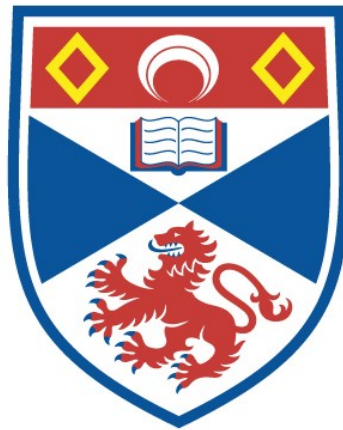


Slaying ideological dragons: the life and thought of Kenneth Minogue

Ojel Luis Rodriguez Burgos

A thesis submitted for the degree of PhD
at the
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*Politics is the activity by which the framework of
human life is sustained; it is not life itself.*

-K. Minogue,

Politics: A Very Short Introduction

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Abstract

This thesis analyses Kenneth Minogue's life and ideas, drawing from primary sources, especially his personal papers at the University of St Andrews' Institute of Intellectual History. It traces Minogue's intellectual development and assesses the three main themes in his work. Additionally, it examines the contemporary relevance of Minogue's thought amid a globally polarised political landscape with radical ideological tendencies on both the Left and Right.

The thesis comprises two parts. The first provides a comprehensive intellectual biography of Minogue, beginning with his early years and the influence of figures like John Anderson and Michael Oakeshott on his intellectual development. The first chapter also delves into his early publications that critiqued inherent salvationist tendencies in modern ideologies. The second chapter focuses on Minogue's career as a public intellectual, particularly his engagement in debates on Higher Education at the London School of Economics and Political Science. It traces his involvement in the New Right movement and support for Thatcherism. The third chapter explores the later phase of Minogue's career, examining his defence of Thatcherism, his Euroscepticism, opposition to identity politics, and concerns about ideology's adverse effects on authority and human conduct.

The second part of the thesis examines three central themes in Minogue's thought: his defence of conservative individualism, his critique of ideology, and his own brand of conservative realism. The fourth chapter explores Minogue's view that conservative individualism embodies the essence of modernity, fostering the harmonious coexistence of freedom and authority in moral life. The fifth chapter evaluates Minogue's critique of ideology as apolitical, emphasising his contribution to preserving its critical role in a non-Marxist context. The concluding chapter

addresses the relevance of Minogue's conservatism in contemporary politics, particularly amid the rise of the global reactionary Right.

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I also wish to note my gratitude to the Minogue family, particularly to his daughter Noonie Minogue, who was very receptive and welcoming about my thesis on her father's life. Noonie's support in identifying potential interviewees and sending digitised papers held by the Minogue family were instrumental in clearing up grey areas and providing more context about Kenneth Minogue's life.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge other members of the academic community in St. Andrews who were instrumental to this thesis. First, I express my thanks to Maia Sheridan and the archival team in the special collections of the Institute of Intellectual History for their work in digitising and sending Minogue's papers to me. Secondly, I wish to convey gratitude to the team at the University library who worked tirelessly in finding and obtaining Minogue's publications, displaying patience throughout the process. Thirdly, I appreciate my Ph.D. cohort, particularly Mr. Theo Poward, who has been an invaluable colleague and friend. Theo's friendship and camaraderie were crucial, as was his feedback on my thesis and academic work. Without the support of the St. Andrews community, the process of researching and drafting this thesis would have been exceptionally challenging.

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Introduction

In the Shadows of History: Rediscovering a forgotten conservative patriot

The term ‘Jacobinism’ has a rich and significant history, originating from its association with the meeting place of one of the most influential factions of the French Revolution. Initially, it carried a positive connotation as a revolutionary political label in the national assembly. However, it later gained notoriety due to the Reign of Terror, becoming forever linked to the radicalism of the French Revolution (Scrivener, 2001). As a result, Jacobinism has come to represent radical rationalist politics striving to reshape society according to abstract principles (Hamilton, 2020).

The prevalence of Jacobin politics during the French Revolution gave rise to reactions and criticisms that introduced a new political term. This term, known as conservatism, emerged as a response to the writings of figures like Edmund Burke, who denounced the rationalist ideals that underpinned the French Revolution (Burke, 2003). Therefore, conservatism became the historical adversary of Jacobinism during the French Revolution and subsequent radical endeavours throughout history. It stood as the intellectual antithesis of Jacobinism, displaying scepticism and opposition towards the rationalist foundations of Jacobin politics (Kekes, 2001).

The interdependence of these concepts establishes a dichotomy in modern politics between radical Jacobin politics and sceptical conservative politics. Radical Jacobin politics revolve around framing politics as a struggle between the oppressed and oppressors. The Jacobins employ strategies that incite anger and resentment among the oppressed, channelling them against those

in power. They also claim to enlighten the masses by exposing the oppressive structures of society, fuelling their quest to 'liberate' the oppressed and create a better world. On the other hand, conservative politics relies on the wisdom derived from the practices of Western civilisation, using it as a guiding principle in political activity. Conservative politics exhibit scepticism towards projects that deviate from the wisdom of these established practices. Consequently, conservatism consistently reacts to Jacobin initiatives and advises prudence and restraint when these projects tend to fail or overreach.

However, despite conservatism's opposition to Jacobin politics, many conservatives have been disheartened by the Jacobins' political success. This success is evident in the waning familiarity of Western civilisation that conservative individuals are lamenting (Edmund Burke Foundation, 2022; Kekes, 2001; Scruton, 2001; Smith, 2019). The achievements of Jacobin politics have not gone unnoticed by the Right, leading to discontent with traditional conservative politics. This is reflected in ongoing discussions that highlight perceived shortcomings and the need for an alternative approach to counter the rising Jacobin influence (Haivry & Hazony, 2017; Ryn, 2023).

The dominant alternative being proposed embraces reactionary populism with the aim of attaining political, social, and cultural supremacy. This alternative is found in the reactionary global Right, a movement that has emerged in recent decades, adopting the language and strategies of Jacobinism to challenge the prevailing dominance of liberal ideas and practices in Western civilisation (Drolet & Williams, 2021a). Ironically, in their endeavour to combat the Left-wing Jacobins, the reactionaries of the global Right have arguably become a mirror image of their most despised adversaries, transforming themselves into the Jacobins of the Right.

The intellectual roots of the global Right's reactionary movement have yielded results, evident in political events like Brexit. Additionally, the rise of political parties aligned with these ideas has significantly altered Western political dynamics. For example, Geert Wilders' success in the 2023 Netherlands general election has brought his reactionary ideas close to political power (Oxford Analytica, 2023). In Germany, the Alternative for Deutschland party is evolving into a major political force, potentially poised for power or as a kingmaker in a future election (Ward-Glenton, 2023). Established parties, too, have not been immune to reactionary influences, with the Republican Party radicalising through Trumpism, even embracing political violence as a means to its ends (Kydd, 2021).

As a result, modern politics face a daunting test in a Jacobin world, where radicalism has pervaded both the Left and Right. Furthermore, conservatism is challenged by the reactionary global Right, presenting itself as the future of the conservative movement. This thesis aims to address these challenges by examining the life and ideas of Kenneth Minogue (1930-2013). By studying Minogue, this thesis seeks to explore whether his political life and thoughts offer contemporary insights on how to navigate the future of conservatism in the context of the rise of the reactionary global Right. Minogue's contributions and conservative insights could offer an alternative that avoids the tendency of certain factions on the Right to embrace radicalism while remaining receptive to the concerns of the Jacobins within the global Right, providing a viable future for conservative politics.

I: Kenneth Minogue: An uncharted scholar?

This thesis is the first major study of Kenneth Robert Minogue (1930-2013), an Australian political thinker and a leading right-wing public intellectual during his lifetime. Minogue spent his academic and public intellectual life in the United Kingdom, primarily at the London School of

Economics and Political Science (LSE). He was renowned for his exceptional teaching and was held in high esteem by his colleagues and students (O'Sullivan, 2013a). Alongside his academic work, Minogue was a prolific public intellectual, regularly contributing to various publications and appearing on television. He was closely affiliated with think tanks and organisations, where he championed conservative politics, free markets, individualism, and freedom.

Minogue was part of the 'golden age' of intellectuals at the LSE, which included figures such as Karl Popper (1902-1994), Friedrich Hayek (1899-1992), Elie Kedourie (1926-1992), and Shirley Robin Letwin (1924-1993). Minogue (2000, p. 11) saw himself and his peers as belonging to a "curious tradition in which foreigners explained to the English what their freedom actually was about" advocating with intellectual rigidity and creativity for practical policies and politics in defence of freedom. However, the name Kenneth Minogue does not immediately come to mind for many individuals with right-wing leanings. In fact, outside of a select group within conservative circles, Minogue remains relatively unknown (Jones, 2013).

Despite his relative obscurity, Kenneth Minogue's contribution to post-war politics is significant, focusing on critiquing anti-collectivism and the messianic tendencies of liberalism. As a member of the New Right, Minogue actively participated in Shirley Letwin's salon alongside notable figures such as Elie Kedourie, T.E. Utley, Maurice Cranston, and Maurice Cowling, placing him at the heart of the debates that have shaped British conservatism both in the past and present.¹ Indeed, Minogue emerged as "the leading public intellectual of the Right, called upon

¹ Elie Kedourie (1926-1992): Renowned historian of the Middle East. T.E. Utley (1921-1988): British journalist. Maurice Cranston (1920-1993): Intellectual Historian and colleague of Minogue at LSE. Maurice Cowling (1926-2005): Prominent conservative historian at Peterhouse College, Cambridge.

regularly by the BBC to present a civilized case for opinions the institution plainly thought were somewhat uncivilized” (O'Sullivan, 2013d, para. 1).

Regrettably, there has been relatively little scholarly exploration of Kenneth Minogue and his perspective on conservatism, apart from occasional references to his work. The existing academic engagement primarily focuses on his ideas regarding ideology and their relevance to our modern context. Additionally, another engagement has been to examine the influence of Oakeshott's thinking on British conservatism, using Minogue as a case study. Lastly, there is an analysis of Minogue's participation in conservative intellectual debates following the Cold War.

Anthony O'Hear's (2021), for example, delves into the concept of ideology as expounded by Kenneth Minogue and its significance for contemporary society. O'Hear highlights Minogue's insights in recognising the rhetoric of oppression and ideology in contemporary political movements like anti-capitalism and environmentalism. These movements frequently attribute societal disharmony and strife to the individualistic nature of Western civilisation, thereby impeding the liberation of the oppressed. As a result, O'Hear concludes that Minogue's ideas offer valuable guidance in comprehending the dangers of ideology and its ramifications in our current age.

O'Hear effectively highlights the key ideas that underpin Minogue's perspective on ideology, and I concur with the notion that it is valuable for analysing our present-day context. However, he glosses over the importance of Minogue's concept of politics in his analysis of ideology, which forms an integral part of a framework for identifying ideological and political doctrines. Additionally, O'Hear fails to situate Minogue's concept within the historical evolution of the term and neglects to identify the intellectual objectives that guide Minogue's scholarly exploration of ideology.

In her dissertation titled 'Michael Oakeshott and the Traditionalists: Philosophy and Conservative Ideologies,' Lin Tsui (2021) also explores the influence of Oakeshott's conservatism on Kenneth Minogue. Tsui traces Minogue's trajectory, from his early critique of liberal messianism and advocacy of free markets to his later emphasis on broader social and cultural themes that move beyond Oakeshott's framework. The study begins by analysing Minogue's early career when he popularised Oakeshottian ideas and critiqued liberalism. It then highlights Minogue's transition to a public intellectual, driven by his response to the LSE troubles and perceived failures of Ted Heath's government, including his defence of Thatcherism. Lastly, Tsui's study explores Minogue's later focus on the infiltration of ideology into civil institutions, resulting in a shift towards more traditionalist themes in his intellectual discourse.

Tsui's work is a valuable contribution to scholarship as it traces the evolution of Minogue's thinking and the shifts in emphasis in his writing. However, focusing solely on Oakeshott as a lens for analysing Minogue's thought neglects other intellectual influences that shaped him. Additionally, there is a lack of exploration regarding Minogue's early life and his qualities in the academic, social, and personal spheres. Lastly, the study could benefit from situating Minogue and the conservative tradition he belongs to within the broader intellectual debates of his time.

Another area of engagement with Minogue revolves around intellectual discussions on conservative politics in the post-Cold War era, as explored in Brian Pilbeam's book *Conservatism in Crisis? Anglo-American Conservative Ideology After the Cold War* (2003). These discussions acknowledge Minogue as a prominent advocate for the individualistic way of life and free markets, particularly in contrast to the prevailing managerialism of the nineties (Pilbeam, 2003). Minogue is credited with defending the individualistic way of life by linking it to the restoration of virtuous

individuals and the preservation of institutions that are essential to the moral identity of individuals.

Pilbeam's work is valuable as it highlights Minogue's role as a defender of New Right politics in the post-Cold War era, which were prominent in the eighties. However, the study lacks in-depth exploration of the foundations of Minogue's thought, particularly regarding individualism. Additionally, it does not fully delve into Minogue's growing concerns for cultural and social themes, challenging the prevailing notion that Thatcher supporters were solely focused on free markets.

The limited literature on Minogue reveals a gap in the comprehensive exploration of his life and thought, which this thesis aims to address. By utilising primary sources such as his published works, interviews with family and close associates, and his personal papers housed at the Intellectual History Institute at the University of St Andrews, this thesis endeavours to offer a more comprehensive account of Minogue as an individual, conservative scholar, and public figure. Through this approach, the thesis provides valuable insights into a neglected conservative thinker who played a significant role in Britain's intellectual life and British conservatism, highlighting the enduring relevance of his ideas for the future.

II: Motivations for Study

Kenneth Minogue gained prominence as a member of the London School of Economics (LSE) Right; a group of conservative thinkers coined so by Maurice Cowling (1990). This group, including Minogue, was recruited into the LSE's Government department primarily during Michael Oakeshott's leadership. They played a crucial role in offering academic and public support to the ideas of the New Right and the Thatcher government. Among them, Minogue stood out as

the most vocal and actively engaged figure within the New Right and the Conservative party (Skeffington, 2021). His dedication to conservative politics is evident in his long-standing membership of the Conservative party until 2007, albeit he considered it nominal due to his academic and public commitments taking precedence (Minogue, 2007b).

The LSE Right strongly supported Thatcherism, considering it a practical application of their ‘conservative realism’. Coined by Minogue, conservative realism represents the conservatism embraced by the LSE Right, characterised by a conservative and sceptical disposition in political activity and an appreciation for the individualist British way of life. This thesis contributes significantly to the study of British conservatism by exploring Minogue's life and brand of conservatism. While the thesis does not focus on the LSE Right's position within British conservatism, its defence of Thatcherism, and the implications for the future of Conservative politics, it opens the door for further research and examination of these topics. My research into Minogue provides an opening for clarity in some of these questions, and it allows for a future examination of the LSE Right's conservatism, its politics, and the possibility of intellectual, popular, and electoral viability in an arguably Jacobin-dominated world.

The thesis examines the significance of the LSE Right's conservatism through the lens of Kenneth Minogue, focusing on its intellectual, popular, and electoral implications. It argues that Minogue's conservative realism provides valuable insights into understanding the global reactionary Right and offers a response to it. One key insight is Minogue's recognition that the Western way of life is both inherently individualistic and dependent on a symbiotic relationship with authority. The thesis critiques the Jacobin right-wing take on individualism that is charged as responsible for the problems of modernity with no distinction made between Liberal and Conservative forms of individualism.

The misreading of the problem by right-wing Jacobins leads them to propose a cure that is worse than the disease: turning to ideology and imposing a utopian vision. Minogue provides a unique perspective, distinguishing political doctrines governed by laws from ideological doctrines seeking salvation. Therefore, Minogue's critique of ideology reveals that the radical Right, in departing from the political realm, mirrors their main opponent—liberal rationalism (Williams, 2022).

Minogue's conservative realism offers valuable assertions for the future of conservatism. Firstly, it provides a theoretical response to the global reactionary Right without demolishing liberal values and modernity. Secondly, it incorporates the concerns and themes of the reactionary global Right. Thirdly, conservative realism can form the basis for future conservative politics, gaining popular support. Lastly, Minogue's active participation in public life and his example of living a conservative life are necessary for preserving the practices of Western civilisation.

III: The Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured into two parts: an intellectual biography and an exploration of Minogue's thought. This division allows for a comprehensive examination of both Minogue's life and his ideas. As the first significant study on Kenneth Minogue, the first part of the thesis traces his intellectual journey, highlighting the influence of his personal experiences and of the socio-political events of his time on his intellectual development. This section emphasises the interplay between Minogue's life experiences and the broader social and political context, providing essential insights into his thought and its evolution. Additionally, it contextualises Minogue within the wider intellectual debates of his time, enabling a deeper understanding of his thinking.

The second part of the thesis will examine Minogue's thought and its intellectual significance. By addressing the existing knowledge gap surrounding his ideas and the tradition he represents, this emphasis on Minogue's thought will contribute valuable insights and enrich the scholarly discourse around his legacy. Moreover, by focusing on Minogue's thought, the thesis will explore its contribution to and significance for debates on conservatism and its politics. This examination will illuminate the enduring relevance of Minogue's ideas and their potential contributions to current debates on conservative ideas and politics.

The thesis begins by exploring Minogue's early intellectual trajectory, tracing his journey from Australia to the United Kingdom. The first chapter aims to provide insights into his formative years, including the influence of John Anderson, whose ideas contributed to Minogue's development of a sceptical outlook and exposure to an anti-totalitarian ethos. It will delve into Minogue's time at LSE, his academic role, and the impact of Michael Oakeshott on his thought. Additionally, the chapter will shed light on the early focal points of Minogue's thought that indicted the perfectionist tendencies of Liberalism and Nationalism. Through an analysis of his early writings, it will highlight Minogue's affinity with and divergence from Cold War Liberalism, providing a deeper understanding of his intellectual foundations and influences.

The second chapter explores Minogue's evolution into a public intellectual, driven by his active opposition to student protests at LSE in the sixties and his enduring concern for academic institutions. These public engagements, along with his disillusionment with Ted Heath's government, propelled Minogue to become a prominent figure within the New Right movement, engaging in significant political debates in British politics. Through his involvement, Minogue defended New Right ideas and politics, earning recognition and influence in the Anglosphere. The

chapter concludes by highlighting Minogue's defence of Thatcherism as a moral restoration of the individualistic way of life in Britain.

