, who went into exile for a time with Thomas à Becket (later murdered in the cathedral at Canterbury), is an early contributor to the literature. Examples of such resistance abound: the Lollards, the Hussites, the Huguenots, the Pilgrims, John Knox, John Hampden, Algernon Sydney, and many others. The doctrine of interposition is well-developed in the Huguenot tract *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* and was implicated, for example, in resistance to the Sugar and Stamp Acts in the American colonies, the Declaration of Independence, the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions of 1798, and many other instances of civil disobedience.

The Investiture Struggle over the appointment of high church officers—emperor or bishops?—led to what Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy called the Papal Revolution of the 11C, soon followed by the reintroduction of Roman law (the Institutes and Code of Justinian). This protracted contest between emperors and the church helped keep power divided and more accountable. Similar struggles inspired the great landmarks of liberty, representative institutions, even the divine right of kings idea developed by Jean Bodin, who is discussed in the fifth chapter

Early during the English Civil War, which Rosenstock called the real English Revolution, Samuel Rutherford developed a theology of resistance through lesser magistrates. John Locke and the patriot-pastors of the American colonies further developed the literature of resistance to tyranny. Good sources on this subject include Alice Baldwin's *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution* and Ellis Sandoz's *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805*. Felix Morley devotes a chapter to interposition in *Freedom and Federalism*.

Over a period of centuries the influence of Christianity and the struggles between church and state -- as the empire receded and nation-states arose -- brought the individual into his own. The recognition that individuals are beloved of God gradually encouraged a restructuring of the political order to ensure the rule of law, both civil and ecclesiastical. This enabled, first, the barons and bishops of the land to be represented in government

(*Magna Charta* and the rise of parliaments) and, gradually, enabled individuals of all classes to win economic and civil liberty and self-government.

KEY IDEAS

- ✓ Medieval civilization was constructed of three elements: love of freedom, decentralization, Christianity;
- ✓ Tribal law was inherited; relationships were bound by oath; kings were guardians of the law;
- ✓ The law of the land evolved from extension of the king's peace over a territorial realm;
- ✓ Civil order was constructed by agreement between kings and their most powerful vassals (magnates);
- ✓ The story of freedom is one of institutions and laws that balanced the demands of the dominant powers;
- ✓ Parliaments evolved out of the necessity of kings to secure cooperation of nobles, clerics, and townsmen;
- ✓ Christianity, as a religion of the book, set a premium on education and literacy

Beliefs are fragile, requiring custodians of their purity and orthodoxy [issue of toleration and intolerance];

- ✓ Christianity is a religion of moral challenge [cf. J. Budziszewski on natural law and classical apologetics];
- ✓ The value of each individual lies in a personality that responded to the challenge of sin;
- ✓ Christianity turned attention to the cultivation of the inner life; its influence is still to be found in modern life

**5. CONSTRUCTING THE MODERN STATE**

One of the great debates among modern political theorists is to what extent our American political traditions reflect individualistic [liberal] or republican [communitarian] values. Minogue clearly

favors the first position. A third option, which was reintroduced to political theory by Barry Alan Shain, would be to emphasize the biblical or covenantal origins of the American polity, which permitted the blossoming of a culture receptive to Christian influence.

The key to understanding the transition from medieval to modern politics is the changed role of the individual. In the Middle Ages the individual was encapsulated in a web of communal relationships that permitted unity as well as diversity. The modern state simplifies the character of society by magnifying the state while gradually weakening or dissolving rival social institutions. This is the world Thomas Hobbes helped to shape.

Hobbes's *Leviathan* set much of the tone and terms of discourse for modern political science. The cover of my Political Theory study guide reproduced the frontispiece Hobbes designed for his book. Study questions for a selection of passages from chapters11 and 13 included the following: How does Hobbes's theory of motivation resemble those set forth by St. Augustine and Girard? In what, according to Hobbes, does felicity (the pleasure principle) consist? Thought question: When all is said and done, where do these various motives and desires naturally lead? What is required for men to enjoy each other's company? What are the three principal sources of quarrel? In what do war and peace consist? Where does the absence of a "common power to keep them [men] all in awe" (the State of Nature) lead? What is the necessary (and practical) context for defining justice and injustice? What are the passions that incline men to peace?