The concluding chapter of the first part examines Minogue's transition from critiquing ideology's perfectionist tendencies to exploring its impact on authority. This chapter argues that Minogue's shift in focus is driven by his commitment to safeguarding the individualistic way of life, which he sees as liberated from the constraints of authority. As a result, Minogue's intellectual writings increasingly incorporate cultural and social themes, reflecting his growing concern with the role of authority in society. Despite this concern, Minogue remains steadfast in his defence of Thatcherite politics, expressing disappointment with the Conservative Party's perceived abandonment of these principles in the nineties. Additionally, Minogue's emphasis on authority is accompanied by a strong dose of Euroscepticism and a deep concern for national identity in the face of internationalist ideologies. The combination of liberation from authority, the state of individualism in the Western world, and apprehension about the deleterious effects of ideology on a global scale contribute to Minogue's gloomy outlook, in which he argues that individuals are becoming increasingly servile.

The second part of the thesis examines three key themes in Minogue's thought. The first theme centres around Minogue's strong defence of Conservative individualism as the prevailing and established way of life in the Western world. This chapter argues that Minogue views individualism as the defining disposition that has shaped modernity and its distinctively Western character, influenced by Christian and humanist sceptical thought. According to Minogue, individualism represents a way of life in which individuals strive for felicity and the development of their moral identities. However, Minogue emphasises that individualism is a moral practice that necessitates individuals' adherence to authority as a prerequisite for active participation in this way

of life. He refers to this adherence as the moral life, which acts as a guiding principle for individuals in their moral deliberations and determination of what is morally right. Furthermore, the chapter explores the principles of law, moral commitments, and the concern for moral identity that inform individuals' understanding of what constitutes moral conduct.

In the fifth chapter, the focus shifts to Minogue's study of ideology, providing valuable insights into his unique perspective and enriching our understanding of the concept. The central argument of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, it challenges the notion of the 'end of ideology' by highlighting Minogue's critique and asserting that ideology remains influential in modern liberalism and nationalism. Minogue argues against the idea that ideologies have become obsolete, emphasising their continued impact on political discourse and societal structures. Secondly, the chapter explores Minogue's conception of ideology as a distinct form of thought rooted in classical Marxism, while attributing to it a negative connotation. Minogue views ideology as a pseudo-scientific mode of thinking that aims to liberate society and individuals from what it perceives as the oppressive nature of the individualistic modern world.

The thesis concludes by analysing Minogue's concept of 'conservative realism'. The closing chapter explores the motivations behind Minogue's formulation of the term: as a tribute to the thinkers of the LSE Right, a response to the decline of New Right politics, and a reaction to the collapse of the intellectual consensus within the New Right movement. It further elucidates Minogue's view of conservatism as a disposition that manifests in politics through scepticism, cautious decision-making, and an emphasis on conservative individualism.

The central argument of this chapter is that while Minogue's conservatism may be considered an endangered species in the current context of the global reactionary Right, due to its alignment with liberalism, secular nature, and absence of a comprehensive plan for restoration of

the familiar, revisiting Minogue's conservative realism can provide valuable insights. These insights can assist in assessing the rise of the global reactionary Right, exploring conservatism's tendency to become ideological, and offering viable ideas for the future of conservative politics. By delving into Minogue's ideas and examining their relevance in contemporary political landscapes, the chapter ultimately aims to highlight the potential of Minogue's insights to inform and shape future conservative political discourses and actions.

I hope this study can inspire further research into Minogue's thought and his role in 20th-century British conservatism. While the thesis primarily focuses on lessons for the global reactionary Right, Minogue's ideas and life have broader implications for understanding conservatism in a Jacobin world, reevaluating the concept of ideology, examining Thatcherism, and shaping the future of Conservative politics. This thesis aims to shed light on Minogue's forgotten contributions as a Conservative patriot and encourage others to appreciate his legacy.

Part I

A Scholarly Portrait: The intellectual journey of Kenneth Minogue

A remarkably industrious academic, an astute political commentator, and an articulate writer, Kenneth Minogue's intellectual journey spans multiple decades and encompasses a broad spectrum of themes within the realm of political thought, liberalism, conservatism, and the intricacies of individualism in our modern world. The first part of this thesis embarks on an immersive expedition into Kenneth Minogue's intellectual life. This endeavour involves delving into his formative experiences, scrutinising his intellectual influencers, and dissecting pivotal publications that contributed to his distinctive conservative perspective.

In this part, the focus rests on three themes: first, the early Minogue who displayed a concern for the perfectionist tendencies of ideology; secondly, the public intellectual life of Minogue that brought him into prominence in political circles; and finally, the late Minogue, whose concern for the effects of ideology on authority made him a conservative critic in the realm of social and cultural issues. Navigating through the intricate contours of Minogue's life, I unveil the story of a reflective thinker and academic whose contributions to conservatism and Anglophone political sphere deserve thorough exploration and attention.

Chapter I

Intellectual Awakening: Unravelling Kenneth Minogue's early years

Kenneth Minogue, a renowned political theorist, and philosopher left an indelible mark on Anglo-American conservative politics and British political life. While Minogue's intellectual prowess initially placed him in the shadows of influential thinkers like John Anderson, Michael Oakeshott, and Elie Kedourie, his contributions would soon surpass those of his mentors. Emerging as a notable public intellectual, Minogue fervently championed conservative politics, extending his influence beyond the conventional confines of academia. His ideas and active participation in political and intellectual debates during his lifetime solidified his influential role in shaping the conservative landscape.

The publication of his book, *The Liberal Mind*, in 1963 marked a pivotal moment in Kenneth Minogue's trajectory, propelling him from relative obscurity in academia and intellectual circles into the forefront of the intellectual landscape encompassing anti-totalitarian movements like Cold War Liberalism. In this chapter, I delve into the formative years of Kenneth Minogue, exploring the personal, educational, and socio-cultural factors that shaped his intellectual development and laid the groundwork for his illustrious career as a prominent conservative thinker. By examining these early influences, we gain valuable insights into the foundations of Minogue's thought and the intellectual journey that led him to become a distinguished figure within the conservative genus.

To trace the intellectual trajectory of Kenneth Minogue, the examination begins by exploring his formative years in New Zealand and Australia. This section provides valuable

insights into his birthplace, parental background, and the circumstances that led to their decision to relocate to Australia. Furthermore, it delves into Minogue's early education, culminating in his enrolment at Sydney University. It is at this institution where he was exposed to the profound influence of philosopher John Anderson, who imparted upon Minogue important ideas regarding education, scepticism, and a staunch opposition to totalitarianism.

The subsequent section focuses on Minogue's relocation to London and the challenges he encountered before making the pivotal decision to pursue studies in Economics at the London School of Economics (LSE). This section delves into his transformation into an academic, shedding light on the circumstances that led to his appointment as a temporary lecturer in the Government department under the guidance of Michael Oakeshott. Through a comprehensive analysis, this section explores Minogue's academic journey and the influence of Oakeshott's ideas on his intellectual development.

The concluding section of the chapter investigates Minogue's works, namely *The Liberal Mind* (1963) and *Nationalism* (1967), with a particular emphasis on their origins and core arguments. It delves into the influence of his intellectual predecessors on these publications and highlights the areas where Minogue's ideas diverge from theirs. Moreover, this section situates the books within the broader intellectual context of Cold War Liberalism, examining how Minogue's writings demonstrate both his early alignment with the Cold War liberals and significant points of departure.

I: The New Zealander in Australia

Kenneth Robert Minogue, also known as Ken, was born on September 11, 1930, at the Imperial Hotel in Palmerston North, New Zealand as the only child to Eunice Pearl (née Porter)

(1908–1950) and Dennis Francis (Frank) Minogue (1901–1987) (Jones, 2017). His parents met on the ferry that traversed between Australia and New Zealand, and they subsequently married in 1929. The Great Depression affected New Zealand's economy in 1930, causing the collapse of the hotel business owned by Minogue's maternal grandparents (Minogue, n.d.).

As a result, his parents relocated to Australia. However, owing to his father's risky lifestyle, Minogue's (n.d.) experience was far from one marked by security. In 1935, Minogue and his mother returned to New Zealand, later joined by his father, where he attended Newmarket Primary School in Auckland. Following the outbreak of World War II in 1941, Minogue moved with his parents to Sydney, Australia, at the age of 10 or 11, as his father was attempting to reunite the family. This was a period of great hardship for the Minogue household. Due to his father's unsuccessful business ventures, the family lived in a cramped apartment in Coogee Bay, facing financial difficulties (Jones, 2017). Despite these challenging circumstances, Minogue demonstrated his early academic abilities by attending Darlinghurst Primary School and later enrolling at Sydney Boys High School (Coleman, 1996).

In an interview with the National Library of Australia, Minogue discussed his early political beliefs during his primary and secondary education. He recounted debating with a teacher, who he believed was a Marxist, in favour of the British Empire to which New Zealand and Australia belonged (Coleman, 1996). This highlights his affinity for controversy and confrontation. Moreover, it illustrates his early conservative views and his support for preserving the unity of the Empire, while also displaying his scepticism toward nationalist movements that might jeopardise its cohesion.

Minogue's defence of the British Empire mirrors his self-perception as a child of the Empire. Minogue (2000e) acknowledged that individuals from his and previous generations in

Australia and New Zealand also identified themselves as part of the Empire. For Minogue, the Empire's value lay in disseminating English morality throughout the nations of the Anglosphere. This morality, praised by Minogue, reflects his conception of Britishness, centred on adherence to the postulates of the rule of law and the idea of maintaining a conscious and chosen distance from other individuals (Minogue, 1991a). Indeed, Minogue's civilisational attachment to the Empire should be recognised as a sentiment that significantly influenced his thought.

From 1947 to 1951, Minogue attended Sydney University at the age of 16, pursuing a “two years' Arts course on my way, notionally, towards law” (Coleman, 1996, para. 10). Minogue's university years coincided with the post-war era, which witnessed events such as India's independence from Britain, the ascendance of the Soviet Union and China, and the adoption of post-reconstruction policies in the West. Minogue's university years were marked by left-leaning ideological politics, which he later called “Juvenile salvationism” (Coleman, 1996, para. 10). His exposure to Marxism during this time caused his political opinions to shift further to the left. He found Marxism appealing because it “presented a grand scheme into which everything fitted” (Coleman, 1996, para. 8). While studying at Sydney University, Minogue wrote for the left-wing, anti-establishment student paper *Honi Soit*. His experience as a student journalist Minogue acknowledges, “served me quite well ever since” (Coleman, 1996, para. 8). His ability to write quickly and orderly, along with the sizable volume of published works throughout his life, reflected this experience. This was also evident in his ability to understand ideologies with critical and anti-establishment characteristics.

Minogue's Marxist phase was short-lived, as evidenced by his work for the independent publication *The Heresy* (Jones, 2013). The broadsheet emerged in response to censorship by the University and Parliament of New South Wales, which sought to suppress criticism of patriotic

and religious symbols in state schools ('University Professor Censured', 1931; O'Neil, 1979). The paper's editorial stance was firmly against censorship and repression, advocating for free speech and academic freedom in Australia (Coleman, 1996). *The Heresy's* philosophy was inspired by John Anderson, whose ideas had a profound impact on Minogue's intellectual development and ultimately led to his shift towards conservative views.

John Anderson was a Scottish philosopher in Sydney University from 1927 to 1958. Anderson was described by Minogue (1976, p. 12) as "the most striking philosophical phenomenon in Australian intellectual history." In his early years after arriving in Australia in 1927, he was a highly active member of the Communist movement (O'Neil, 1979). However, he quickly became disenchanted by the movement's Stalinist posture, although for a while he still supported Trotskyist dissident groups.² Eventually, he also grew disillusioned with the Trotskyists for their call to replace the tyranny of the bourgeoisie with the supposed tyranny of the proletariat. By the early thirties, Anderson had rejected Stalinism, Trotskyism, and Marxism altogether. Anderson's disillusionment in the early thirties led to his shift towards a liberal political outlook movement (Cole, 2009; O'Neil, 1979).

Anderson's emphasis on academic freedom as a cornerstone of the university was another key factor in his shift towards a liberal political outlook. This was due to his realism based on the importance of logic and experience in testing claims about reality, which influenced Minogue's own views (Anderson, 1939). Anderson's realism meant the individual must be critical, and his reality cannot be determined by hypotheses forced upon him by theories or society. As a result,

² For the Stalinist and Leninist struggle see; Dawsey (2018).

academic freedom was central to the pursuit of reality because it was an instrument of implementing criticism on all manners of claims.

Anderson's concern with academic freedom is noted in the University's Free Thought Society, which he founded as a platform for discussing controversial issues and opposing censorship both within the academy and in wider society (Baker, 1962). The society allowed Anderson to speak out against censorship, such as the suppression of views critical of the war and the West's alliance with the Soviet Union.

Anderson's commitment to academic freedom also led him to oppose a religious test for members of the university community (Anderson, 1943). His advocacy for academic freedom and the establishment of the Free Thought Society reflects his firm belief in the significance of freedom of thought and speech, as well as the necessity to resist authoritarian censorship and state intrusion. Anderson believed that a critical attitude and a university free from state influence were crucial to academic life, and that controversy resulting from academic freedom was necessary for a free democratic society (Anderson, 1980).³

Minogue's book, *The Concept of a University* (1974), reflects the influence of Anderson's advocacy for academic freedom and independent universities. In the book, Minogue (1974a) criticised contemporary philosophies of education for being ideologically dominated, arguing that schools adopting political positions threatened their independence and academic freedom. Such political posturing was based on ideological views that often led to censorship of opposing views.

³Minogue cautioned against the dangers of a critical attitude, arguing that it could make students vulnerable to ideology (Coleman, 1996). Furthermore, he charged that Anderson's critical attitude often led him to become addicted to polemics (Minogue, 1996e).

John Anderson's advocacy for academic freedom influenced Minogue's involvement in academic governance at the LSE. Minogue (1987d) delivered a speech to the LSE's Court of Governors, criticising the institution for taking a political stance on apartheid in South Africa in response to a student protest. The protest called for the university to divest from South African companies that supported the regime and resulted in an occupation of the Old Building. During his speech to the LSE's Court of Governors, Minogue criticised the institution's stance against apartheid, arguing that it was not the School's place to take a political stance and that it could damage its academic reputation. While he did not condone apartheid, his concerns centred on preserving the independence of the institution. His opposition was based on the practical implications of such a policy, which could compromise the School's political neutrality and academic freedom. Minogue cautioned that compromising the institution's impartiality could result in it becoming a support institution for political activists.

In his book and involvement in LSE's academic governance, Minogue endorsed Anderson's belief that academic freedom is vital for the success of a university. He shared Anderson's concern that universities were becoming intolerant of non-ideological views and argued that academic inquiry must be free from censorship and ideological bias for a university to thrive (Minogue, 1986d).

Anderson's influence on Minogue is evident in their shared critique of the concept of the servile state. In a 1943 essay, Anderson (2009) criticised collectivism and state dependency, arguing that they would lead to a suppression of political opposition and independent enterprise, resulting in a servile state. Anderson was concerned about the adoption of collectivist policies by countries during the Great Depression and war economy, which he believed would lead to

servility.⁴ This, he argued, represented the decline of liberalism into a protectionist state that drained the vitality of individual life.

Anderson's essay, 'The Servile State', is noticeable because it represented Minogue's first exposure to anti-totalitarian ideas that will dominate his life. Moreover, this is an influence that Minogue will echo in his last book, *The Servile Mind: How Democracy Erodes the Moral Life* (2010), where he criticised contemporary society and the state for moving towards collectivism and democratic authoritarianism. He argued that the individual was becoming dominated by a servile mind, where personal conduct and responsibility were determined by a managerial state.

Minogue's early political outlook shifted from Marxist to Andersonian outlook as he was shaped by the themes of academic freedom and servility. He was influenced by Anderson's thinking until his final year at Sydney University in 1951, when personal problems - such as the death of his mother in 1949 and his difficult relationship with his father, who was described as 'The Black Sheep of the Family' - influenced his decision to leave Australia. Minogue did not want to stay in Australia with his combative father (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021a).

Minogue had a taste for adventure and was inspired by his friends who had left (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021a). Thus, Minogue decided it was time for "a pilgrimage to the Old World, to see what it was like" (Coleman, 1996, para. 25). Minogue had a great affection for the sea, symbolised by his fondness of Joseph Conrad's novels. (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021a). He found a job as a cabin boy on a ship called the *Graigwen*, which took him to London - the city that would shape the rest of his life (Jones, 2017).

⁴ Minogue had read Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* (1944). However, Minogue (1999e, p. 5) considered Hayek's arguments too simplistic, and preferred Anderson's ideas on the question of servility, saying "The experience of servility is something [Hayek] recognises as real, but is not good at analysing."

II: The newest Londoner

On his twenty-first birthday, Kenneth Minogue arrived in London, finding himself in Russell Square waiting for The Youth Hostel Association to open (Jones, 2013). It was a gloomy time as the city was recovering from the war and rationing, which ended in 1954. To make money, Minogue sold stories to publications like *The London Opinion* and *The Daily Star* and worked as a courier for a French travel company based in Le Touquet (Coleman, 1996; Minogue, 2021a). However, he soon realised this was not sustainable and decided to take up a job as a supply teacher for eighteen months (Coleman, 1996).

Contemplating returning to Australia, Minogue wanted something to “take back with me, which for a person of my sort, was a degree” (Coleman, 1996, para. 34). Hence, he applied to a master’s degree from LSE but was turned down because his bachelor’s from Sydney University was a pass degree, not sufficient academically for entry to graduate school (Coleman, 1996). Instead, Minogue enrolled in a Bachelor of Economics evening programme, while continuing to teach during daytime.⁵

In June 1954, Minogue married Valerie Pearson Hallett (*b.* 1931). They had a son named Nicholas (Nick) (*b.* 1955) and a daughter named Eunice (Noonie) (*b.* 1957). During this time, Minogue travelled between his in-laws' house in Wales and London (Minogue, 2021a). According to his son Nick, Minogue was not “a jolly father,” but he felt a keen sense of obligation and duty to his family (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021b). In the same year, Minogue received the Harold Laski

⁵ Minogue was proud and admired this decision to study economics, comparing it to “just as a woman steps back to admire a new hat” (Minogue, 2021a).