KEY IDEAS

- ✓ Civil society in the 16th century was conceived of as an association of believers;
- ✓ Civil and religious warfare was part of a transition from medieval localism to the centralized modern state;
- ✓ The common response to civil war is an enthusiasm for absolute government; many feared despotism;

- ✓ The new politics revolved around a court, leading to the emergence of the courtier (and today's politician);
- ✓ The high-risk politics of the early modern period resulted from the insecurity of rulers;
- ✓ Medieval rule as a moral relationship gave way to the practice of "policy" in managing turbulent subjects;
- ✓ The new politics became explicit in Italian city-states where civic republics gave way to insecure tyrants;
- ✓ The art of state focused attention of keeping power [political realism or *Realpolitik*];
- ✓ Nostalgia for a lost world of the republic came to dominate Enlightenment criticism of monarchy;
- ✓ Hobbes: Such idealism caused bloodshed by making young scholars the dupes of ambitious men;
- ✓ Two new problems: Dissension and ambition may cause civil war; individuality encourages diversity;
- ✓ Hobbes: fear of sudden death requires a sovereign power (*maiestas*, as described by Bodin);
- ✓ Dilemma: How can laws be made that apply to all equally, including rulers?;
- ✓ Mitigating factors: natural law concepts, rights, consent, nationalism, idea of the general will;
- ✓ Modern technology has enhanced the actual power available to a ruler;
- ✓ Early liberals saw the function of the state merely to ensure the peace necessary for one's own projects;
- ✓ Others, like Hegel, saw the state as a dazzling new machine that can enable men to pursue their dreams;

## 6. HOW TO ANALYZE A MODERN SOCIETY

The modern penchant for specialization may be seen in the fact that, once the modern state emerged, other units of measure – society, economy, culture, psyche – were abstracted from this

image of a civil body politic. The advent of Christianity as an "empire within an empire" meant that loyalties would henceforth be divided between this world and the next. The resulting tension proved to be a force for liberating the individual and encouraging the rise of new social entities, such as churches, guilds, and universities. Another, later, development was the development of modern social science as a study of man in his various roles or *personae* – social, economic, cultural, individual – but with a tendency to reduce man either to one facet or to a sum of these parts.

Modern social science is a child of the Enlightenment project. In *Cosmopolis*, Stephen Toulmin traces this use of science for utopian, idealistic social reforms to a reaction against the wars of religion that had culminated in the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). Many subsequent political thinkers deemed science and enlightened despotism to be the solution to the destructive madness of superstition. The rise of academic and professional social sciences in the nineteenth century reflects a kind of secular evangelism: an impetus to comprehensive social reform that is today described as social engineering.

Short readings include selections by John Locke, Lord James Bryce, *The Federalist*, and Margaret Thatcher, as well as a discussion of the Australian national constitution of 1891. Here is a sample of questions. How does federalism as a form help limit government and make it more responsible? Given the observations of Lord Bryce, has the subsequent centralization of political initiative to the national level delayed or short-circuited – through what he calls external power – the healthy outworking of consequences that might otherwise force people to adjust their behavior?

Margaret Thatcher's "Speech to the General Assembly of the Scottish Church" expressed her Christian understanding of the proper relationship between church and state. What are the distinctive marks of Christianity? Why is it important to nurture the roots of Christianity? What do we gain from key elements of the Old and New Testaments? What is important to understand

from the Tenth Commandment? What is the nursery of civic virtue? Why is intervention by the State a danger? Why does Margaret Thatcher believe that religious education is a proper part of the school curriculum? What makes her an enthusiast for democracy? What makes her concerned about the future of democracy? What is the role of the Church? Here she builds upon the idea of *subsidiarity*: that the Church performs public services that may not be provided by the State.

KEY IDEAS

- ✓ The state is imagined as a body, a unified corporate structure [see J. Budziszewski on communitarianism];
- ✓ Christianity both exploited and undermined the idea of harmony: demoting politics, elevating the individual;
- ✓ Christianity taught Europeans to live in a divided society: *sacerdotium* (church) and *regnum* (civil society);
- ✓ The essence of modernity lay in the development of the new sentiment of individuality;
- ✓ Religious dissidence -- along with commerce and military service -- led to increased migration;
- ✓ The state became an umbrella for a great many social roles and organized entities;
- ✓ Society, economy, and culture are increasingly distinguished from the state by a process of abstraction;
- ✓ Economics seemed to be the key to a real science of man; Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* led the way;
- ✓ The industrial revolution in coal-rich England actually transformed the human condition;
- ✓ Mercantilism: a zero-sum game national competition to acquire wealth through trade monopolies;
- ✓ Britain gradually deregulated commerce, as Adam Smith urged, and prospered through free trade;
- ✓ A culture is a kind of spiritual (*Volkgeist*) rather than political body that expresses itself in poetry and song;

- ✓ In state, society, economy, and culture we have the conceptual ground-plan of the social sciences;
- ✓ Until the economy and the state have been distinguished there can be no modern theory of socialism;
- ✓ Nationalism is the doctrine that every culture ought to be self-determining;
- ✓ Reductionists wish to simplify these abstract associations by supplying a single dominant motive for each;
- ✓ Self-interest is the duty an individualist society upon its members to be self-motivated and self-sufficient;
- ✓ Determinism: the idea that one or another of these associations determines the others;
- ✓ Political activists who make such arguments really seek the power of the state to transform these spheres;
- ✓ These strange endeavors arise from a nostalgic yearning to return to a unified body politic;
- ✓ The concept of alienation, as a diagnosis of what ails us, is part of a doomed attempt to restore that unity;

#### 7. RELATIONS BETWEEN STATES: HOW TO BALANCE POWER

The ancient Roman *ius gentium* is the precursor of the modern "law of nations." Some of the pioneers in the field of modern international law, organization, and diplomacy include Hugo Grotius and Count Metternich. David Hume wrote a classic essay articulating the Balance of Power rationale. It is excerpted as one of the readings.

One critic of the reactionary Metternichian system that held sway in much of Europe after the Napoleonic wars was Francis Lieber, whose lengthy correspondence with Tocqueville, Bluntschli, Laboulaye, and others, helped launch a series of international conventions that led to the Hague and Geneva Conventions and, more recently, to the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Rights.

KEY IDEAS

- ✓ Morality, no less than its opposite, can lead to war; warriors developed an ethic of honor;
- ✓ The mosaic of small dominions inherited from the Middle Ages was consolidated by war;
- ✓ Clausewitz: War is the continuation of policy by other means;
- ✓ Hobbes's state of nature is a state of war in which the life of man is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short;
- ✓ Hobbes on the causes of conflict: scarcity, passion for glory, diffidence;
- ✓ Hobbes argued that war is the natural relation between humans; the question is how to achieve peace;
- ✓ There are positive reasons why power tends to snowball: to those that hath more, more shall be given;
- ✓ Bandwagon Effect: Movements grow because everyone seeks to be associated with power and success;
- ✓ The negative reasons for the growth of power may be seen in attempts to subdue competitors;
- ✓ The modern economy is a positive-sum game in which everyone gets richer;
- ✓ The same logic underlies the balance of power strategy: states unite to frustrate an ambitious hegemon;
- ✓ A great power has no friends, merely interests, and national interest can change;
- ✓ The cold logic of politics requires that men and wealth should be sacrificed to protect the national interest;
- ✓ "Reason of state" (*raison d'etat*) may require violence, deception, and breaking of promises;
- ✓ Medieval idea of Christendom as an international moral order drew on the natural law and *ius gentium;*
- ✓ War within Christendom acquired usages and conventions that mitigated its ferocity [cf. Truce of God];

- ✓ Idealists believe that interdependence makes sovereignty of national state an illusion;
- ✓ The moral thrust of internationalism is to identify the national interest with selfishness;
- ✓ Realists take national interest as their guide; monocausal theories of the causes of war have been refuted;
- ✓ Like Hobbes realists believe utopian aspirations absolutize conflicts and make them intractable;
- ✓ National interests are in some degree negotiable; rights, in principle, are not;

**8. THE EXPERIENCE OF POLITICS: I. HOW TO BE AN ACTIVIST**

The next three chapters are concerned with the practical aspects of political life. Here theory and practice may seem to diverge but the theory is not meant simply to describe, but also to prescribe, evaluate, criticize. Here we move from the grammar to the dialectic stage of the *Trivium*, which is designed to confront students with problems of evidence and bring them to a practical application of the rudiments of their knowledge. Mental exercise is required to build intellectual muscle. The point of studying political theory is to develop a greater understanding how politics is and may be practiced.

In this chapter, Minogue examines the building blocks of public life in modern times, including the practical knowledge (prudence) that equips citizens for effective participation. Spokesmanship and office are the two poles of a public official's political life. The first is representation: the skill of constructing a consensus position, some essence of an issue that harmonizes conflicting desires. The second is where the raw brutalities of power [*potentia*] are converted into the "suavities of authority."

Readings are drawn from Polybius, Abraham Lincoln's Lyceum Address, and Walter Bagehot's distinction between the efficient and dignified parts of government.