Scholarship, which was awarded to the top-performing student (Coleman, 1996).⁶This scholarship allowed him to stop teaching and complete his final year of the program during the daytime.⁷

In his final year as an LSE student, Minogue applied for a temporary assistant lectureship at the University of Exeter, which he obtained.⁸ He spent a year at Exeter, teaching economics to students (Coleman, 1996). Minogue's wife Valerie hated Exeter and so life in the city and the university was difficult for the family, but it gave the family a stable income (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021a; 2021b).⁹ However, Minogue would soon receive an invitation that would have a lasting impact on his life and ideas.

LSE, Oakeshott, and Minogue

In February 1956, Michael Oakeshott offered Minogue a temporary lectureship position at LSE, which he accepted, bringing joy to the Minogue household (Jones, 2013).¹⁰ At the time, Oakeshott was the convenor of the Government Department and a professor of political science (Munro, 2020).¹¹ The family moved to 1 Terrace Villas, Hammersmith, facilitated by the prize money won by his horse Kissing Cup in the Lord Mayor's Cup in Sidney (Minogue, 2021a). LSE became Minogue's academic home, where he spent his entire academic career. He started as a temporary lecturer and eventually rising to full professor.¹² He also became the convenor of the

⁶ Minogue graduated with First-Class Honours from LSE. See; The London School of Economics (1955).

⁷ In addition to the Harold Laski Scholarship, Minogue also received the Gerstenberg Studentship in Economics (Weir, 1955).

⁸ Minogue's initial application to Exeter College was not short-listed. However, by late July 1955, he had reapplied and successfully obtained the position (Minogue, 2021a).

⁹ Despite having a stable income, Minogue (1956) sought additional opportunities beyond Exeter due to the temporary nature of the position, including applying for a Ph.D. program at Trinity College, Cambridge.

¹⁰ Oakeshott (1956) invited Minogue to consider taking over Alan Milne's position as a supernumerary Assistant Lecturer at the LSE for a year. However, Minogue (2021a) hesitated to accept the offer as he had also applied for a PhD program at Cambridge University.

¹¹ Minogue also dedicated some time to teaching in the Economics Department at LSE. See; Henderson (1962).

¹²Minogue's temporary lectureship extended for three years before becoming permanent. He advanced through academic ranks, becoming Senior Lecturer in 1964, Reader in 1971, and eventually Professor of Political Science in 1984 (Caine, 1957; Adams, 1971).

Government department (Coleman, 1996). As Minogue once said, “I came to LSE as an assistant lecturer and the rest, as they say, is history. My history, anyway” (Coleman, 1996, para. 48).

Constant lectures and seminars which influenced many students marked Minogue’s time as an academic at the LSE. Minogue was remembered for his humour, conversations, charm, intelligence, a spirited critical attitude and for being a terrific teacher (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021d; 2021i). Anecdotes sent to Noonie Minogue after his death, noted his kindness, humour and support for students and colleagues at the School, with one adding Minogue “made such a great difference to me” (Minogue, 2021b). As an academic, Minogue was known for his meticulous approach to his work (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021a). He would often write extensive notes, spanning several pages, to capture his thoughts on political events and intellectual ideas. These notes served as valuable resources for his lectures and papers, highlighting his ability to memorise and distil complex arguments.

Minogue's daughter and stepdaughter fondly remembered him as a fearless individual who relished being a contrarian and stirring controversy, traits that reflected the Andersonian spirit within him (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021a; 2021c). This tendency was exemplified by an incident in the eighties when he tried to debate Australian feminist Dale Spender at LSE after she had hosted a women-only seminar, leading to a scuffle outside the seminar room (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021c). A willingness to engage in controversy was a defining characteristic of Minogue's public intellectual career, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

A mystery remains as to why Michael Oakeshott invited him to lecture at LSE. As Minogue stated, “I hardly knew him. I mean I'd been to his lectures, but I certainly didn't know him” (Coleman, 1996, para. 48). However, it seems that Oakeshott was building the history of political thought programme at the time and hiring many of the academics who constituted "the high point

of the study of history of political thought" in the School (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021i). Hence, it is likely that Oakeshott invited Minogue because he was interested in political thought, his independent thinking, and shared Oakeshott's conservative temperament. Additionally, John Donald Bruce Miller, an Australian lecturer at LSE, offered to support Minogue's entry to the institution (Minogue, 2021a). It is possible that the support and influence of Minogue's professional referees from LSE, such as Miller, K.B. Smellie, and Keith Panter-Brick, also played a role in Oakeshott's decision to hire Minogue.

Oakeshott played a significant role in shaping Minogue's intellectual development,¹³ as evidenced by Minogue's initial registration as a PhD student under Oakeshott, focusing on the thought of Edmund Burke (Coleman, 1996).¹⁴ However, Minogue's true interests lay in his work as a lecturer and in writing a novel, which remained unfinished (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021a). Although he did not complete his PhD studies,¹⁵ Minogue and Oakeshott remained close, with Minogue frequently visiting Oakeshott's cottage in Dorset after his retirement. In fact, Oakeshott continued to teach even after retirement, visiting LSE to give the first three lectures of a master's course taught by Minogue (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021e). Furthermore, he often joined the Minogue household for summer vacations (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021a).

This closeness is also illustrated in Minogue's writings, which have an Oakeshottian flavour. Minogue also became the first President of the Michael Oakeshott Association in 2000. As Minogue noted about Oakeshott's influence, "I think what I got from Oakeshott was a sense of

¹³ Minogue's early academic publications shows this influence by Oakeshott. See for example: Minogue (1959).

¹⁴ In 1956, Minogue formally enrolled as a part-time Ph.D. student under the guidance of Michael Oakeshott. His research proposal, titled 'The Function of Poetic Statement in the Political Philosophy of Edmund Burke,' gained approval in 1961 (Henderson, 1956; Mizen, 1961).

¹⁵ Minogue's inability to complete the thesis seems primarily attributed to ongoing academic commitments at LSE, his work on *The Liberal Mind* and *Nationalism*, and Oakeshott's retirement in 1968.

the complexity of the world, and the way in which one set of understandings depended upon earlier understandings and judgments of the meaning of things” (Coleman, 1996, para. 52).

The influence of Oakeshott on Minogue is undeniably significant. In fact, Minogue has been referred to as possibly being “Oakeshott’s ‘chief disciple’” and “Oakeshott’s parrot” (Kremky, Bohmer & Skeffington, 2021, p. 98; Skeffington, 2021, p. 77). There is validity to this claim, as both Oakeshott and Minogue shared a scepticism towards politics that dismissed political reality. Additionally, they both recognised and valued the individualistic disposition of the modern world. The extent of Minogue's affinity for Oakeshott's thought will become more apparent when I delve into a detailed examination of his ideas in the second part of the thesis. However, it is important to note that Minogue considered himself an independent thinker with unique ideas.

Indeed, Minogue emphasised his independence as a thinker and rejected being solely identified as a follower of Oakeshott. This independent streak was evident in his early works. For instance, Minogue's publication on *Nationalism* addressed a subject that Oakeshott never wrote about in detail (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021i). Minogue's public intellectual career as a conservative politics apologist surpassed Oakeshott's influence, who remained in academic isolation. This is exemplified in Oakeshott's lack of public response to the LSE troubles in the sixties, whereas Minogue openly opposed the student protests. Furthermore, Minogue's later intellectual career demonstrated a greater concern with the actual conditions of freedom, as his writings directly addressed contemporary moral, social, and cultural issues. In contrast, Oakeshott maintained a more detached attitude.

Oakeshott significantly influenced Minogue, but it's crucial to also consider the broad impact of the LSE academic community on him. According to Minogue (1995j, p. 22), LSE was established "to train rational administrators who would create a healthy society out of the disease

and poverty of late 19th-century Britain." Despite LSE's rationalist origins, a robust free-market and sceptical counterpoint existed. Minogue (1995j, p. 22) emphasises the importance of this movement, stating, "LSE has contributed most of the firepower to what David Collard, in a Fabian pamphlet of 1968, called 'the New Right'".

The free-market and sceptical movement at LSE, led by Hayek and Robbins, thrived postwar with influential figures like Walters, Paish, and Johnson (Minogue, 1995j). This influence was complemented by thinkers in various departments, notably Popper in Philosophy. Popper's critique of historicism and defence of liberalism, pluralism, and a free society posed a formidable challenge to utopian beliefs. The appointment of Michael Oakeshott as Professor of Political Science, following Laski's tenure, which, according to Minogue (1975f, p. 1), transformed the department into a "hotbed of socialism", holds immense significance. Oakeshott's remaking of the Government department, with new faculty, including Minogue, introduced a specific sceptical view to the study of politics and its implications (Minogue, 1995j).

Minogue's exposure to the academic community at LSE undeniably shaped his perspectives. Initially studying economics at LSE, he immersed himself in the free-market tradition, reading and studying under influential thinkers. This solidified Minogue's affinity for the free market and equipped him to intellectually engage with and publicly advocate for free-market economics. Moreover, students exposed to this tradition, such as Arthur Seldon, co-founder of the Institute of Economic Affairs, emerged as noteworthy advocates in their own right. Minogue's engagement within this circle not only shaped his own perspectives but also paved the way for academic and professional opportunities later in his career.

Secondly, Minogue co-existed with LSE faculty who belonged to what Aurelian Craiutu (2016) called the faces of moderation, thinkers with diverse intellectual backgrounds and

commitments, who shared an appreciation for political moderation. This spirit of moderation was rooted in open conversation and the virtues of civility, the opposite of the dogmatism of ideology. While Craiutu's (2016) heroes of moderation did not feature LSE members Popper and Hayek, possibly owing to their perceived dogmatic defence of a free society, these thinkers, alongside Oakeshott, played integral roles in fostering an intellectually nurturing environment at the School. This environment allowed Minogue to refine his belief in old-fashioned civility and the virtues of conversation, as well as his opposition to ideological fanaticism.

III: Dissecting the ideologies of Liberalism and Nationalism

In tracing Kenneth Minogue's intellectual development, I highlighted his initial exposure to anti-totalitarian politics through the influence of John Anderson. Minogue's ideas were further shaped by Michael Oakeshott's critique of rationalism and emphasis on the importance of individualism over a state-imposed vision of a perfect society. As a result, Minogue's early scholarly works reflected his concerns regarding the totalitarian tendencies of ideology, which he believed posed a threat to the Western way of life.¹⁶ This culminated in the publication of two significant books, *The Liberal Mind* (1963) and *Nationalism* (1967), where Minogue articulated his concerns and ideas.

The Liberal Mind

Upon its publication, *The Liberal Mind* propelled Minogue to fame among academic and conservative circles. The book has since become a conservative classic. In a review by *The New Yorker*, it was praised as “a rare exercise of intelligence applied to social theory” (*The New Yorker*, 1964, p. 126). The book delves into the principles of liberalism, both classical and modern,

¹⁶ Some examples of this early work; Minogue (1959; 1961a; 1962).

prevalent in Western societies. In it, Minogue warns against the salvationism promoted by modern liberalism. This book marks the apex of his early intellectual formation.

The book originated from Minogue's 1960 article, 'The British Left: Innocent Part of the Guilty Whole'. Minogue (1960) asserted that the British Left was primarily concerned with making moral gestures, using protests, meetings, and resolutions as a means to combat oppression both domestically and internationally. However, such gestures often led to a sense of moral superiority, as the Left laid claim to being the only sympathisers for the oppressed and underprivileged members of society.

The article caught the attention of John Cullen (1960a), the general editor of Methuen, who wrote to Minogue inquiring if he was interested in writing further on the subject. Initially, Minogue had aspirations of publishing a novel. However, after receiving a critical review of the draft, Methuen ultimately decided against Minogue's manuscript (Cullen, 1960b). Instead, Methuen approached Minogue and requested that he write about the merger of *The New Statesman* and *The Nation* magazines and their shift to the political left under the leadership of Kingsley Martin. However, Minogue declined this proposal, stating that he preferred to author a book on Liberalism (Coleman, 1996).¹⁷

The book adopted a critical stance towards the post-war consensus in the Western World, which promoted state intervention in the economy, Keynesian economics, and the expansion of the welfare state. Minogue drew on his personal experience of living in Britain during the 'One Nation' administrations of Churchill, Eden, and Macmillan, which implemented these policies. During this period, both Conservative and Labour governments prioritised the reduction of

¹⁷ Originally, Minogue titled his manuscript on Liberalism as 'The Liberal Pattern'. However, John Cullen (1962) suggested 'The Liberal Mind' as a better title.

suffering in society. To Minogue, this political approach signalled a departure from the liberal tradition of prioritising individual freedom to an ideological liberalism that emphasised the salvation of society. This new form of liberalism established a prevailing morality in the Western World, where the state and politicians were responsible for eradicating suffering and victimhood from society. Paradoxically, Minogue believed, this pursuit of eliminating suffering through state coercion resulted in modern liberalism becoming illiberal and a threat to individual freedom.

Minogue's debut book offers an analysis of the modern Western World and liberalism, which he characterises as the first modern ideology (Jones, 2013). He argues that modern liberalism is driven by situations of suffering, which reduce politics to a moral battleground between oppressors and the oppressed (Minogue, 2001b). According to Minogue (2001b, p. 12), this perspective is politically alluring because it fosters “a moral and political consensus which unites virtually all of us.” It should be noted that Minogue does not argue against every effort to alleviate suffering. For instance, he acknowledges the importance of the National Health Service (NHS) in Britain, which provides essential care for those experiencing health problems.¹⁸ Minogue's critique is primarily aimed at liberalism's attempt to solve all of society's problems through state intervention.

Minogue cautions that the liberal mind is predisposed to identifying victims to rescue until all suffering is eradicated. Consequently, every instance of victimhood in society becomes a political issue that demands a state solution. This pursuit of a perfect society results in illiberal policies that threaten human freedom, such as removing the role of civil society in addressing social and moral problems arising from state action (Minogue, 2001b). According to Minogue,

¹⁸ Minogue (2004c) commended the NHS as an embodiment of the moral value of caring for one another. Nonetheless, he was excessively critical of the managerial and centralizing administration of the NHS.

liberalism became ideological in its attempt to eliminate suffering through grand and humanistic state-led projects.

The arguments presented in the book offer an opportunity to examine Minogue's alignment with the tradition of Cold War Liberalism that arose in the post-World War II era. This tradition emerged as a response to the ongoing threats posed by totalitarianism and the imperative to safeguard liberal values and individual freedoms (Cherniss, 2019). Cold War Liberalism, however, is not a uniform doctrine but rather an intellectual disposition shared by thinkers such as Raymond Aron and Karl Popper (Müller, 2008). This shared sentiment can be described as the 'Liberalism of fear', as Judith Shklar (2013) termed it, which prioritises the avoidance of the worst of grand ideological projects. While Minogue shares the scepticism towards utopian endeavours, not all aspects of Shklar's framework apply to him. Despite growing more sombre in his later years, Minogue does not adopt a pessimistic outlook. Additionally, Shklar's (2013) argument that government poses the primary threat to individual liberty is too narrow to be applied to Minogue's (2001b) case, as he criticises liberalism in *The Liberal Mind* for its antagonism towards authority.

Even though the book predates the academic formulation of Cold War Liberalism, it notably underscores Minogue's strong alignment with its principles and concepts. Firstly, his scepticism towards any attempts to utilise government to impose a singular order aligns with the preservation of individualism. This critical stance leads him to oppose totalitarianism and collectivism. Secondly, he recognises and embraces the diverse nature of modern society, which has fostered individualism. Thirdly, Minogue acknowledges the role of government in reducing social suffering, albeit with a sceptic outlook at attempts to maximise government intervention. Fourthly, he places a significant emphasis on individual liberty within the framework of the rule of law, which he considers a defining characteristic of the Western tradition (Minogue, 2001b).

These viewpoints undoubtedly align Minogue with the anti-totalitarianism espoused by Cold War Liberals such as Popper, Hayek, and Berlin (O'Sullivan, 2003). Minogue's affinity for Cold War Liberalism and his critique of the salvationist tendencies of liberalism in the *Liberal Mind* must be seen as part of a broader intellectual discourse on the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of liberalism during the Cold War. However, significant divergences exist between Minogue and Cold War Liberals.

Firstly, Minogue challenges the 'End of ideology' thesis advocated by Cold War Liberals such as Raymond Aron. Aron (1962) argued that Europe's successful mixed economics approach to post-war reconstruction, along with the post-Stalin Soviet Union, had created conditions for the decline of ideological politics. In contrast, Minogue argues (2001b) that modern liberalism's pursuit of salvation necessitates an all-encompassing project, rendering it an ideological revolutionary movement that prioritises the state over the individual in solving societal problems. Consequently, ideology has not ended but is manifested in modern liberalism's quest for a new salvationist doctrine that supersedes the Western tradition of freedom.

The second divergence is in the idea of freedom advocated by figures like Isaiah Berlin. Berlin (2002) popularised the distinction between negative liberty (absence of constraints imposed by others) and positive liberty (power to achieve desired ends). Berlin cautioned against the potential abuse of positive liberty, as it can often lead to coercion and tyranny in the pursuit of an idealised self-realisation. While Berlin did not completely reject positive liberty, he expressed a preference for negative freedom as a safeguard against such risks.

Minogue disagreed with Berlin's negative freedom, deeming it insufficient for Western liberty (Minogue, 2017). According to Minogue (1983c, p. 207), true freedom entails "constructing a social order out of laws which leave people free, in a significant sense, to make their own

decisions.” Minogue stressed the importance of the rule of law in a civil association, where agreed-upon rules can be modified. Minogue (2017) contended freedom requires subscription to the rule of law and the exercise of individual choice within the bounds of moral integrity and the established rules of society. This emphasis on positive virtue directly challenges Isaiah Berlin's conception of negative freedom. Minogue (1995b) argued that freedom requires self-mastery to live in accordance with the law and moral life.

Moreover, Minogue's emphasis on the rule of law challenges Berlin's argument that laws inherently limit individual freedom. For Minogue, the law is legitimately coercive when it is made according to an authoritative process that equally binds all members of the community. While the law is coercive and carries sanctions for non-subscription, these penalties are not violations of freedom. They are applied for failing to observe the relevant adverbial conditions of action attached to civil rules. According to Minogue, freedom is only violated when individuals are prevented from pursuing their own ends. When individuals are punished for breaking a particular law, it is typically because their action disregarded the potential consequences for others, such as in the case of speeding while driving. However, the law does not tell individuals where to go or even to drive in the first place, so justice in such cases does not infringe on freedom.

The final disagreement between Minogue and Cold War Liberals pertains to their views on the role of tradition. While Cold War Liberals assign tradition an instrumental role, Minogue diverges from this perspective. For instance, Popper (1962) develops a theory of tradition that assesses critically their effectiveness in achieving specific goals. Similarly, Hayek (1988) regards tradition in terms of its contribution to the prosperity of a free society. While Minogue acknowledges the value of practices in fostering a free society, he rejects the instrumental role

ascribed to them by Popper and Hayek. According to Minogue (1986c), traditions are not ends-oriented; rather, their significance lies in what they reveal about the individual's concrete identity.

The Liberal Mind, while emphasising Minogue's intellectual indebtedness to Oakeshott (Tsui, 2021), also incorporates references to Anderson, Hobbes, and Montesquieu, whose ideas he consistently draws upon throughout his career. One such idea is the decline of Classical Liberalism in favour of salvationism, a concept he extracts from the works of Anderson and Oakeshott. Additionally, he embraces the Oakeshottian theme of distinguishing between desire as a rational passion and impulse as an irrational passion (Tsui, 2021). Thirdly, Minogue also subscribes to the idea that the moral life is a way of living nurtured by practice, which is central to Western civilisation (Tsui, 2021). The idea of the moral life is complemented by the role of honour in the individual's deliberation of their conduct, influenced by Montesquieu's thinking. Furthermore, he uses the language of Montesquieu and Anderson, employing terms such as 'despotism' and 'servile' to articulate his concerns regarding the state of freedom in the Western world and the encroachment of political discourse by ideological language (Minogue, 2001b).

Additionally, as highlighted by Tsui (2021), the book highlights Minogue's evolving perspective on Oakeshott's early idealist philosophical framework. Minogue (1959) initially demonstrated a certain sympathy for idealist beliefs in the absolute, this book reflects his growing independence, scepticism, and view of politics. Moreover, this shifting attitude demonstrates that, despite Oakeshott's influence on him, Anderson's critique of the idealist tradition continued to shape Minogue's thinking.

Steven Lukes' (1964) review of the book noted that Minogue avoided engaging with specific theories or arguments but acknowledged that they had valuable insights. This could be attributed to Minogue's early stage of intellectual development. It was not until the publication of

Oakeshott's book *On Human Conduct* in 1975 that Minogue was able to draw fully from Oakeshott and refine his own ideas (Tsui, 2021). Nonetheless, Minogue's hesitancy to extend his ideas to modern political discussions could mirror his allegiance to Oakeshott's inclination to abstain from engaging in the contemporary political debates of his era.

The book was published in 1963, prior to the revolutions and ideologies that emerged in the late sixties. As Minogue (2001b, p. 6) noted, when “The Liberal Mind appeared, the young and the radical in the Western world were in a restive condition.” However, the book was on course to become a critique of such events, with Minogue becoming a prominent public intellectual and social critic in the latter years of his life. Thus, arising within him was “a sort of critical, somewhat anti-establishment kind of Realist” attitude in an ideologically dominated world (Coleman, 1996, para. 16).

Nationalism

Nationalism, published in 1967, marked Minogue's second book. Although he once remarked that “I did it largely because I wanted to master that field,” it has been described as Minogue’s “least impressive work” (Coleman, 1996, para. 80; Rodriguez Burgos, 2021e). Nonetheless, the book stands as one of the most powerful and substantial critiques of nationalism in modern times (Miller, 1995). It displays Minogue's independence from Oakeshott, who did not extensively explore the subject. Nevertheless, Oakeshottian themes are discernible in the book, exemplified by the dismissal of politics attributed to nationalism's insistence on presenting an unassailable truth within political activity (Minogue, 1967c). Moreover, the book also underscores the substantial impact of Elie Kedourie on Minogue's thought on the subject (Coleman, 1996).

Kedourie's book *Nationalism* (1960) made a significant contribution to the study of this concept. Kedourie (1961) defined nationalism as the belief that humanity is inherently divided into nations, each with distinct characteristics, and that national self-government is the only legitimate form of governance. He emphasised the historical context of nationalism, which emerged in 19th-century Europe in response to the universalism of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment.

Kedourie (1961) developed a theory of nationalism, contending that the French Revolution and the Enlightenment fostered the notion that individuals and communities could freely secede from one state to join another. He argued that philosophical ideas, such as Kant's defence of individual moral autonomy, were exploited or misinterpreted, leading to the emergence of nationalism as a form of collective moral autonomy or self-determination. Kedourie thus criticised nationalism as the leading ideology of modernity, drawing on Burke's and Oakeshott's scepticism towards unbridled change and the modern world that had arisen from it.

The book contended that the origins of nationalist ideology can be traced back to Enlightenment concepts such as self-determination and the dynamics between the individual and the state (Kedourie, 1961). These notions catalysed the French Revolution and the subsequent era of strife, culminating in the remapping of Europe's borders during the Congress of Vienna in 1815.¹⁹ The convergence of Enlightenment ideals, the aftermath of the French Revolution, and the outcomes of the Vienna Congress forged the two primary grievances that steered nationalist thought and movements. Firstly, it was the discontent with imposed monarchical regimes lacking consent, and secondly, the division of nationally homogenous territories.

¹⁹ For some insight about the Congress of Vienna see, Jarrett (2016).

According to Kedourie (1961), nationalism is a political ideology that seeks to equate the will of the individual with that of the nation. Nationalist ideologues require both internal and external obedience to maintain their grip on power. As such, nationalist ideology becomes a rhetorical and political instrument that aims to impose a single moral standard, culture, or conception of the good by using state coercion. Nationalism seeks to establish a cohesive society in which the will and moral identity of the individual are determined by the ideologues who control the nation.

The impact of Kedourie's scholarship is evident in Minogue's analysis of nationalism. Both authors commence their respective works with a quotation from W.B. Yeats. Like Kedourie, Minogue (1967c; 1967d; 2003b) maintains that nationalism is a modern phenomenon with its intellectual roots in the French Revolution and German unification. Building upon his critique of ideological grievances in *The Liberal Mind*, Minogue concurs with Kedourie that grievance is central to nationalist thinking. Furthermore, Minogue's (1967c) analysis, as outlined in his work, resonates with Kedourie's critique of nationalism, which advocates modernisation as essential for overcoming oppression.

Minogue (1967c, p. 25) posits that nationalism is a “political movement depending on a feeling of collective grievance against foreigners”. He outlines a three-stage process that guides this ideology. The first stage, which Minogue terms ‘stirrings’, occurs when a national community believes that it is living under an oppressive system. During this stage, nationalist movements typically express two grievances that lead them to conclude that they are under an oppressive system. These two grievances, as Kedourie also argued, are foreign rule and the division of peoples that should be politically and territorially united.

The second stage in this process is the 'struggle for independence', which has a clear objective: to gain recognition as an independent nation and join the international community (Minogue, 1967c). During this stage, two types of struggles may ensue: independence can be achieved either through violent means or political processes. The last stage of nationalism, Minogue argues, is consolidation. In this last stage, the leaders of the newly independent countries begin the process of consolidating the new nation. This process may involve economic development or securing a cohesive and genuine community based on race, culture, religion, and language.

Minogue (2018), influenced by Kedourie, argues that the last stage of nationalism, is dangerous as it often leads to the creation of a totalitarian system. Nationalists use the power of the state to maintain the political and cultural unity of the newly emerging nation, leading to hostility towards pluralism, which is seen as a threat to national unity. Nationalists reject pluralism as individual wills can become destructive to their project. Instead, they see a strong communal bias fostering the will of the nation as necessary for national unity. Minogue (1974b) highlights the threat of nationalism to individual freedom, stating that nationalist ideas are damaging to individualism. Furthermore, nationalists seek external or internal oppressors to continue their politics of grievances and perpetuate their control over the new independent state.

Ernest Gellner is credited by Minogue with influencing his work on nationalism (Coleman, 1996). Gellner was part of the modernist and sociological tradition, which posits that nationalism emerged during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because of the modernisation process. Gellner's (1997) definition of nationalism was that it is a principle that advocates for a congruence between the political and national unit. He presented a three-phase theory of human progress in which humanity progressed from pre-agrarian to agrarian and then to industrial societies. In the

pre-agrarian phase, nationalism would not have been relevant as individuals were stateless. In the agrarian phase, rulers did not require individuals to share a common culture or language (O'Leary, 1997). Nationalism emerged during the industrial phase of history as a crucial means of social cohesion for communities (O'Leary, 1997). It was vital to the success of industrial societies, which required uniform languages, cultures, norms, and traditions (Gellner, 1997). Consequently, national intellectuals and states used cultural institutions and education to assimilate individuals. Despite this, Gellner did not agree with Kedourie's theory and criticised it by stating that treating nationalism as a contingent and avoidable aberration would be disastrous. He believed that treating nationalism as a mere by-product of European thought would be a mistake.

Gellner (1997) defended Kant's philosophy by asserting that there was a link between individual and national self-determination. He argued that nationalists rejected Kant's ideas as they preferred attachment to culture and territory over individualism. Therefore, Kant's ideas were not the basis for nationalism's development, unlike Kedourie suggested, instead, nationalists went beyond Kant's doctrine of the autonomy of the will and drew significant political conclusions from it.

In an interview, Minogue stated that Gellner was a major influence on his book's development and writing (Coleman, 1996). Gellner's influence on Minogue is centred on two key points: first, that nationalism is a modern phenomenon, and second, that nationalism is an aggressive movement that seeks to replace the shared history of nations within the modern state with an abstract conception of the nation. Nevertheless, Minogue disagreed with Gellner's perspective that nationalism was a sociological phenomenon driven by the industrialisation of modern states. Instead, he pointed out that industrialisation in countries like Britain did not lead to the emergence of nationalist movements driven by grievances (Minogue, 1996c). Moreover,

Minogue (1967c) rejected Gellner's view that nationalism arose from a process of social and economic transformation, as he believed that it was influenced by specific historical conditions and ideas. Minogue argued that nationalism should be analysed by focusing on particular historical contexts, instead of using a general theory of history, as Gellner proposed. Hence, Minogue crediting Gellner as a major influence on the book could be seen as a bit of a stretch.

Minogue's book on nationalism was published during a period of decolonisation in Britain, which was marked by Harold Macmillan's famous 'Wind of Change' speech.²⁰ Decolonisation had slowed during the Conservative governments of Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden in the early fifties. However, Macmillan's government and the subsequent Labour government under Harold Wilson in the sixties saw a renewed push towards decolonisation, with many African colonies such as Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania granted independence.²¹

Elie Kedourie (2004) strongly criticised Britain's foreign policy, particularly its support for Arab nationalism. Kedourie's influence on Minogue means that *Nationalism* must also be situated within the contours of a wider critique of British foreign policy which fanned the flames of nationalism in its drive to grant independence to its colonies ever since Britain emerged from the Second World War in no position politically, economically, and military to stop the colonies from gaining independence.

An earlier recounted anecdote about Minogue's early support for the British Empire in school and him being a child of the Empire can be seen as an extension of his fierce critique of nationalism in later years. *Nationalism* can be seen as a response to the debates within the

²⁰ Minogue (ca1962, p. 2) was critical of Macmillan writing, "[He is] a tory radical, and in argument and thought, his position was close to that of many a liberal and socialist".

²¹ For more details on Macmillan's decolonisation policy see; Hemming (1996).

Conservative party about its policies of decolonisation which led to the founding of the anti-Tory left, Conservative Monday Club.²² Minogue (1967c) did not oppose decolonisation, as he believed in the principle of granting freedom to colonial dependencies. However, he critiqued the liberal belief that decolonisation was a form of ‘good nationalism’ responding to nationalist demands for freedom. Furthermore, Minogue (1960) firmly rejected the liberal sense of guilt that influenced their endorsement of nationalist movements. He viewed such support for decolonisation a “direct enemy of conservative politics” (Minogue, 1967c, p. 135).

Nationalism also underscores a divergence between Minogue and Cold War Liberals regarding their perspectives on nationalism. Cold War Liberals exhibited a nuanced understanding of nationalism. For instance, Isaiah Berlin (2013a), entertained the possibility of a liberal nationalism that embraced individual yearnings for belonging and human diversity. While, other Cold War Liberals, such as Popper, acknowledged the potential dangers of nationalism in fostering totalitarianism (Vincent, 2005). The point of divergence with Minogue (1967c) is the idea of a positive liberal nationalism since he dismissed the notion of doctrinal coherence between liberalism and nationalism, perceiving the latter as a distinct style of politics. Moreover, Minogue's interpretation of Johann Gottfried Herder and his influence on nationalist thinking deviates from Berlin's sympathetic interpretation. Minogue contends that Herder's emphasis on linguistic nationalism should not serve as the sole criterion for statehood. Additionally, Minogue warns of the revolutionary sentiments that can arise from the political implications of Herder's ideas.

Another significant point of divergence between Cold War Liberals and Minogue lies in their perspectives on decolonisation. Cold War Liberals supported gradual decolonisation based

²² For details on these debates see; Copping (1972).

on *realpolitik* considerations and the expectation that the newly independent states would align with the capitalist West (Hacohen, 2009). In contrast, Minogue (1998a) regarded such beliefs as naive, arguing that the politics of anti-colonial movements were driven by salvationist aspirations. He believed it was unrealistic to expect these new states to align with the capitalist bloc. Furthermore, Minogue (1967c; 1967d) contented that the breakup of multinational and colonial empires and the emergence of new states and international organisations did not lead to the prosperous and manageable world envisioned by Liberal idealists.

This critique from Minogue resonates with Elie Kedourie's argument that liberal idealism has contributed to international disorder. Kedourie (1984) criticised the abandonment of balance of power politics in favour of self-determination, influenced by international institutions like the League of Nations. Additionally, Kedourie (1984; 1989) critiqued American foreign policy for dismantling the empires of its allies and prioritising the United Nations and its ideals. Similarly, Minogue (2000b) highlights the shortcomings of international organisations such as the United Nations in achieving perpetual peace. Instead, he advocates for a realist approach to foreign policy that prioritises national interests over idealistic projects.

Conclusion

This chapter offers valuable insights into Minogue's early life, starting with the circumstances that led to his eventual settlement in Australia and his studies at Sydney University. During his time at Sydney University, Minogue's initial Marxist sympathies waned through his involvement in student journalism at *Heresy* and the influence of John Anderson. The impact of John Anderson on Minogue's intellectual development is noteworthy as it fostered a critical and sceptical mindset that would shape his concerns regarding themes of servility and academic inquiry

within the university. It also marked Minogue's first exposure to anti-totalitarian ideas, which would continue to occupy his thoughts throughout his life.

In the subsequent section, the chapter delves into Minogue's formative years in Britain, highlighting the challenges he faced that ultimately led him to pursue studies at the LSE. His academic accomplishments at LSE opened doors for him, eventually leading to a position as a lecturer at Exeter and later joining the staff of the Government department at LSE. The chapter explores the possible factors that prompted Oakeshott to invite Minogue to lecture at LSE and the qualities that made him a valuable asset within academia. Additionally, it examines the personal relationship between Oakeshott and Minogue, shedding light on their early connections, shared interests, and areas of divergence.

The chapter concludes by delving into Minogue's first two published books. *The Liberal Mind* focuses on the inclination of liberalism towards salvationist tendencies prevalent in Western political discourse. The book explores themes that position Minogue as closely aligned with Cold War Liberalism, emphasising his appreciation for the modern West, individualism, pluralism, and a sceptical approach to grand ideological projects. As a result, the book establishes Minogue as an active contributor to the broader realm of anti-totalitarian literature. However, the distinctive character of Minogue's anti-totalitarianism is shown, as he diverges from Cold War Liberals on topics such as freedom, tradition, and the notion of an 'End of Ideology'.

The publication of *Nationalism* demonstrates the impact of Minogue's LSE colleague, particularly Elie Kedourie, on shaping his critique of nationalism as an ideology driven by grievances and posing a threat to individual freedom. Kedourie's influence is instrumental in contextualising Minogue's contribution to the study of nationalism, as an indirect critique of the decolonisation process favoured by British foreign policy. While Minogue did not oppose

decolonisation per se, he remained critical of liberal idealist support for what they deemed as ‘good nationalism’, as well as their faith in international organisations and their ability to establish a stable international order.

Minogue's initial significant works, *The Liberal Mind* and *Nationalism*, demonstrate his deep understanding of the prominent themes within the discourse against totalitarianism. However, these works do not directly address the political events of the time. Minogue's early intellectual development and his adherence to Oakeshott's perspective on the academic role may have contributed to this lack of engagement with contemporary politics. As a result, Minogue's recognition remained limited to a select group of conservative thinkers and academics. It was through his response to the events at the LSE in the sixties that Minogue gained a broader audience and wider recognition.

Chapter II

The Conservative Warrior: The public intellectual life of Kenneth Minogue

I devoted the first chapter of this thesis to Kenneth Minogue's early life, focusing on aspects of his time in New Zealand, Australia, and Britain. I emphasised the influence of several thinkers such as Michael Oakeshott, Elie Kedourie, and John Anderson in the development of Minogue's thinking and career. These thinkers provided Minogue with the intellectual bearings for the development of his own thought, leading to the publications of his first two major books, *The Liberal Mind* and *Nationalism*.

Minogue's book publications enhanced his recognition within the academic community both in London and internationally. His academic journey followed the conventional path, involving administrative and academic responsibilities at the LSE, active participation in conferences, and the publication of scholarly papers. However, Minogue's subsequent career decisions and his inclination towards independent thinking diverged from the anticipated trajectory of an academic, distinguishing him from his colleagues and intellectual influences who generally preferred to remain detached from public attention and media exposure.

Minogue's unique trajectory intertwined his academic vocation with that of a public intellectual, extending across Britain, the United States, and Australia. Embracing this role, Minogue emerged as a proponent for unbiased universities, championed the moral underpinnings of the Thatcherite revolution, and gained prominence within Australia's political and intellectual realms. This chapter aims to trace Minogue's evolution from an academic at LSE to a public

intellectual advocating conservative political principle during the period spanning from the late sixties to the early nineties. It centres around three pivotal events that shaped this transformation: the turmoil at LSE between 1966 and 1969, the shortcomings of the Heath government (1970-1974), and the ascent of Thatcherism in Britain.