KEY IDEAS

- ✓ Politicians need more of the same kind of knowledge needed by citizens;
- ✓ A tradition (or political culture) must be the central object of understanding in any political system;
- ✓ There are many variations on the ideas of justice and freedom;
- ✓ Since politics is talk, political skill requires wit, and politicians are remembered for their phrases;
- ✓ Citizens once attended like connoisseurs to long and complicated political speeches;
- ✓ The culture of oratory has been destroyed by the trivializing effect of the mass media;
- ✓ Spokesmanship and office are the polarities within which politicians must live;
- ✓ In office, the raw brutalities of power are largely converted into the "suavities" of authority;
- ✓ The reasons a politician decides on a policy are distinct from the reasons by which he publicly defends it;
- ✓ The three dimensions of a political act are its practicality, consequences, and effect on the politicians;
- ✓ Politicians as a class constitute an oligarchy whose tendency is at odds with the population it rules;
- ✓ This tendency is more pronounced in countries whose electoral system requires voting for party lists;
- ✓ The politician must be a special type of person capable of keeping his deepest convictions to himself;
- ✓ Statesmen: politicians who can balance inner conviction with a talent for turning opportunity to advantage;

### 9. THE EXPERIENCE OF POLITICS: II. PARTIES AND DOCTRINES

From the personal attributes needed to effective public influence, Minogue turns to the arena of politics itself. Here he considers the character of modern politics as a struggle played out

between factions that seek to shape the direction of public policy, the ways political parties are themselves shaped within a larger political culture, and the techniques they use to influence public opinion. After introducing the traditional liberal/conservative tension early in the chapter, Minogue discusses the origins of modern liberalism, conservatism, and socialism and the ways they interpenetrate each other.

The British journalist Peter Oborne wrote the following about *The Triumph of the Political Class* (2007):

> The most important division in Britain is no longer the Tory versus Labour demarcation that marked out the battle zone in politics for the bulk of the 20th century. The real division is between a narrow, self-serving and increasingly corrupt governing elite and the mass of ordinary voters. The distinction between those in and out of ministerial office has become blurred, and general elections have become public stunts, whose primary purpose is an ostentatious affirmation of Political Class hegemony.[3]

The main reading for this chapter consists of excerpts from Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). What does Burke suggest when he remarks that "power . . . will survive the shock in which manner and opinions perish"? Does he mean *potestas* or *potentia*? What may be expected when fealty [personal loyalty to one's liege lord] yields to the expediency of "policy"? How does he encapsulate the lessons of chapter 5. What does modern life generally, and not just "modern letters," owe to "antient manners"? Idolatry appears to be an important theme of Burke's *Reflections*. In fact, in the paragraph with the phrase—"the gods of our oeconomical politicians"—Burke makes an allusion to Rom. 1:25.

[3]Oborne, 2007.

KEY IDEAS

- ✓ In modern politics liberal and conservative tendencies are basic;
- ✓ A party that monopolizes power and talks only to itself can only be despotic;
- ✓ In every liberal democratic state there will generally be two dominant parties with others on the margins;
- ✓ William James: Human beings are either tough-minded or tender-minded;
- ✓ The idea of the class war is a covert way of recommending an end to politics;
- ✓ Principles and programs are important in politics, but both are trumped [outbid] by circumstance;
- ✓ The Whigs and Tories originated in the debate over the Exclusion Bill in 1679;
- ✓ Locke's doctrines: government by consent; men have a natural right to life, liberty, and property;
- ✓ Burke warned that the French Revolution would subject France to the brutalities of an abstract blueprint;
- ✓ Burke's conservatism opposed liberalism's failure to distance itself from utopian schemes;
- ✓ The political distinction of left and right originated from the seating in the French National Assembly;
- ✓ Burke: Politics arises out of the present circumstances rather than abstract ideas of social perfection;
- ✓ Socialism arises from the fusion of the idea of society as a factory with the idea of universal suffrage;
- ✓ Parties steal each other's ideas and poach each other's supporters with little concern for consistency;
- ✓ Although a socialist party has failed to take root here, American "liberalism" comes close to socialism;

**10. THE EXPERIENCE OF POLITICS: III. JUSTICE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY**

Finally, Minogue examines some of the goals of politics: the big ideas -- such as justice, freedom, and democracy -- that often become the building blocks for the ideologies he considers in chapter twelve. Our perception of each of these goals is so highly influenced by our experiences, interests, and beliefs that we become sharply divided over their definition and application. The classical liberal emphasis on civil and economic liberty has been countered by the contemporary liberal/socialist demand for economic democracy and social justice. The popularity of the words themselves have made them ripe for ideological colonization and redefinition. The intensifying ideological struggle or culture war reveals a rift that J. Budziszewski addresses in *The Revenge of Conscience* (1999). Minogue argues that by converting them into ideals we distort what could be called the natural law or reality of justice, liberty, and democracy that we have already achieved.