The chapter commences by examining the challenges that arose at LSE during the late sixties, during which Minogue, as a faculty member, directly witnessed the unfolding events surrounding student protests. It will emphasise Minogue's emergence in the public sphere, vehemently opposing the protests and asserting that they posed a detriment to the institution. The chapter will delve into Minogue's noteworthy contributions to the discussions on governance at LSE and the student protests, which ultimately prompted him to publish his book, *The Concept of a University* (1974), wherein he delved into the idea and mission of a university. The section concludes by exploring Minogue's active role within LSE and his gloom outlook regarding the state of the institution following his retirement.

Next, I examine the failure of Ted Heath's conservative government in the early seventies as the second factor behind Minogue's transformation. This setback propelled Minogue into engaging with intellectual salons and conservative organisations, where he actively participated and made substantial contributions to conservative thought and politics. Additionally, this section highlights Minogue's growing involvement with domestic and international organisations, including the Heritage Foundation and the Mont Pelerin Society.

Minogue's active engagement as a public intellectual resulted in a burgeoning public profile in Australia. This section will focus on his noteworthy contributions to various Australian think tanks, including The Centre for Independent Studies and the Adelaide Review. Furthermore, it will highlight Minogue's influential presence and enduring legacy within Australian intellectual circles.

The increasing profile in Australia also coincided with the rise of Margaret Thatcher to the leadership of the Conservative party and premiership of the United Kingdom. This last section focuses on Minogue's role during the zenith of Thatcherism, and his relationship with Lady Thatcher and the Centre for Policy Studies. Furthermore, I will explore Minogue's moral defence of Thatcher's policies, as symbolising the traditional British way of life.

I: Minogue and the troubles at LSE

The LSE troubles marked a pivotal moment in the history of higher education in Britain as it marked the first significant student uprising (Gould, 1970). Occurring between 1966 and 1969, this period coincided with Minogue's nine-year tenure at the School, where he held the position of Senior Lecturer.¹As an academic at LSE, Minogue bore witness to the various incidents and protests that ultimately led to the temporary closure of the institution. The repercussions of these events profoundly affected Minogue, serving as a catalyst for his transformation into a public figure and prompting him to assume a more active role in the School's governance structures.²

The origin of the troubles at LSE was the appointment of Sir Walter Adams as the director of the School.³ The motive for the student protests, which involved tactics such as strikes, sit-ins and occupation of School buildings, was Adams' role as principal of the University College of Rhodesia and his lack of opposition to Rhodesia's attempt to preserve white minority rule through a unilateral declaration of independence from Britain (Donnelly, 2019). However, the protesters broadened their demands to opposing the Vietnam war and expanding student involvement in the

¹ In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Minogue briefly considered a broadcasting career with the BBC due to concerns about his household's financial stability (Gregory, 1958; Wilshin, 1960; Minogue, 2021a).

² For a comprehensive history of this event see; Kidd (1969).

³ For more information on the life of Sir Walter Adams and his time at LSE see; Donnelly (2018).

running of institutions of higher education, two issues that were central topics of debate during the counterculture of the sixties.⁴

Minogue perceived the protests, which resulted in a temporary school closure, as detrimental to LSE.⁵ As a result, he actively engaged in countering the protests both within the School and in the court of public opinion. Conversely, although his colleagues and intellectual influences, such as Kedourie and Oakeshott, shared opposition to the student demands, they generally refrained from public involvement (Coleman, 1996). Minogue humorously summarised his position and engagement, stating, “there was no doubt that I was on the anti-student militant side, which was totally relaxing” (Coleman, 1996, para. 91).

Minogue initially engaged in the School's written opinion circles, expressing his opposition to one of the demands put forth by student protesters: the expansion of student involvement in the administration and governance of LSE. A notable instance of this was his response to an article titled ‘The Machinery of Government’ by John Griffiths in the student newspaper, *the Beaver*. In his letter, Minogue (1968a) contended that student politics and the School's governance were not compatible. He argued that students lacked specific qualifications or experience that would warrant their involvement in the management of the institution. Additionally, as most students only remained at the School for a relatively brief period of three to four years, Minogue concluded that

⁴ Minogue (1966a) supported the American and Australian strategy of intervening in Vietnam, as exemplified by his detailed rejection of a request to sign an anti-Vietnam war petition.

⁵ Minogue (1967f, para. 2) publicly decried the troubles at LSE. However, privately he enjoyed being in the conservative battle lines writing to Kenneth Waltz that the troubles were “all great fun”. Minogue (1967e, p. 1) wrote a satire song about student protesters titled “The Aldwych Ballad” to the tune of “Have you seen the muffin man”. An example of a verse, “Oh I have joined LSE, The LEA will pay for me and I will go, with a ‘Ho Ho Ho’, for Ho Chi Minh and Liberty”.

their interests would primarily revolve around short-term personal gains rather than the long-term welfare of the School.

Minogue's opposition to the protests within the School was also extrapolated to the wider public sphere by writing a memorandum to the Select Committee on Education and Science of the House of Commons. In the memorandum, Minogue (1969a) gave an account of the causes of the student militancy and the actions of the management of the School. Minogue argued ideological belief caused the student militancy against universities stemming from the students' conviction that these institutions were integral parts of a modern oppressive society. The idea behind the students' arguments was that universities, rather than being agents of emancipation and critical analysis of society, were actually guardians of the status quo.⁶

Examples of his increasing public presence included writing letters to newspapers opposing the riots and his regular column for *The Times Higher Education Supplement* from 1975 to 1976.⁷ Additionally, Minogue (1967a) offered written analysis to *The Daily Telegraph*, where he contended that the challenges confronting British universities stemmed from the misguided notion that these institutions should be responsible for solving all of society's problems. In another article, Minogue (1969c) cautioned against the distinction between ideological education promoted by the protesters and academic education. According to Minogue, this disparity transformed higher education into a tool for ideological totalising endeavours.

Minogue's dissent towards the protests and his perspectives on higher education institutions and academic freedom motivated him to author a book addressing these subjects (Coleman, 1996).

⁶ Minogue (1968b, p. 1) delineated the characteristic of these students' protesters as, "a fanatical high-mindedness which makes them the heirs of the Anabaptists and the Jacobins."

⁷ Some examples of his writings; Minogue (1968b; 1975d; 1975e).

This marked the inception of his work titled *The Concept of a University* (1974), which delved into the notion and essence of a university.

Building upon his earlier reflections on the challenges at LSE, particularly his memorandum to the House of Commons education select committee, the book posits that to maintain its vibrancy, a university must function as an autonomous hub for scholarly research (Minogue, 1974a). Nonetheless, Minogue observes two pressing issues jeopardising universities. Firstly, there is a tendency for universities to adopt political stances, thereby compromising their political impartiality. Secondly, they risk becoming instruments manipulated by ideologues who exploit academia as a means to advance overarching transformative policies. Consequently, universities are no longer solely dedicated to academic exploration, but rather prioritise the practical implications such exploration may have for businesses, industries, ideological factions, and government bodies.

Minogue (1974a, p. 203) proposes a solution to this issue by defining the university as an institution dedicated to the "disinterested pursuit of truth". Academic inquiry is "undertaken for the sake of engaging in them, not for achieving anything extrinsic to them" (Minogue, 1974a, p. 189). Therefore, for the university to flourish, it must refrain from adopting a social role. Rather, the emphasis should be placed on the disinterested pursuit of truth, devoid of any teleological aims.

Edward Penn's (1974, p. 72) review of the book stated that Minogue's intellectual exercise in the book was "an uncomfortable and unproductive exercise", adding further that the book offers "so much rhetoric and so little thoughtful analysis of alternative positions". Penn's review suggests that Minogue's scholarly work in the book merely reiterates arguments and rhetoric previously employed against student protesters at LSE. As a result, Penn concluded, Minogue's intellectual

exercise lacks a sustained engagement with serious scholarly exploration of the concept of a university.

Penn (1974) argues that a university's purpose, as solely focused on academic inquiry and the pursuit of truth, often overlooks the possibility of other objectives. Penn's critique counters Minogue's viewpoint, highlighting its overly narrow nature and its potential to hinder universities from engaging in research aimed at addressing societal challenges, including health, economic, and policy issues. Additionally, Minogue fails to recognise that the aspiration to contribute to society itself serves as a motivation for academic research and discovery. Penn acknowledged Minogue's valid concern regarding universities succumbing to societal pressures at the expense of academic inquiry. In today's world, universities tend to prioritise ideological objectives over the pursuit of truth. Nonetheless, Minogue's perspective oversimplified the issue, failing to recognise the importance of exploring the nuances within the grey areas that demand our attention.

Minogue's concerns about the riots and the importance of the university led to a more active institutional life and the assumption of administrative duties at the LSE. In the early seventies, he became Dean of undergraduate studies (1971–1974), in the eighties convenor of the Government department (1987–1990) and an active member of the academic board (Jones, 2017). However, Minogue (ca1980s, para. 2) described administrative duties as “pretty corrupting for thinking men, who really ought to be cultivating leisure and solitude”. His activities within the confines of the School also included his regular contribution to the LSE student newspaper *The Beaver*.⁸ These contributions mostly criticised its left-wing political writings and editorial stance,

⁸ See for example; Minogue (1974c; 1977a).

leading Minogue (1974d, para. 3) to disparage the student paper as “full of pretty deplorable stuff”.⁹

Throughout his career, Minogue's interest in the School as an academic institution remained unabated. A specific area of concern for Minogue (1977b) was the financial strain confronting universities, which resulted in an increased reliance on government funding. Another constant topic for Minogue (1978a) was the importance and preservation of the School's political neutrality as it became more dependent on government and ideological activist funding. Finally, he cautioned against the dominance of radical thinking in universities, as exemplified by his contribution to the report titled ‘The Attack on Higher Education: Marxist and Radical Penetration by the Institute for the Study of Conflict’ (The Beaver, 1977).

The report was created during the seventies as higher education expanded due to the recommendations of the Robbins report. The report, published in 1963, examined the state of higher education in Britain and recommended the expansion of universities.¹⁰ Whitehall implemented the recommendations of the report, leading to the creation of new institutions and expansion of university places.¹¹

The expansion of higher and community education led to a conflict between two generations within education circles in Britain, each invoking higher principles. The older generation was committed to a free society, authority and opposition to collectivism and totalitarianism. The younger generation, influenced by the social and cultural shift in the sixties

⁹ In a letter to the editor, Minogue (1974c, para. 4) pointing out that the student paper "has been devoting inordinate space to propagandist treatments of fashionable problems."

¹⁰ For the report see; British Committee on Higher Education, London (England). (1963).

¹¹ Minogue (1977b, p. 7) critiqued the effects of the expansion of universities places stating, “The most obvious danger comes from below: it comes from the vast increase in the number of young people ploughing into universities and demanding that universities shall be useful to them.”

and seventies, was committed to ending moral authoritarianism and supporting egalitarian principles (Hammersley, 2015).

The younger generation was influenced by educational figures from the New Left in Britain, such as Ralph Miliband, John Saville, and E. P. Thompson. The British New Left was a movement that sought to distance progressive Marxism from Stalinism and the Soviet Union, and revive leftist ideals within the Labour party (Davis, 2008). This process saw the movement become the intellectual anchor of many reforms undertaken by the Labour government in the sixties, such as the national implementation of comprehensive schooling, which led to an increase in first-degree attainment (Bolton, 2012). The expansion of universities and the increase in university students coincided with an influx of academics influenced by the New Left, leading to significant changes in scholarly pursuits within higher education institutions (Edwards and Canaan, 2015). These academics redirected their focus towards critical theories, including post-colonialism, feminism, critical race theory, and Marxism. As a result, university education infused with the ideals of the New Left began to shift, as Minogue (1975c) argues, from traditional academic scholarship to critical research aimed at societal transformation.

The Gould Report, issued by the Institute for the Study of Conflict, emerged as a direct assault on the growing influence of critical studies within university departments. Conservative scholars, including Antony Flew, David Martin, and Minogue himself, contributed to this report, cautioning against the infiltration of Marxist ideals (critical studies) into academia (The Times, 1977a). The report expressed concern that teaching and scholarly research were under threat from Marxist ideologues seeking to introduce radical and critical theories that were incompatible with Britain's pluralistic and liberal society. For instance, the report highlighted the Open University's offering of courses that criticised the longstanding educational tradition in Britain (Bradley, 1977).

The Times' editorial responded to the report by highlighting the threats to freedom of expression and inquiry in British higher education (The Times, 1977b). Minogue saw himself as a public intellectual assuming the role of defending a pluralistic, open, and liberal education against ideological corruption. Indeed, defending the university's significance as a protector of freedom of speech and research became a recurring theme in Minogue's essays and political commentary, even after retiring from the LSE.

In 1977, Minogue's expertise in educational themes, administrative experience, and understanding of the concept of a university led to his commission by the Pahlavi University of Shiraz (Jones, 2017). The university was undergoing a transformation into a Western-style institution of higher education. Minogue was tasked with developing a master plan for the university, showcasing his international reputation and extensive knowledge of, and experience in, managing academic and administrative affairs. Unfortunately, the plan's implementation was disrupted by the fall of the Shah in 1979. Nonetheless, this episode highlights Minogue's profound interest in university education and his expertise in the field.¹²

The enduring theme of the ideological corruption of universities in Minogue's writings and life did not affect his views about LSE. At the LSE, Minogue felt welcomed, proud, and never marginalised because of his political and philosophical views (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021h). Minogue's contribution to the School was rewarded by his appointments as an emeritus professor in 1995 and an honorary fellow in 2002. Furthermore, the School's Government department, with a generous donation by Tim and Alison Frost, created a scholarship named after Minogue to support a PhD student for a four-year period. Despite his attachment to the LSE, Minogue did not

¹² Early in his academic career, Minogue's interest in education made him an ideal resource for universities outside of Europe. For instance, Minogue (1961b) served as an examiner for the B.Sc. Economics degree at the University of Ghana.

refrain from criticising the School. Even after his retirement, he believed that the legacy of the golden age, represented by figures like Michael Oakeshott, Elie Kedourie, and Shirley Letwin, had been abandoned during and after Anthony Giddens' tenure as LSE director (Jones, 2013). For Minogue, the shift towards third-way politics by the School's leaders marked the end of this golden age.

The 'third way' refers to centrism, exemplified in the reinvention of the Labour party as New Labour under Tony Blair's leadership. It enabled the Labour party to come to power after 18 years of Conservative rule. Intellectual support from influential figures like Anthony Giddens played a significant role in New Labour's ascent, as they outlined the objectives of third way politics. Giddens (1998, pp. 36-37) argued that the purpose of this new political approach was “to help citizens pilot their way through the major revolutions of our time: globalisation, transformations in personal life and our relationship to nature”.

Third way thinking advocated for breaking away from economic, social, political, and cultural protectionism and embracing globalisation as a means to achieving social justice. Third way thinking was brought to LSE during Giddens' directorship (1996-2003). This transformation positioned the School as a platform for generating philosophical arguments and policies in alignment with third way goals. Giddens expressed his vision for the role of the LSE in this new political era: “I want LSE to be at the centre of the third phase-rethinking of what politics and the state should be in a globalised, post-traditional world” (Boynton, 1997, p. 69). While Giddens acknowledged that his vision for LSE was not to transform it into a laboratory of ideas for New Labour, he saw the institution as a potential bridge connecting Westminster with the aspirations of the people. He envisioned the School as an “intellectual beacon... and [guide of] the fate of the

nation” (Boynton, 1997, p. 69). Ultimately, his goal was to establish LSE as the intellectual anchor of ‘thirdwayism’.

Minogue argued that embracing third way politics transformed the School from an academic institution into an ideologically oriented one. LSE became a vital component of what Minogue (2007a) referred to as the ‘ensuring state’, with government institutions aiming to achieve positive outcomes domestically and internationally. Consequently, the School actively promoted third way concepts like global democracy and third way public policies (Jones, 2013).

This embrace of third way politics such as global democracy, Minogue believed, led to LSE cooperating and accepting million in funds from the Gaddafi Foundation to the Centre for the Study of Global Governance for the promotion of liberal democratic values (Hughes, 2011). LSE accepted millions of funds after Muammar Gaddafi’s son Saif al-Islam Gaddafi’s was awarded a PhD degree from the School. The Gaddafi regime's educational and funding connections with LSE faced significant criticism during the 2011 Libyan civil war.¹³ Consequently, the Woolf inquiry was conducted to investigate these ties, and its findings exposed various governmental and managerial shortcomings that resulted in the acceptance of funds from the Gaddafi Foundation (Matthews, 2011). As a consequence of this controversy, Saif’s academic advisor and the co-director of the centre, Prof David Held, departed from LSE for academic reasons and joined Durham University (Vasagar, 2011).

Minogue considered this controversy an illustration of the pitfalls associated with adopting a third-way ideology in university administration. He argued that such an embrace would inevitably result in the university being corrupted by the advocacy industry. In a public letter to

¹³ LSE academic Fred Halliday (2009) emerged as a prominent voice of criticism against these affiliations. See; Halliday, F. (2009).

John Keane, a former colleague of Held, Minogue emphasised that the "problem that Held failed to confront" was the uncritical endorsement of global democracy, which would consequently lead to the unquestioning acceptance of support from dubious elements within the advocacy industry (Jones, 2013, para. 25). This blind acceptance not only opened the door for controversies such as the Gaddafi-LSE affair but also led to "the mushing of academic life common in our expanded universities" (Jones, 2013, para. 26).

The Gaddafi-LSE affair exemplified for Minogue the decline of universities, which he saw as institutions increasingly engaged in political advocacy. This advocacy manifested in three key ways: the application of critical theories like Marxism and Feminism to promote ideological agendas, the utilisation of funding to advance specific ideological goals (such as third way thinking), and the transformation of universities into policy-driven, rather than research-focused institutions, thus catering to the politics and advocacy industry.

Leaving the academy upon his retirement from LSE, Minogue continued to critique the ideological movements and their destructive effects on the School, which he experienced first-hand during the sixties. This concern for the loss of universities as the centre that fostered academic independence, intellectual rigour and the search for the truth will be a dominant theme in Minogue's writings throughout his public intellectual life.¹⁴

Kenneth Minogue initially gained recognition as a public intellectual through his emphasis on education. However, he gradually broadened his scope to include other policy areas and became

¹⁴ See for example; Minogue (1994d; 2001c; 2007c).

a staunch advocate and defender of free market policies. This shift in focus can be attributed to the perceived shortcomings of Ted Heath's government.¹⁵

II: The failure of the Heath government

Edward 'Ted' Heath assumed leadership of the Conservative party in 1965 following the party's loss in the 1964 general election.¹⁶ Despite a subsequent defeat to Harold Wilson in the 1966 general election, Heath unexpectedly led the Conservative party to victory in the 1970 election. The party's manifesto, commonly referred to as the *Seldon Manifesto* or 'A Better Tomorrow,' outlined free market policies aimed at tackling issues such as inflation within Britain (Holmes, 1997).

However, in 1972, Heath's administration abandoned their free-market pledges due to concerns over trade union opposition and rising unemployment (Holmes, 1997). In February 1974, Heath called a snap general election with the slogan 'Who governs Britain?' The result was a hung parliament, with Labour as the largest party, forming a minority administration. Subsequently, Heath lost another election in October 1974, with Labour obtaining a majority (Dunton, 2014). These policy reversals and electoral failures led to a leadership contest in 1975, paving the way for the rise of Margaret Thatcher.

Minogue believed that Heath and his administration's departure from free market principles towards collectivist post-war policies, which were traditionally associated with the Tory Left, amounted to a betrayal of both the voters and the Conservative cause. The Tory Left, which enjoyed significant support within the party, advocated for a mixed economy, an expanded welfare

¹⁵ For a comprehensive account of Heath's ministry see; Holmes (1997).

¹⁶ For a comprehensive account of Ted Heath political life see; Ziegler (2011).

state, the achievement of full employment, and maintaining favourable relations with trade unions (Bale, 2012). During a dinner table conversation during Ted Heath's funeral in 2005, David Martin Jones recounted the words of Minogue, stating, "That's the wrong flag for Ted" (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021e). This quote aptly captured the sentiments shared by numerous right-wing members of the Conservative party and free-market academics throughout Britain regarding Heath's administration.¹⁷ Heath's failure in government and as a leader of the Conservative party led to the eventual return of the Labour party to government under Harold Macmillan and James Callaghan, which, according to Minogue (1989c, p. 23), led to Britain becoming "a fully fledged corporate state".

Minogue's involvement in free market circles at the LSE and London suggests his response to the failure and perceived betrayal of the Heath government was a catalyst for thinkers of free market capitalism, such as himself, to engage more actively in public life (O'Sullivan, 2013c).¹⁸ This was exemplified by his participation in Shirley Letwin's salon, with whom Minogue enjoyed a close intellectual friendship (O'Sullivan, 2013c). The tradition of hosting these intellectual gatherings continued in Minogue's London home, attracting leading Conservative thinkers (O'Sullivan, 2013b). At these salons, Minogue's sociability, wit, and loyalty to friends and colleagues were on full display (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021a; 2021c).

Letwin and Minogue hosted dinner and tennis parties attended by notable figures like Elie Kedourie and Maurice Cranston, creating a vibrant space for conservative debates. This environment, described as a "hothouse of conservative arguments", played a significant role in the

¹⁷ Ted Heath's political stance has become a label for conservative politicians who do not embrace free-market policies. Minogue's mention of Malcolm Fraser as "Australia's Ted Heath" illustrates this point (Stove, 2019, para. 4).

¹⁸ In the initial phase of Minogue's academic career, he kept a low public profile. Yet, he later immersed himself in intellectual circles in London and conservative associations. See; Jenkins (1958); *Letter to Mrs. Smellie* (1961).

emergence of the New Right during the seventies, prompted by disillusionment with Heath's leadership (O'Sullivan, 2005, p. 496; 2013d). The New Right movement aimed to revive and promote free market doctrine and policies, resulting in the marginalisation of the Tory left within the Conservative party. The development of the New Right in Britain was accompanied by the establishment of influential organisations and think tanks, including the Selsdon Group, The Centre for Policy Studies (CPS), The Adam Smith Institute (ASI), and the Conservative Philosophy Group (CPG). These organisations played active roles in shaping public opinion, intellectual discourse, and public policy by advocating for free market solutions. Gradually, the New Right became the intellectual anchor that drove and sustained the policies of Thatcherism.

Participation in Shirley Letwin's salon and other intellectual events held great significance for Minogue, leading to his transformation from an education-focused public intellectual to a conservative public intellectual and political commentator. These serious intellectual gatherings provided Minogue with a direct role in, and indirect influence on, Tory party politics and conservative thought. During the seventies, Minogue's growing contributions to right-wing publications displayed his increasing public prominence. Notably, his writings in *Encounter* magazine touched on familiar themes, such as the importance of a liberal education and his critique of modern thinkers' tendency towards abstract theories for societal perfection (Minogue, 1973a; 1979a). While covering a diverse range of arguments and topics, Minogue consistently maintained a focus on his enduring intellectual concerns: university education, the dangers of ideology, and the preservation of freedom.

Minogue's role within the New Right movement can be characterised as that of its foremost intellectual and public advocate. He firmly positioned himself as a staunch defender of New Right thought and politics, both during the Thatcher era and beyond. In the public sphere, Minogue

consistently served as a dependable intellectual spokesperson for the New Right, frequently called upon to make media appearances (O’Sullivan, 2013d). His prominent position within the movement lends credence to John O’Sullivan’s (2013c, para. 7) assertion that, “[Minogue] has a good claim to being a founder of Thatcherism.”

O’Sullivan’s assertion regarding Minogue’s impact on Thatcherism’s development requires clarification for a comprehensive understanding of his role. First, Thatcherism is intricately linked to the seventies’ context that shaped this political vision (Minogue, 1987b). This context, defined by inflationary pressures, notably from the oil crisis, and the failure of Keynesian policies by Conservative and Labour governments, laid the foundation for Thatcherism. Second, Thatcher wasn’t the progenitor of the intellectual revolution setting the stage for Thatcherism and her subsequent ascent to power; that credit goes to Keith Joseph (Harrison, 1994). Minogue (1987b, p. XV) agrees, stating, “The man who, after the Conservative defeat of 1974, underwent a Damascus Road conversion to classical liberal principles was Sir Keith Joseph, who proceeded to stomp the country and transform its political atmosphere.” Joseph articulated the intellectual ideas permeating the discourse of Thatcherism in British society. Through Joseph, Thatcher was introduced to the intellectuals shaping the New Right.

Nevertheless, Margaret Thatcher was the one who translated the ideas articulated by Keith Joseph, thereby reshaping the Conservative Party. Minogue (1987b, p. XV) writes:

[T]he key figure in this doctrinal relay race was Mrs Thatcher, who not only took up these ideas and ran, but took the Conservative Party with her. And it was clear that while they came primarily in the guise of ideas about the economics of inflation, their real appeal lay to highly traditional moral convictions such as Mrs Thatcher had absorbed from her background and had held ever since she was a Young Conservative.

Minogue's influence on the moral dimension of Thatcherism is apparent. The impact of Minogue and other New Right intellectuals on Thatcherism stems from their argument that Thatcherite ideas were not alien to Tory ideals but rather deeply rooted in them. O'Sullivan (2013d, para. 3) acknowledged this influence, stating, “[t]hey helped persuade other Tories that Thatcherism was more than a revival of classical liberalism. They gave it Tory arguments and a kind of Tory sheen”. Thus, Minogue's impact on Thatcherism lies in linking it to the enduring moral values cherished by Conservatives. Additionally, it could be contended that Thatcher's emphasis on these values can be traced back to Minogue's defence of the individualist way of life.¹⁹

Minogue's writings and political ideas gained prominence in the United States as well. His book, *The Liberal Mind*, was widely promoted within American conservative circles. He also received invitations to contribute to publications such as *The American Spectator* and established a relationship with the Heritage Foundation by joining their policy experts resource bank.²⁰ Minogue maintained his involvement with United States-based organisations throughout his life. He became a visiting scholar at the Liberty Fund (1999) in Indianapolis, engaging in research, participating in colloquiums, leading discussions, and writing the preface for the Liberty Fund edition of his influential book, *The Liberal Mind*. Additionally, Minogue continued his productive affiliation with the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C., serving as an adjunct scholar. His contributions to the Foundation were highly regarded, described as “invigorating personally and wonderful” (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021d).

¹⁹ I will delve in much detail into Minogue's thoughts on individualism in Chapter IV.

²⁰ See for example; Cribb Jr. (1978); Tyrrell Jr. (1978a, 1978b); Minogue (1999f).

Minogue's growing intellectual and public prominence within the liberty and free market movement led him to become involved with the Mont Pelerin Society. Founded in 1947 under the leadership of Friedrich Hayek, the society aimed to unite like-minded individuals in defence of liberty against the rising tide of collectivism (Bjerre-Poulsen, 2015). Given the economic and social devastation caused by the Great Depression and the Second World War, there was a growing inclination towards collectivist ideologies as potential solutions. The Mont Pelerin Society focused on promoting individual liberty in areas such as social policy, free markets, and property rights. Its members, who aligned with classical liberal or free market conservative traditions, held differing views on public policy, including fiscal and social matters. Nevertheless, they shared a common commitment to defending liberty, advocating for free markets, and upholding individual freedom.

It is unsurprising that Minogue felt a natural affinity towards a society that shared such aims and philosophical positions. Initially, his involvement with the Mont Pelerin Society centred on attending meetings as a non-member to present academic papers.²¹ However, his participation increased after officially becoming a member in 1998. Eventually, Minogue assumed the presidency of the society from 2010 to 2012, a somewhat unconventional choice considering that most past presidents were economists rather than political philosophers. Nevertheless, his candidacy received support from fellow society member Ed Feulner, highlighting Minogue's qualifications to lead such an organisation and his strong ties within the liberty and free market movement (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021d).²²

²¹ See for example; Minogue (1980a).

²² A review of Minogue's papers during his tenure as President of the Mont Pelerin Society indicates that Ed Feulner was more actively involved in handling administrative responsibilities than Minogue. In an email, Minogue (ca2010s, para. 3) acknowledges this, stating, "Owing to many distractions, I have been keeping a scandalously low profile in

Minogue's association with free market and anti-collectivist organisations, primarily in Anglosphere countries, also bolstered his reputation in Australia. As a member of the Australian intellectual diaspora in London, Minogue was frequently approached by the British media and Australian institutions to provide commentary and participate in Australian political and academic spheres. This recognition of his expertise further solidified his standing and involvement in the Australian intellectual community.

III: A growing profile in Australia

The LSE riots and the failures of the Heath government significantly boosted Minogue's public intellectual profile, making him a sought-after figure by academics, organisations, and the media in Britain. While his public standing in Australia also increased, it did not reach the same level of influence as in Britain. This disparity was evident in the comparatively subdued response to his death in 2013, in contrast to the glowing tributes he received in Britain (Jones, 2013). A modest response to his death was surprising, as Minogue was given Australia's Centenary Medal for services to political science and was interviewed for the Oral History Program of the National Library of Australia (O'Sullivan, 2013c). Furthermore, during his time in London, Minogue actively engaged with the Australian diaspora. He shared a flat with famed forensic scientist Godfrey Oettle and attended events at Australia House and the Society of Australian authors, thereby maintaining connections with his fellow Australians abroad (Minogue, 2021a).

Minogue primarily resided in the United Kingdom and remained detached from the day-to-day academic and political affairs in Australia. Moreover, he operated on the fringes of the

MPS discussions about the future conferences and increasing membership. It is such an excellent association that it deserves better".

Australian intellectual sphere, positioning his thoughts and politics outside the mainstream (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021b). The Australian intellectual landscape, heavily influenced by social democratic politics and the left-libertarianism prevalent among the members of the Sydney Push, contrasted with Minogue's perspectives.

The Sydney Push, composed of Australian intellectuals and lawyers, championed individual freedom, and opposed authoritarianism in institutions, society, and morality. They formed an intellectual and cultural movement grounded in social criticism and a firm rejection of all forms of authoritarianism. John Anderson's anti-authoritarian and anti-servility views significantly influenced the Sydney Push, drawing numerous staff members and students from Sydney University. The group emerged from the splintering of Australia's freethinking circles, with Anderson's endorsement of post-war anti-communist measures serving as a key catalyst.²³ These measures involved employing military forces to suppress coal strikes and enforcing conscription for the Korean War.

The conscription policy provoked opposition among members of Anderson's freethought society on campus. However, Anderson himself supported conscription as a necessary measure against communism and suppressed any criticism of the policy within the society. This disagreement prompted left-wing libertarians, including A. J. Baker, to break away and establish the Libertarian Society.²⁴ The society aimed to investigate political, sexual, and religious authoritarianism and would later become the cornerstone of what is now known as the Sydney Push (Franklin, 2013).

²³ For a more thorough exploration of the Sydney Push see; Franklin (2003).

²⁴Minogue wouldn't be astonished by the division within the freethought society in response to Anderson's endorsement of authoritarian measures. As Minogue (1996e) observed, Anderson, despite being a prominent advocate of liberty ideas, paradoxically governed the University of Sydney with an iron grip over students and staff.

As a student at Sydney University, Minogue had connections and friendships with Anderson's students, including D.M. Armstrong, and Peter Coleman, and was also acquainted with various members of the Sydney Push (Minogue, 2021a). The influence of Anderson on the Sydney Push raises the question of why Minogue did not adopt a more anti-authoritarian stance?

One plausible explanation is that Minogue had already left Sydney University before the Libertarian Society became more active in university life in 1956, through presentations of philosophical papers and hosting conferences (Franklin, 2013). Another conceivable reason is Minogue's deep appreciation of authority as a crucial element of individual freedom. Unlike members of the Sydney Push who advocated sexual liberation as a means to challenging moral authoritarianism in the sixties, Minogue did not share the same emphasis on this aspect. These explanations account for why Minogue's political views diverged from those influenced by John Anderson in their critique of social authority. As a result, it is plausible to argue that the relatively muted response to Minogue's passing was due to his politics residing outside the mainstream of Australian intellectual life. By distancing himself from both social democratic politics and the ideals of the Sydney Push, Minogue positioned himself outside the intellectual establishment.

Minogue made frequent visits to Australia, where he engaged in teaching, lecturing, presenting papers, visiting friends, and spending time with his son Nick (Coleman, 1996; Jones, 2013). His extensive private correspondence demonstrates his deep understanding of Australian politics and active involvement in academic affairs. This involvement included writing letters of recommendation and offering guidance to aspiring academics. Minogue's travels to Australia allowed him to actively engage with Australian affairs, both intellectually and practically, and provided him with opportunities to delve into Australian politics and academia. Minogue

expressed his fascination with Australian politics as a contrast to British politics and the unique challenges it presented (Coleman, 1996).

In the seventies, Minogue established his public intellectual presence in Australia by contributing to *Quadrant*, a magazine covering politics, society, and culture. In his initial publication, he noted that “Australian readers will recognise in much though not all of what Oakeshott has to say a version of the producer’s ethic of enterprise, initiative and risk as elaborated by John Anderson at Sydney in the 1940s” (Minogue, 1975b, p. 82). This quote highlights the relative unfamiliarity of the Australian audience with both Oakeshott's and Minogue's work. Minogue's writings in *Quadrant* became a significant part of his engagement and analysis of Australian politics. His covered various subjects such as identity politics, the dominance of the left-wing in academia, and book reviews.²⁵ However, Minogue's involvement in the public sphere of Australian politics extended beyond *Quadrant*. He also published numerous pieces in the *Adelaide Review*, providing contemporary commentary on both British and Australian politics.²⁶

Minogue's involvement with Australian free market think tanks paralleled his activities in Britain. One prominent example is The Centre for Independent Studies (CIS), founded in 1976 to promote freedom and free market doctrine. Minogue made notable contributions to the centre, including works such as ‘The Egalitarian Conceit: False and True Equalities’ (1989), and ‘How Much Justice does a Society Need?’ (1992). In these publications, Minogue expressed his scepticism towards normative political theory and the underlying emphasis on social justice. Minogue's contributions also extended to the think tank, Institute of Public Affairs (IPA), founded in 1943 to promote free market and conservative principles. Notable examples of his work with

²⁵ See for example; Minogue (2003d; 2009a).

²⁶ See for example; Minogue (1995g; 1999g).

the IPA such as ‘Thinking Strategically about Reform’ (1992), and ‘The New Constitutionalism’ (1992). These contributions highlight Minogue's proclaiming the triumph of New Right politics from Britain to Australia while cautioning against an excessive enthusiasm for constitutional reform. Minogue also actively participated in the Sydney Institute, a renowned centre for public debate and discussion. He delivered speeches that were subsequently published as papers. For instance, in ‘National Self-Hatred and The European Community’ (1992), Minogue dissected the idealism underlying the endorsement of further European integration.

Minogue's prominent standing in the intellectual and political spheres of Australia and Britain made him a sought-after commentator on Australian politics. For instance, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) frequently invited him to participate in opinion and news broadcasts, where he offered expert analysis and political commentary on Australian affairs (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021b). Minogue's influential presence in Australia coincided with the lengthy tenure of the Australian Labor Party, led by Bob Hawke and Paul Keating. During this period, Minogue (1992e) delved into the subject of how free market reforms could drive Australian economic success. These writings can be traced back to his experiences defending Thatcherism.

IV: The rise of Thatcherism

Minogue's rising profile in Britain, the United States, and Australia coincided with Margaret Thatcher's rise to power. Through active participation in free market supporting organisations, such as the Conservative Philosophy Group (CPG), Minogue had the opportunity to engage with Thatcher and discuss scholarly papers (O’Sullivan, 2013c). Thatcher's leadership as Prime Minister had a profound impact on Minogue, transforming him into a staunch defender of Thatcherism. Their connection grew into a friendship, with Minogue (1993g; 1994e) fondly referring to her as the 'blessed Margaret' (O’Sullivan, 2013d).

Margaret Thatcher, representing the right-wing of the Conservative party, assumed leadership in 1975, offering a vision for Britain centred on free market policies that she believed her predecessor, Heath, had abandoned (Moore, 2013). In 1979, she became the Prime Minister, dominating British politics for eleven years promoting a doctrine known as Thatcherism. This doctrine advocated for a philosophy of governance that believed in free markets and a small state ('What Is Thatcherism?', 2013). Thatcherism led to the implementation of policies such as deregulation, tax reductions, and the privatisation of state-owned enterprises. Minogue (2013b) passionately embraced and staunchly defended these principles, often criticising subsequent conservative leaders for deviating from them.