Excerpts from Jean-Jacques Rousseau and several commentators are featured readings. Rousseau's Sovereign may be compared with Hobbes's Leviathan. To other Sovereigns [nation-states], the Sovereign is an individual. Who or what can bind the Sovereign? Anything that violates the original contract has what effect? The Sovereign may have no interest of its own contrary to the individuals who compose it; but the reverse is not the case. How may the Sovereign have security that the individuals would fulfill their obligations (to the general will)? To what sort of deceptions must fathers of nations resort? [cf. Plato's noble lie]. How does J. L. Talmon picture Rousseau's ambivalence? Is there possibly a link between Rousseau's personal quirks and his totalitarian Messianic temperament? What are some of the consequences of this temperament [cf. Eric Hoffer's "true believer"]?

According to Max Stackhouse, writing on "the socialist creed," Rousseau took the English contract theory and moved it in a Machiavellian "realist" direction. What did he object to in the

"English model?" What kind of contract did he prefer? His corporate model, in fact, anticipated both fascism and socialism. How does the general will favor altruism? What is the character of law? What does he think of natural law? What is the serpent in Rousseau's garden? [cf. Girard on mimetic rivalry]. Why did he find pluralism objectionable? What were his objections to Christianity? Why does he endorse a permanent revolution? What role is to be played by a civic religion? How did the French Revolution reflect Rousseau's ideas?

KEY IDEAS

- ✓ Politics, being largely talk, must dramatize itself (theatricality);
- ✓ Politics (governing=*gubernaculum*) is the art of navigating the ship of state;
- ✓ The supreme navigational tool of politics -- the star to steer by -- is an ideal: justice;
- ✓ Justice in Plato's *Republic*: Workers, warriors, and philosopher-kings each stick to their own tasks;
- ✓ Politics is endless public disagreement about what justice requires;
- ✓ Justice can also supply a philosophical explanation of what we already know [Budziszewski's natural law];
- ✓ Justice as a formula for demanding reform can be cheapened and trivialized, leading into civil disorder;
- ✓ St. Augustine: "What are great kingdoms without justice, but great robberies?";
- ✓ Freedom functions as a term of self-identification: distinguishing those ruled politically, not despotically;
- ✓ Freedom is best defined as the condition of living under the rule of law rather than arbitrary command;
- ✓ Our character and our culture at a given time limit what is possible for us;
- ✓ The paradox of freedom is the fact that it can only be a possession we already have;

- ✓ Democracy, which began as a humble constitutional term, now threatens both freedom and justice;
- ✓ Democracy illustrates the way ideals have expanded beyond politics and been set up as criteria of value;
- ✓ These ideals not only describe our philosophical foundations but also indicate new directions to take;

### 11. STUDYING POLITICS SCIENTIFICALLY

In this chapter, Minogue gives a capsule summary of some of the intellectual tools and foundational concepts of modern political science as well as the purposes and schools of thought that have guided its development. They include systems theory, behaviorism, and rational choice theory, each of which is dealt with in greater detail in Robert Heineman's *Political Science: An Introduction* (1996).

René Williamson's "Reflections of a Political Scientist," gives a personal account of the evolution of American political science. A selection by William C. Mitchell, under whom I studied, raises important public choice questions. What is meant by "the tragedy of the commons," a term coined by Garrett Hardin? Why would the prevention of markets and property rights be the chief source of negative externalities? A "negative externality occurs when an individual or firm making a decision does not have to pay the full cost of the decision. If a good has a negative externality, then the cost to society is greater than the cost consumer is paying for it."

What is the argument in favor of government providing public goods? What are some of the flaws in the argument? Rather than avoiding the free rider problem, how does government provision of public goods merely shift the expense to those who are politically less powerful? Why does this common practice operate as a negative-sum game? Why does it tend to result in a "pay to play" arrangement on the part of political entrepreneurs? What are the hidden costs?

KEY IDEAS

- ✓ Seeing politics scientifically requires a complete change of perspective;
- ✓ The way we experience politics is as a drama of character, convention, and circumstance;
- ✓ Political science requires that we forget particulars and construe politics, over time, as a process;
- ✓ The idea of a system -- a set of mechanical components in fixed relation -- is central to political science;
- ✓ Political science: a study of the process fused with an ambition to use such knowledge for our ends;
- ✓ A system constituted by race, gender, class, or history cannot predict how people are going to act;
- ✓ The aim of political science is to find causal connections between systems described by the data;
- ✓ The project of political science is limited by assuming that human conduct is essentially non-rational;
- ✓ Science turns whatever it studies into a natural process which is not affected by thinking;
- ✓ Behaviorism, which focuses on psychology, has fallen behind rational (or public) choice theory;
- ✓ Public choice theory deals with the relative rationality of cooperation versus pursuing individual advantage;
- ✓ Concepts: the prisoner's dilemma, the free rider phenomenon, [and the tragedy of the commons];
- ✓ In the game of life trust is risky but it can have the greatest pay-off;
- ✓ Human beings seek both to realize their desires and to conserve a chosen identity;

**12. IDEOLOGY CHALLENGES POLITICS**

Having already provided the elements for constructing an ideology in chapter six, Minogue now supplies a formula. Ideology often begins with the perception of things being wrong or oneself

being somehow different, estranged, or oppressed because of that difference. An ideology offers a comprehensive explanation of the world and a plan to correct perceived injustices or restore the proper order of things. It may feature a taxonomy of oppressors (often "them") and victims (usually "us").

Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn discusses the phenomenon of modern "identitarian" politics, which he calls *nostrism* (us-ness), in his book *Leftism* (1974). By provoking envy and scapegoating, as René Girard showed, such ideas as nationalism, socialism, and progressivism, have had terrible consequences. J. Budziszewski shows that what he calls demonic communitarianism (similar to what Russell Kirk called the "diabolical imagination") can result in a terrible despotism. My own mentor, Edward Rozek, for example, was a model of grace in the face of persecution.

Many of the readings for the Political Theory course are imaginative testimonies to this reality, including selections by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Helmut Schelsky, C. S. Lewis, Whittaker Chambers, James Kurth, Alain Finkielkraut, Pierre Manent, Benedict XVI, Angelo Codevilla, and many others.

In more recent years, the term *multiculturalism* has become a major political issue over what or whose values should shape our political culture. The modern world is torn between an appeal for unity and the desire for diversity (or to preserve identity), as Benjamin Barber notes in *Jihad vs. McWorld* (1996). Both may lead to despotism. James M. McPherson's *Is Blood Thicker Than Water?* (1998) contrasts civic with ethnic nationalism and discusses their conflict in the American Civil War and more recently in Quebec.

These two ways of collective self-identification -- civic and ethnic -- correspond to two methods of determining citizenship: *ius soli* (right of soil), which prevails in the United States, and *ius sanguinis* (right of blood). Karl Marx added a third option: class. The civic and ethnic variants of the politics of identity represent two poles of modern political thought, as reflected in the title of a 1997 conference: "America: An Idea or a People?" Much of the world is in turmoil over the issue of which should prevail: soil or

blood? Or, might we add: faith? Once again we see the politics of love and loyalty, such as St. Augustine noted with regard to the ancient Romans and Christians. But it is good to remember that in the pursuit of our visions of the good each of us is subject to the moral errors outlined by Budziszewski. We must learn not to confuse the City of Man with the City of God.

The readings include excerpts from *The Communist Manifesto* of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Some questions: How may the Communist theory be summarized? By calling capital a collective product, Marx and Engels are reifying (making concrete) some implications of Rousseau's general will, which is akin to Hobbes's *Leviathan*. Social contract theory is here radicalized and applied to property relations. The State is regarded as a collective entity. What is left unstated here is how the proletariat is strengthened until the point is reached that, by revolutionary means, it captures control over the State, which has allegedly served to protect the property of each dominant class in turn. Some of the measures to be taken are listed. Which of these measures have been adopted since the manifesto was written in 1848?

A speech Thomas Sowell gave that summarized his book, *The Quest for Cosmic Justice*, supplies another reading. Questions: Summarize in three propositions the book's message. What is cosmic justice – based on the "unconstrained vision" of life – and how does it differ from traditional concepts of justice or fairness? How did John Rawls distinguish "fair" from merely "formal" equality of opportunity? In terms of "social justice," what would constitute a fair fight? Who is presumably to blame for the vast ranges of undeserved inequalities? How is cosmic justice marketed so that supporters of traditional justice will confuse it with the latter? What, according to the economist Joseph Schumpeter and others, will a man do for his ideals? Who is victimized by the pursuit of cosmic justice? What type of inequality is required to promote greater economic and social equality?

Vaçlav Havel's Parable of the Greengrocer speaks of the "excusatory function" of ideology. What purpose is served by

employing the "ideological excuse" to bind the system together. Such binding, you may remember, was the traditional function of religion in Roman times.