Thatcher and Minogue developed a cordial and respectful relationship, often attending dinners, meetings, and conferences together. They became acquainted through their involvement with the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS), including gatherings held at 10 Downing Street (No.10 Guest List, 1981). One notable event was the conference on the future of conservatism at Cumberland Lodge, where Lady Thatcher served as a keynote speaker (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021i). Minogue and Lady Thatcher found common ground in their shared values, policies, and outsider perspectives (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021a). This shared understanding led to a strong intellectual and academic alliance, with Minogue's writings providing valuable support for Thatcher's politics and administration (Hoskyns Note, 1981). Indeed, Minogue assisted in the writing of speeches for Thatcher and frequently led policy seminars, particularly on education (Addison, 1985; Thatcher, 1976). On her part, Thatcher regarded Minogue as an esteemed intellectual figure and valued member of her support network (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021d; 2021e).

In 1986, Minogue was made the host of Channel 4's acclaimed series *The New Enlightenment*. This six-part programme explored political philosophy and economics with a focus

on classical liberalism and free market principles. Christopher Dunkley (1986) praised it as the most captivating and significant programme on television at the time. *The New Enlightenment* delved into the idea that individuals have ever-changing desires and thoughts, which find political expression through democracy and economic manifestation through the market (Minogue, 1986f). The program broke new ground on British television by being the first political show to openly advocate a specific philosophy. Minogue's program reflected the acceptance and importance of espousing the philosophical foundations of free markets to the general public. Indeed, the *Guardian* reviewer Hugh Herbert (1986, para. 1) noted that the series was "commercial for Thatcherism".

Minogue's influence as a public intellectual peaked during the Thatcher government. He actively supported and commented on the government's promotion of liberty and free market policies. His association with the CPS further demonstrates his role as a foundational figure in Thatcherism, as noted by John O'Sullivan. Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher established CPS in 1974, an institution that played a key role in shaping the public policy agenda of Thatcherism. Minogue joined CPS in 1983, initially as a member of the board and later as its director after retiring from LSE (O'Sullivan, 2013d). Prior to this, he had already participated in CPS student seminars.²⁷ Minogue's contributions to CPS included significant publications such as 'The Egalitarian Conceit' (1989), 'Europe: Limits to Integration' (1992), and 'The Constitutional Mania' (1993). The overarching theme of these contributions involved the examination and critique of egalitarianism, scrutinising the push for additional European integration, and addressing the inclination towards constitutional reform in Britain.

²⁷ See for example; Centre for Policy Studies Management Committee Minutes (1977); *The Times* (1978).

Minogue's affiliation with think tanks like CPS and his involvement in programs like *The New Enlightenment* displayed his role as a defender of Thatcherism. As a public intellectual, Minogue staunchly supported Thatcherism, emphasising its alignment with the British way of life.

Critics from the left condemned Thatcherism for its perceived incoherence and contradiction between supporting free market principles and moral authoritarianism. The combination of neoliberal ideas like anti-collectivism and anti-statism with moral values drew criticism from scholars of the New Left, who viewed it as a form of Thatcherite moralism (Bulpitt, 1986; Hall, 2019). This moralistic stance prescribed adherence to Thatcherite values such as self-reliance and personal responsibility as essential to British identity (Hall, 2019).

This combination led to what Stuart Hall (2019) called 'authoritarian populism', where discontent with the economic and political order is channelled toward right-wing authoritarian solutions. Critics on the Left argued that Thatcherism was an incoherent and contradictory ideology, as it merged neoliberal ideas with the authoritarianism of traditional conservatism (Gamble, 1994; Hall, 1990; Jessop et al., 1988; Kavanagh, 1987). Despite advocating for freedom and choice, Thatcherism was accused of imposing its own moral agenda on individuals. Left-wing critics concluded that Thatcherism was a complex and unstable product of social forces attempting to shape their own destiny under challenging and unpredictable circumstances (Jessop et al., 1988).

Minogue found no incoherence or contradiction. He believed that a prosperous free market system was vital but needed guidance from values, virtues, and morals beyond the market's capacity to foster. Minogue (ca2004) argued that "wealth does not come to free societies, but it comes largely because of the virtues necessary to sustain freedom, the virtues of dutifulness and self-control, sustain the individualists who make up a free society". Minogue's perspective differs

from early CPS publications that emphasised 'Victorian' values like self-reliance and hard work as key to individual prosperity (Denham, 1996). Thus, he surpasses most free market proponents by emphasising a wider range of values beyond what many free market advocates consider essential.

Minogue's defence of these values as essential for a free-market society was part of a broader conservative intellectual offensive led by Thatcher's free market supporters (Walker, 1983). The objective was to establish conservative dominance in British intellectual life by shaping a coherent conservative political thought that could influence public and political affairs. This was pursued through influencing Thatcher's government and gaining a growing media and public profile. To further this offensive, Minogue actively participated as a public intellectual in various programs such as *Open University*, *Thinking Aloud*, and educational debates, broadcasted by the BBC.²⁸ In addition, he published several significant pieces that emphasised the significance of a free-market system guided by these values as the foundation of the British way of life.²⁹ The core theme of Minogue's defence of Thatcherism in these writings revolved around the moral aspect of the actions undertaken under this philosophy. As Minogue (1989c, p. 23) wrote about Thatcher, “it was moral passion that led her to put the problem of inflation above the immediate fate of those thrown out of work in the collapse of firms that failed to adjust to the rise in interest rates”.

Minogue (1987b) argued that Thatcherism's core was rooted in moral values rather than economic concepts. According to him, these values, including responsibility and hard work, symbolised the enduring British way of life, embodied by Thatcher and her political doctrine (Minogue, 2009d). As a result, Thatcherism represented a practical conservative approach,

²⁸ See for example; Dear Davalle (1983; 1986).

²⁹ Some examples of this work; Minogue (1981a; 1987b).

grounded in economic rationality, moral principles, and a profound reverence for authoritative institutions deeply embedded in the British way of life (Minogue, 1981a).

Minogue's focus on the British way of life is understandable given the circumstances that brought Thatcher to power, known as the 'Winter of Discontent'.³⁰ Strikes by public and private sector employees against the Labour government's income policy disrupted hospital services and left unburied bodies and uncollected rubbish. These events weakened the political position of the Labour party as they faced challenges to their authority from the striking unions. Against this backdrop, Minogue (1981a; 1987b) viewed Thatcherism as a moral rejuvenation of the British way of life. The 'Winter of Discontent' events brought attention to the socialist economic policies of the Labour government, the erosion of British values like hard work and individual moral responsibility, and the undermining of parliamentary authority. For Minogue, these three elements constituted crucial elements of the British way of life and were endangered by the industrial strikes that occurred during that period.

Minogue maintained that the moral foundation of the British way of life rested on the practice of individualism. This practice revolved around the freedom for individuals to pursue their felicity, which embodied the essence of being British (Minogue, 1992a; 1993b). The concept of individualism stemmed from the intertwined history of Britain and Western civilisation, recognising the inherent moral qualities necessary for the freedom of choice. According to Minogue (1992a), this way of life entailed not only the power of individuals to shape their felicity but also forming their moral identity.

³⁰ For a comprehensive account of this time see; Shepherd (2016).

Minogue (1988b) recognises the potential within individualism to lead to license. However, this individualism is tempered by the authoritative conditions found within the practices of the polity and individual moral responsibility. For Minogue, Thatcherism sought to revive the moral fabric of society by reinstating choice through free market policies, countering the erosion caused by social and economic planning. Therefore, Thatcherism was not an advocate of unrestrained freedom but a reaffirmation of the traditional British way of life, emphasising the principles of choice and duties as essential foundations of a free society.

Minogue's moral defence of Thatcherism arises from his acknowledgement of the drawbacks associated with free market ideology. He observed that economic liberals, including those aligned with Hayek, were prone to ideological tendencies similar to socialist planners (Minogue, 1986c). This inclination involved prioritising market freedoms over the moral identity of individuals. In contrast, Minogue (1986c, pp. 16-17) defends the “conservative view is that we ought not lightly to challenge religious, or patriotic, or habitual practices and loyalties, because these things reveal to us what we are.” Thus, while conservatives can support free markets, their endorsement is not primarily driven by economic benefits. Instead, it lies in the value of offering meaningful choices that influence individuals' felicities and moral identity. Furthermore, Minogue did not base his support for free markets solely on its economic benefits. For him, free markets were the only economic system yet known to humans capable of accommodating the reality of a pluralist society of individuals.

Minogue's moral defence of Thatcherism, based on the British way of life, reflects his ethnocentric perspective on Anglo-American culture and Western civilisation. This viewpoint is evident in his writings, which prioritise the themes of individualism, freedom, and modernity that

Minogue argues are closely tied to the development of Western civilisation.³¹ His analysis consistently highlights Western civilisation as the bedrock of contemporary world, attributing its central role to the cultivation of fundamental values such as individualism and freedom (Minogue, 2001a).

Minogue's ethnocentrism becomes apparent in his response to David Miller's (1989) argument regarding the egalitarian ethos created by market relations between individuals. In his reply, Minogue enthusiastically embraces his own ethnocentric perspective by highlighting three forms of equality. One of these forms is equality of manners, which he declares to be of “vital importance” and “unique to the West, and basic to how we carry on” (Minogue, 1989a, p. 106).

Minogue's concise publication, *Politics: A Very Short Introduction* (1995), offers valuable insights into his ethnocentrism. The book delves into the evolution of the concept and practice of politics, with a particular emphasis on Western civilisations like Ancient Rome and Greece, as well as the influence of the Christian religion in shaping modern politics.

Minogue (2000b) contends that modern politics is primarily a product of Western civilisation, as evidenced by the widespread adoption of Western institutions and political traditions across the globe. The attraction towards Western freedom has motivated many societies to embrace the Western perspective on politics as the epitome of modern governance (Minogue, 2000b). This Western concept of freedom, rooted in the rise of individualism, is seen as intrinsic to the nature of modernity (Minogue, 2000b).

Minogue's opposition to multiculturalism in Britain reflects his ethnocentric stance. In his introduction to Patrick West's *The Poverty of Multiculturalism* (2005), Minogue (2005d, p. XII)

³¹ See for example; Minogue (2012a; 2017).

asserts the superiority of European culture, stating that “virtually everybody in Britain believes, and rightly, that whatever the shallowness and injustices of European life, it is superior to that of most other cultures.” Minogue criticised the principle of multiculturalism, which asserts the equality of all cultures and calls for government intervention to accommodate them in British society. Such an accommodation implies that the British way of life must be modified to foster cultural harmony, often through the promotion of identity politics and the implementation of restrictive public policies that curtail individual choice (Minogue, 2005d).

Minogue's critique of multiculturalism in Britain does not negate the moral worth of other cultures. He acknowledges that each culture is a human response to a specific context, possessing inherent moral value and intellectual interest (Minogue, 2005d). However, Minogue emphasises the moral worth and value of Britain's own culture, which should not be compromised in favour of accommodating other cultures. Indeed, it is the British way of life, which provides the framework of choices to individuals from other cultures to follow their felicity and moral identity.

Minogue's defence of the morality of Thatcherism was underpinned by ethnocentrism, as he contended that Lady Thatcher's policies were a natural extension of the British way of life rather than a radical departure. This ethnocentrism became more prominent in the later stages of Minogue's intellectual career as he shifted towards a traditionalist stance, particularly in his critique of identity politics.³²

Towards the end of Margaret Thatcher's tenure as Prime Minister, Minogue reached the pinnacle of his public intellectual life. During this period, he began to embrace new political

³² In the subsequent chapter, I delve into Minogue's critique of identity politics.

causes, leading to a shift in his writings. While previously focusing primarily on free markets, his later work reflected a growing support for traditional values, authority, and morality.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the next phase of Kenneth Minogue's intellectual journey, as he transitions to an active public intellectual in Britain, Australia, and the United States. This shift was prompted by the tumultuous events at LSE in the late sixties, including student protests against the appointment of Sir Walter Adams as the School's director. These protests reflected broader concerns of the era, such as opposition to the Vietnam War and calls for increased student participation in university governance. Minogue saw the student protests as a threat to universities like LSE, as they introduced hostile ideologies that undermined the university's purpose. His concern for academic institutions led him to enter public life, speaking out against ideological influences in universities. This ongoing concern with ideology and the state of universities remained central throughout Minogue's life. However, his growing alarm about the state of Britain, combined with his support for free market politics, played a significant role in his transition to a more active public role.

Ted Heath's electoral defeats in 1974 and his reluctance to pursue free market policies led to the return of the Labour party and a shift towards corporate statism in Britain. This marginalised the left-wing of the Conservative party and sparked a resurgence of conservative thinking. Think tanks like the CPG and CPS emerged to promote liberty and free market policies, influencing the rise of Margaret Thatcher's administration. It was during this period that Minogue reached the pinnacle of his public intellectual career.

During this period, Minogue actively engaged with various organisations, and penned publications, which supported liberty and free market principles, including the Mont Pelerin Society, the Heritage Foundation, Institute of Public Affairs, and The American Spectator. During this time, Minogue's active defence of Thatcherism led to an increase in his public profile in Australia, despite having lived in Britain for most of his life. He contributed to Australian publications and organisations such as *Quadrant* and The Centre for Independent Studies. However, despite gaining recognition, Minogue's political views aligned with the Andersonian influenced Sydney Push, placing him on the fringes of Australian intellectual and political circles.

Minogue's primary role as a public intellectual was to staunchly defend these principles as fundamental to the Western civilisation's way of life, thus positioning himself as an intellectual apologist for Thatcher's leadership. His defence involved active participation both behind the scenes and in the public sphere, providing support to the Thatcher Government. A key aspect of Minogue's intellectual contribution was emphasising that Thatcherism was more than just an economic agenda; it had a moral dimension. He believed that the moral agenda of Thatcherism sought to restore the British individualistic way of life, centred around the pursuit of felicity and a sense of moral identity, which he believed had been compromised under previous administrations.

Chapter III

The Traditionalist Minogue: Defender of authority, practice and morals

In earlier chapters, I explored Kenneth Minogue's early academic journey and subsequent career as a public intellectual. I contended that during this period, Minogue focused on the dangers of ideology in universities, the ideological aspects of liberalism, and the virtues of the free market system, rooted in traditions sympathetic to liberal conservatism. However, in the late eighties and after Margaret Thatcher's departure from office in 1990, Minogue's writings increasingly addressed social and cultural themes. This shift was driven the perceived threat of ideology to the institutions that underpinned the individualism of Western civilisation.

Minogue (1986c, p.16) revealed this growing concern writing:

A human being in the early modern period was identified with his desires, but in that intensely individualistic period, desires were thought to constitute a coherent system by which possible choices might be rationally judged. The entire apparatus of religion reinforced that system and kept it within limits. But with the disappearance of religion from many people's lives, and the expansion of distractions and possibilities, it might more plausibly be said of the later generations of moderns that they are bundles not of desires, but of mere impulses. This is a very agreeable condition for those living within the prosperities of the West, but it is also subject to evident perils; and we just do not know from generation to generation how society is changing as a result of it. In such circumstances, liberals would be well advised to embrace some of the conservative elements of the political tradition to which they belong.

During the initial stage of his intellectual exploration, Minogue predominantly examined the salvationist tendencies inherent in ideologies. However, as his career progressed, he shifted his focus to the ramifications of ideological forms of emancipation on individuals and Western

civilisation. Minogue acknowledged that the pursuit of liberation from authority, as championed by ideologies, led to the unrestrained expression of individual impulses, detached from the moral restraints imposed by societal institutions of authority. Consequently, this undermined the essential institutions that form the foundation of Western society's individualistic character.

Minogue's shift could be interpreted as a personal acknowledgment of his previous failure to vigorously advocate for the fundamental principles of Western civilisation. A notable instance of this recognition is evident in the preface of the 1999 reprint edition of his book, *The Liberal Mind*, published by the Liberty Fund. In this preface, Minogue (2001b, p.7) expressed his regret, stating, “What I did not immediately realise was that a political program which consisted simply of thumbing one’s nose at the pomposities of the Establishment would devastate what we may, as a shorthand, call culture and morality”.

During the writing of his book, Minogue held the belief that the institutions of authority had the capacity to withstand the ideological influences of liberalism. This perspective is understandable given that the book was published in 1963, before the social and cultural upheavals that occurred in Western civilisation during the late sixties. Consequently, it would be unfair to criticise Minogue for failing to anticipate the threat he later recognised as confronting Western civilisation. Furthermore, Minogue was not alone in acknowledging the importance of these institutions of authority and the negative consequences of the liberalisation movements of the sixties.¹ He was convinced that these institutions, which are integral to the individualist nature of Western life, had been weakened or manipulated for ideological purposes. As a result, he advocated for resistance to this trend. Consequently, Minogue's academic and public support for

¹ See for example; Scruton (2014).

individualism and free markets underwent a transformation, leading to a heightened focus on the social and moral fabric of Britain and Western civilisation. This evolution is apparent in his writings and active involvement with conservative groups like the Social Affairs Unit (SAU) and the Salisbury Group (SG), renowned for advocating traditionalist causes. These affiliations underscore Minogue's shift towards addressing social conservative issues.

This chapter aims to outline Minogue's transition to cultural and social themes that occurred in the late eighties and continued until the final years of Minogue's life. During this period, Minogue devoted his intellectual endeavours to defending traditional conservative principles. This defence is evident in his book *Alien Powers*, his role as a critic of social and identity politics, his Eurosceptic stance, and his final work, *The Servile Mind*.

The shift in Minogue's thinking can be traced back to the publication of *Alien Powers*. Although the full embrace of traditionalist themes is more noticeable in the nineties, I argue that *Alien Powers* displays early signs of this change and provides insight into the reasons behind it. Therefore, this section aims to explore the initial indications of this transformation, specifically his concern for the erosion of authority and its significance for individualism.

The subsequent section of the chapter delves into Minogue's position as a public intellectual in Britain following the era of Thatcherism. Minogue's role after Thatcherism will be twofold. Firstly, he will focus more on social and cultural concerns due to his observation of the erosion of authority across society. Secondly, Minogue would emerge as a staunch advocate of Thatcherism, particularly in his response to conservative critics of Thatcher. Finally, this section concludes by examining Minogue's perspective on the state of British party politics following the end of Margaret Thatcher's tenure.