KEY IDEAS

- ✓ Millennial (chiliastic) hopes have often erupted among the poor on the margins of politics;
- ✓ Intellectuals are also susceptible: the *philosophes* could not distinguish reform from revolution;
- ✓ The idea of progress spread from theology into philosophy and history: Smith, Ferguson, Hegel, Marx;
- ✓ Marx detected the fall of man in the institution of private property following a primitive communism;
- ✓ Marx revealed to his followers that formal freedom was the most subtle form of oppression;
- ✓ Marx claimed that his was the first scientific socialism [earlier forms he scorned as utopian];
- ✓ Marx: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world; the point is to change it.";
- ✓ Marxism has served as a model for later "revelations" of the same kind;
- ✓ For Destutt de Tracy ideology is a science of ideas; for Marx, false ideas; or political science, "isms";
- ✓ Ideologies, by contrast with political doctrines, claim exclusive truth and seek to create the perfect society;
- ✓ The logical character of ideologies is revealed in the actions of their followers when they come to power;
- ✓ The constitutive illusion of ideology: a society is possible in which rational actors create a happy world;
- ✓ Recipe for an ideology: Identify oppressed victims, mobilize them for the struggle, then liberate them;
- ✓ Politics assumes that a responsive political order must make it possible for people to follow their own bent;

- ✓ Ideology challenges politics in the name of an ideal in which only approved desires (needs) are satisfied;

### 13. CAN POLITICS SURVIVE THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY?

The discussion of despotism and politics is brought full circle to a Hegelian synthesis of sorts, which the author designates "political moralism."

> Political moralism . . . takes the independence of citizens not as a guarantee of freedom but as a barrier to the project of moralizing the world. Independent individuals disposing of their own property as they please are identified with selfishness and taken to be the cause of poverty. A socially just world is thought to require a rational distribution of the goods which pour so abundantly forth in a modern society. But states whose constitutional authority is limited to ruling by law are imperfect instruments for the immense task of rational distribution, and of the resulting necessity of rectifying the attitudes on which injustice is founded. The entity called 'the state' could, however, become adequate to this formidable task if it were to change its character. And this character does in fact tend to change with every access of central power to dispose of the wealth an economy generates.[4]

One of the great commentators on the American Constitution, Edward S. Corwin, distinguished the original Constitution of Limitations from a wartime Constitution of Powers. But, as Robert Higgs demonstrated in *Crisis and Leviathan* (1987), the crises were very often of a domestic political character. And so, the

[4]Minogue, 1995, p. 112.

notion of "implied powers" under the Constitution was eventually transformed, Ovid-like, into "resulting powers," which began with the Supreme Court upholding federal fiat currency after the Civil War and then struck down state restrictions on birth control and abortion a century later. The power to redefine the very meaning of the constitutional language—as Zachariah Montgomery showed more than a century ago in *Poison Drops in the Federal Senate* (1886)—has proven to be a great boon for postmodernists and other doctrinal latitudinarians, who have shown themselves more than willing to split churches and divide countries while furthering their purposes.

> Modern politics is thus generating a remarkable dilemma. Moralizing the human condition is only possible if we can make the world correspond to some conception of social justice. But it turns out that we can only transcend the inequalities of the past if we institute precisely the form of social order – a despotism – which Western civilization has immemorially found incompatible with its free and independent customs. The promise is justice, the price is freedom.[5]

As Minogue points out in his conclusion, politics historically has been the business of the powerful -- of masterful men who are free to dispose of their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, to paraphrase the sentiment expressed in the Declaration of Independence. In the absence of civil liberty and self-government, politics simply becomes a service industry rather than an arena in which public issues may be freely debated and decided. It is well to recall that the English colonists in America enjoyed considerable liberty. What animated them in 1775 was not a wish to gain but a determination to protect their liberties against a perceived threat. As Captain Preston, a veteran of the

[5]Minogue, p. 113.

Battle of Concord (1775), remarked in 1842 it was not intolerable oppressions or abstract political theories that caused his contemporaries to take up arms. "What we meant in going for those redcoats is this: we always had governed ourselves, and we always meant to. They didn't mean we should."

The reading for this last chapter is excerpted from *Democracy in America* by Alexis de Tocqueville. More than a travelogue, anthropological study, or political essay, Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* is a profound work of philosophy that provides, to a considerable degree, both a reorientation from and an antidote to Rousseau's secular communitarianism. Many scholars assume Tocqueville was a religious skeptic, but the first excerpt on American religion confirms that he drew heavily on the Christian tradition, wrestled with the faith, and may well have been or become a believer. The second and third excerpts—"That Americans Combat the Effects of Individualism by Free Institutions" and "What Sort of Despotism Free Nations Have to Fear" – are among the most profound in the literature of political theory.

Here are some questions concerning the prospect of a democratic despotism: What are the novel features of a democratic form of despotism? What are the effects of bureaucracy on personal initiative? Tocqueville's description of bureaucracy as a "network of small complicated rules" gets right to the point. Indeed, the term "red tape" dates back at least to 1696. Jonathan Swift satirized this aspect of politics in the capture of Gulliver by the Lilliputians. The result is a state of servitude or dependency, which is shaken off briefly from time to time. By what means? Here Tocqueville himself takes a satiric turn, one that is worthy of Bastiat, who later served in the Assembly at the same time that Tocqueville served in a high government office.

Further questions: What two conflicting passions excite our contemporaries? The New Deal of the 1930s, global institutions, and plans for universal health coverage all have tended to promote further centralization. How is oppression relaxed by permitting representation? What is the particular danger associated

with subjection in minor affairs? How is character enervated? How do you believe this might ultimately endanger the security of the whole political order? Once this "short-lived monster" reaches a point of crisis, what options are available to the people?

It should be evident from this review how much Minogue's over-all argument is anticipated by Tocqueville.

KEY IDEAS

- ✓ The Romans cannot be fitted into the modern view that politics is merely a service industry;
- ✓ Modern politicians and civil servants augment their power by giving food to the starving and needy;
- ✓ Politics was born out of certain historical conditions and might well die in the same way;
- ✓ Political moralism would have society replace politics by moral judgment;
- ✓ Internationalism is a form of political moralism that claims that war results from bad institutions;
- ✓ The ambition to replace politics by morality involves abolishing individuals and nation-states as too selfish;
- ✓ Justice, it is said, has been blocked by the selfish interests of the dominant elites;
- ✓ Politics has always been the business of the powerful: citizens, nobles, property-owners, patriarchs;
- ✓ It was because the state was composed of masterful characters that it could not turn into a despotism;
- ✓ The state -- political, not despotic -- is distinguished by the right of people to dispose of their own property;
  - o Political moralism takes the independence of citizens not as a guarantee of freedom but as an obstacle to the project of moralizing the world;
- ✓ States whose authority is constitutionally limited are imperfect instruments for redistributing life's chances;

- ✓ Moralizing the human condition (social justice) is only possible by instituting despotism;
- ✓ The new meaning of politics is that it covers every small detail of life; it is not defined by its limits;
- ✓ In this new sense politics has become, as David Easton put it, "the authoritative allocation of values";
- ✓ Charity in a political form has expanded to take over politics;
- ✓ Political moralism inculcates an attitude that the relief of suffering requires us to be managed by experts;
- ✓ It requires conduct to flow from the right attitudes, setting up a contradiction between theory and practice;
- ✓ The poor and dependent are the lever by which governments accumulate power over everyone;
- ✓ The very character of the people must be changed, especially that of "oppressors" [political correctness];
- ✓ Human beings are becoming the matter which is to be shaped according to the latest moral ideas;
  - In an egalitarian world, everyone is equal, except the managers of equality [George Orwell's *Animal Farm*];

**EPILOGUE**

Minogue's idea of "political moralism" has appeared under a variety of labels over the years. Earlier examples are Alexis de Tocqueville's "democratic despotism" and Francis Lieber's Rousseauism or "democratic absolutism." It is akin what Michael Polanyi described moral inversion, Eric Voegelin characterized as a Gnostic "immanentizing of the eschaton", James Billington referred to as the revolutionary faith, Gerhart Niemeyer called the total critique of society, and Roger Scruton termed the culture of repudiation. Minogue also echoes his colleague Michael Oakeshott's concept of telocracy as opposed to nomocracy. "Political correctness" is a kindred concept. The administrative

state adopted it along with Herbert Marcuse's repressive tolerance as well as the protective coloring of Milovan Djilas's *New Class* (1954). The resulting chimera resembles Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn's parrot/chameleon hybrid.

Kenneth Minogue's last book, *The Servile Mind* (2010), provides a fitting reminder of the world we are losing:

> When social justice meets political correctness, the old liberal idea that relations between individuals are a purely personal matter is overridden. There is a right thing to do, and the state will make sure it is done. Democracy today is becoming rather intolerant of moral and political disagreement. A servile perfection has become the way we think, or perhaps ought to think, and politics seems to resolve itself into technical issues of how to actualize the one true
> policy of international harmony and social justice.[6]

But, of course, the progressive mind, like Satan in *Job,* is never content to rest and so we must remain ever alert to its depredations. As Minogue concludes his "very short introduction":

> The echo of the past always illuminates. *Cui bono?* The Romans used to ask. Who benefits? In an egalitarian world, everyone is equal, except perhaps the managers of equality. And certainly in the foreseeable future, there will be endless and not unprofitable work for those whose business is to spell out in ever greater detail the rules of the game of life, and to teach the benighted what thoughts a just society requires. Politics will have died, but everything will be politics.[7]

[6]Minogue, 2010, pp. 129-30.
[7]Minogue, 1995, pp. 117-18.

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