Subsequently, I will outline Minogue's shift from supporting British membership in the European community to becoming a Eurosceptic. I will explain the reasons behind Minogue's initial support and subsequent transition to being a Eurosceptic intellectual. This transformation ultimately led to his active participation and presidency in the Bruges Group. The section concludes with Minogue's critical analysis of British European policy after the Thatcher years.

Minogue held the belief that the formation of the European Union would result in the emergence of a European identity that would surpass the national identities of member states. This concern regarding identity and its political implications serves as the focal point of the subsequent section. In this section, I will discuss Minogue's criticism of identity politics in both Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

The chapter concludes by returning to the beginning and examining Minogue's intellectual journey through his final book, *The Servile Mind*. This last section highlights Minogue's gloomy evaluation of the state of Western civilisation, wherein individuals have willingly relinquished their freedom, succumbing to a mental state of servility to ideology and the state.

I: Alien Powers: The pure theory of Ideology

Minogue's last substantial publication was *The Concept of a University* in 1974. There was a hiatus of ten years before he published another book. Minogue attributed this hiatus to other priorities: "I allowed myself to be drawn into writing papers and articles and things of that sort" (Coleman, 1996, para. 102). However, private correspondence suggests that there was another reason for the delay in writing and publishing another book. Minogue's position as a public intellectual during Margaret Thatcher's leadership left him with little time to dedicate to writing a

book.² To remedy that, he took a sabbatical in the early eighties, which he spent at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies and the University of Guelph working on his book on ideology (Minogue, 1979c; 1979d).

Minogue's *Alien Powers: The Pure Theory of Ideology* (1985) is a significant but often overlooked study on ideology's structure. It is his most important academic contribution and was “recommended for subject collections” by reviewer David Gordon (1985, p.75). The book represents the culmination of Minogue's persistent scholarly interest in ideology and its social and political effects.

The fixation on ideology arguably originates, firstly, from the impact the LSE riots had on him. Observing the disruptive force of student militancy propelled by ideological convictions, Minogue developed a deep concern for protecting academic freedom, especially within educational institutions. As a result, much of Minogue's contemplation on ideology can be linked to his commitment to upholding universities as bastions of academic liberty. Secondly, Minogue's (2001b) early critique that challenges the notion that ideology had become obsolete. Thirdly, he aimed to preserve the critical role of ideology in a non-Marxist context. The theme of ideology reoccurs consistently throughout Minogue's writings, lectures, speeches, and teaching prior to the publication of *Alien Powers*.³ This provided Minogue with an avenue to explore, analyse, and refine his ideas on ideology, ultimately culminating in the publication of the book.

In his book, Minogue argues that ideology represents a distinct mode of thinking that identifies an oppressive (alien) system and advocates for a comprehensive societal transformation

²See for example; Minogue (ca1980s).

³ See for example; Minogue (ca1970s; 1978b; 1978c).

or perfection. As a result, ideology serves two main purposes: firstly, it functions as a means of liberation from oppression, and secondly, it challenges the authority structures that either cause or facilitate oppression due to their significance in promoting individualism (Minogue, 2008a). Therefore, the essence of ideology lies not in establishing laws for the harmonious coexistence of individuals, but rather in the struggle to liberate oneself from oppressive forms of domination. Ideologues argue that salvation is achieved through a new society where individuals adopt an ideological identity leading to liberation and harmonious governance. This identity is not based on morally valuable choices, but on unfalsifiable truths known by ideologues.

As a result of pursuing salvation through a transformative change in individual identity, ideology inevitably undermines the mechanisms of oppression, namely the institutions of authority that are integral to individualism. Minogue (2008a) asserts that the world has been predominantly shaped by what he terms ‘oppositonality’, which entails the criticism and rejection of authority. Ideologies utilise this oppositionality to determine and undermine oppressive institutions in their quest for radical change.

Minogue's intellectual transition to a more traditional perspective is evident in his work *Alien Powers*, where the focus of his critique of ideology undergoes a subtle change. Initially, Minogue was concerned with ideology's perfectionist tendencies and their impact on freedom. However, in *Alien Powers*, he focuses on the ideological liberation from authority institutions and its effect on the individualism of Western civilisation. This shift becomes apparent when Minogue (2008a, p. 336) describes ideology as “a dagger pointing to the heart of modern Western civilization”. The dagger symbolised the challenge posed by ideology to the authoritative conditions that facilitated the moral practice of individualism, which Minogue viewed as a defining characteristic of modern Western civilisation. This moral practice, coupled with the presence of

institutions of authority, enabled individuals to pursue their felicity and develop their moral character. However, ideology stood in opposition to both individualism and the institutions that fostered it, perceiving them as sources of societal oppression.

Hence, seeking ideological liberation from essential institutions of the modern world amounts, in Minogue's view, to an assault on Western civilisation and freedom itself.⁴ Consequently, his book becomes not only a critique of ideology's perfectionist tendencies, but a moral defence of the institutions and practices that have shaped Western civilisation. Reviewer Joseph Sobran (1985, p. 42) aptly summarises the experience of reading *Alien Powers* as “[sitting] by the warm hearth of civilisation, enjoying the virtues of what is being defended”.

This shift in emphasis and defence of institutions central to Western civilisation represents the final phase of Minogue's intellectual journey as a traditionalist who supports the pivotal role of authority in shaping and preserving the moral foundation of individualism. However, it is important to note that Minogue's (2012c) support for authority is primarily grounded in its practical implications in social life, rather than as a mere concept in political philosophy. Indeed, Minogue (1995a) recognises the inherent tension between advocating individual freedom and acknowledging the necessity of a moral order. Nevertheless, he sees the practical value of authority in creating the conditions for individuals to pursue their felicity and moral character. As he astutely argues, “freedom under law is impossible except for a civil population firmly guided by appropriate moral beliefs” (Minogue, 1993a, p.46).

The focus on authority and its relation to the individual raises the question: why this preoccupation? The answer, in my view, can be found in the preface of the second edition of *Alien*

⁴ Western civilisation according to Minogue (2017, p. 290) stands for “Western Europe and its offshoots in the rest of the world.”

Powers. In this preface, Minogue (2008a, p. 14) writes, “the defeat of the more violent and vicious ideologies—Nazism after 1945 and communism after 1989—left the passion for social perfection as vibrant as ever”. Minogue believed that the end of communism in 1989 and the dominance of New Right politics would weaken the impact of ideological thinking. However, ideologies found refuge in modern state institutions like churches and educational establishments (Minogue, 1993c). Consequently, contemporary ideologies sought to achieve freedom from oppression not by openly advocating for societal transformation, but by undermining institutions of authority. This shift meant that individuals' choices would no longer be guided by well-established institutions, but rather dictated by ideologues.

Ideology's pursuit of liberation from authority explains Minogue's shift towards a traditionalist stance in defence of institutions central to Western individualism. The book *Alien Powers* unveils this subtle shift, highlighting the significance of these valuable institutions and their impact on individual identity and felicity. Moreover, Minogue's active involvement and writings in institutions and publications promoting traditionalist values further underscore this transformation.

II: After Thatcherism

For a significant part of his intellectual career, Kenneth Minogue was a renowned member of the post-war anti-collectivist movement advocating for free markets, freedom, and individualism. However, after the Cold War, the anti-collectivist movement, lacking the unifying principle of anti-communism, found itself in a struggle to define its future (Pilbeam, 2003; Zwolinski & Tomasi, 2023). Minogue began to articulate his future path much earlier in his shift towards traditionalist themes in *Alien Powers*. Nevertheless, it was during the later years of Thatcher's tenure that he fully incorporated social and cultural themes constantly into his writings

and discourse. In the post-Cold War era, Minogue emerged as a staunch traditionalist, guarding against threats to Western civilisation and its individualist way of life. To comprehend this transition, one must consider Minogue's increasing involvement in publications and organisations such as The Social Affairs Unit and the Salisbury Group, which addressed cultural issues and advocates for traditional Tory values. These factors shed light on the trajectory of Minogue's intellectual development.

The Social Affairs Unit (SAU), a think tank where Minogue held the position of Senior Research Fellow, emerged as an offshoot of the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) in 1980. While the IEA primarily addressed economic matters, the SAU directed its attention towards social and cultural policies (The Social Affairs Unit, n.d.). According to the SAU (n.d.), its supporters critique the post-World War II generation for prioritising social engineering over personal responsibility. This aligns with Minogue's views and explains his involvement with the SAU, as he shared their emphasis on personal responsibility within the context of British way of life.

However, after a few years, the SAU became independent from the IEA, which was evident in its growing support for non-market institutions like the family, local communities, and churches, rather than focusing solely on economic prosperity (Denham, 1996). The SAU's emphasis on these social institutions earned it a reputation, as described by *The Times* (1989, para. 1) as, “driving its coach and horses through the liberal consensus, scattering intellectual picket lines as it goes”. Given this context, it is not surprising that Minogue's publications for the SAU exhibited a deference to authority and a preoccupation with social and moral issues.

Minogue's first publication for the think tank in 1995 is titled ‘The End of Authority and Formality: And Their Replacement by Intrusive Regulation’. Minogue (1995a, p.65) begins the article by asserting “authority was left for dead in the student revolution of the 1960s and it remains

on the sick list”. This opening sentence underscores Minogue's profound concern with authority and his awareness of the impact of ideology. In the article, Minogue argues that institutions of authority, with their wealth of wisdom and knowledge derived from historical practice, are best equipped to tackle the ongoing challenges of life within a civil association. He warned, however, that the process of liberation from these institutions was “the most portentous thing that has happened to Britain, and perhaps to Western civilization, in this century” (Minogue, 1995a, pp.70-71). Western civilisation faced a void of authority and was incapable of addressing the social and moral issues of society. Enthusiasts for salvation would exploit emerging issues such as alcohol and drug abuse as a means to fill the void left by the absence of authority with governmental power. Minogue perceived this transition as hazardous to the individualist ethos, as it entailed an expansion of government control across various spheres of life, consequently eroding individuals' freedom of choice and moral responsibility.

Minogue made regular contributions to SAU and its website, including writing for *Standpoint*, the think tank's magazine established in 2008, as well as reviewing numerous theatre plays.⁵ In addition, he authored the book *The Silencing of Society: The True Cost of the Lust for News* in 1997, which critically examined the state of the media. Minogue (1997b) contended that the media opposed traditional institutions influenced by Christianity as outdated. This antagonism towards traditional institutions resulted in the media promoting “abandoning the idea that we are dependent on God in favour of emphasising that we are totally dependent on society (for both our spiritual and material resources) and upon others for the satisfaction of our needs” (Minogue, 1997b, p. 43).

⁵ See for example; Minogue (2004d; 2009e; 2011b).

Another aspect highlighting the late Minogue's traditionalist turn is his involvement with The Salisbury Group (SG). The group was founded in 1976 by Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 6th Marquess of Salisbury, as a tribute to Lord Robert Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury (The Salisbury Review, 2019). Its overarching objective was to promote traditional and socially conservative values, an orientation that chimed with Minogue's preoccupation in the post-Thatcher era. Yet, despite sharing the same concerns about the moral and social problems in Britain, Minogue was not a member of the SG due to differences in their understanding of the conservative ethos.⁶ This contrast becomes evident in Minogue's introduction to his edited volume, *Conservative Realism: New Essays in Conservatism* (1996).

Minogue (1996d, pp. 5-6) wrote about the conservatism he believed in,

what I have been calling 'conservative realism' ought not to be confused with Tory realism, a much more specific and locally rooted view of politics - one which might be described as 'poetic' rather than philosophical. Indeed, it is so specific a plant that Oakeshott, Kedourie and Letwin themselves could hardly claim it - Oakeshott because he was a philosopher, and Tory conservatism is above all not a philosophy, and Letwin and Kedourie because, like many of the present contributors, they came from abroad.

This passage reveals Minogue's (1967b) unique perspective on 'conservative realism' as characterised by a sceptical view of human conduct and a caution against grand ideological projects aiming to create a utopian society. In contrast, Tory realism reflected a focus on the community and the social nature of the individual. The passage also highlights the distinction between conservative realism and Tory realism, emphasising the differences between the liberal and traditionalist wings of the New Right that solidified after Thatcherism. While the former focused on economic liberalism, the latter prioritised tradition, community, and societal conditions

⁶ Roger Scruton's (1982, p. 2) initial editorial declaration in the *Salisbury Review*, emphasising that conservatism encompassed more than just free markets, could have contributed to Minogue's divergence from the group.

(Gamble, 1994). Moreover, Minogue's differentiation between his conservative realism and Tory realism reflects the disintegration of the intellectual consensus within the New Right as conservatives began to critique the aftermath and conservative credentials of Thatcherism.

The conservative critique of Thatcherism is that it disregarded traditional Tory concerns like society and culture in favour of individualism and free markets (Evans, 1998). While Thatcherism aligned with certain conservative principles, its exclusive focus on free markets and individualism disregarded the foundational aspects of conservatism rooted in social, cultural, and traditional values (Scruton, 2014).

This preference for free markets and individualism diverged from traditional conservative thinking and aligned more with the economic liberalism advocated by the Liberal wing of the New Right. Thatcherite liberalism, influenced by Hayek, aimed to liberate individuals from state intervention and collectivism, emphasising individualistic and free market principles. This transformation resulted in a detached, individualistic society that disregarded the social and moral knowledge of its history, traditions, and customs. Consequently, conservative critics argue that Thatcherism, in practice, centralised power in Westminster, leading to the erosion of associative traditions and the establishment of an authoritarian state (Blond, 2010; Gray, 2009). Philip Blond (2010, p. 81) aptly summarised Thatcher's legacy by stating that “the liberal in her destroyed and made impossible the conservation of what she most desired”.

The Liberal wing of the New Right is represented by one of its intellectual movements called the LSE right, which emerged from changes in the Government department at the LSE under Michael Oakeshott. During Oakeshott's tenure as convenor, new academics, including Elie Kedourie, Maurice Cranston, and Kenneth Minogue, who shared Oakeshott's perspectives on history and political philosophy, were recruited to the department (Skeffington, 2021). This group,

along with William and Shirley Letwin, contributed to the department earning the reputation as “the most right-wing department of government in the West” (Newman, 1981, p. 1).

The LSE Right's intellectual focus revolved around free markets, individualism, and a strong critique of collectivism, aligning closely with Hayekian liberalism. However, notable differences existed with Hayekian liberals. The LSE Right emphasised that a successful free market necessitated the cultivation of virtues that other liberals either overlooked or disregarded (Minogue, 1986c). Secondly, the LSE Right's defence of the practices of Western civilisation was not limited only to their value as conditions of freedom, but also to their role in shaping the moral identity of the individual (Minogue, 1986c). Hayekian liberals failed to sufficiently articulate the distinctive evolution of freedom as a Western phenomenon in the development of the moral practice of individualism (Minogue, 2012c). Furthermore, the LSE Right applied their sceptical outlook even to their own ideas, while Hayekian liberals failed to apply the same scrutiny to their free market ideas (Oakeshott, 1962).

Despite their distinct characteristics, the LSE Right's support for free markets naturally aligned with Thatcherism. They contributed to Thatcher's government through the Centre for Policy Studies, exemplified by Elie Kedourie's influence on British Middle East policy (Buncombe, 2021). Additionally, members of the LSE Right, such as Shirley Letwin and Kenneth Minogue, actively defended Thatcher's government, and its political philosophy through sustained intellectual arguments.⁷ The LSE Right's support for Thatcherism did not mean they endorsed her policies uncritically. These thinkers were highly critical of the trend towards centralisation of decision-making within Whitehall. Elie Kedourie (1993), in particular, voiced strong opposition

⁷ See for example; Letwin (1993); Minogue & Biddiss (1987).

to certain changes introduced by the Research Assessment Exercise, viewing it as a means to exert greater government control over universities. Likewise, they voiced criticism of centralisation during the eighties, underscoring higher education reform as a noteworthy example (Letwin, 1993).

Minogue's criticisms of certain aspects of Thatcherite policies did not deter him from embracing a new intellectual role following her tenure. This role involved defending the conservative credentials of Thatcherism against conservative critics. According to Minogue (1996f, p. 167), Thatcherism was just “one member of a concrete family of conservative responses to circumstances”. Minogue saw Thatcher's politics as emblematic of the conservative tradition of conservative realism. Thatcherism, in Minogue's perspective, embodied a realistic approach that acknowledged the importance of market forces and the economy, while maintaining a healthy scepticism towards the capacity of government to have all-encompassing knowledge and control over society. Thatcherism, according to Minogue (1993a), can be seen as a conservative restoration of the British way of life, grounded on an individualism balanced by authoritative conditions. It was not an economic revolution but a revival of traditional conservative values like self-restraint, responsibility, and duty. Hence, for Minogue, Thatcherism did not break with conservative tradition but continued it, recognising conservative preferences shaped by British realities and human conduct. As Minogue (1994c, p. 550) aptly stated, Thatcher's politics were “sailing in the mainstream of conservatism: she was simply restating old Conservative values with a quite new confidence”.

However, Minogue did not fully grasp the tension within the New Right coalition between support for Thatcherite free market policies, more aligned with liberalism, and conservative preferences for culture and social themes. Unlike Minogue, contemporaries such as John Gray

recognised this tension from the outset. While Gray initially endorsed Thatcher and the New Right, his intellectual trajectory has been marked by inconsistency (Burns, 1999; Colls, 1998). Following Thatcher's tenure, he transformed into a fervent critic. Gray (1990) argued that the New Right overlooked the importance of communitarian values to the individualist way of life.

Gray's transformation to a Thatcherite critic reflects the declining influence of the New Right in the nineties (Williams, 2021). Traditionalist conservatives reject the New Right's politics as inadequate in addressing threats to Western civilisation's moral and traditional ties (Dueck, 2020). As a result, the LSE Right, as ardent herald of New Right politics, has faced both academic and public apathy, with Minogue standing out as a prominent illustration of this trend.

The critique of Thatcherism by Gray, a member of the Liberal New Right, alarmed Minogue. In response to this critique, Minogue reaffirmed his support for Thatcherism, given his personal affinity to Thatcher and her politics. Minogue argued that Thatcherism was fully aligned with the conservative tradition, countering Gray's claim of incompatibility.⁸ Specifically, Minogue (1997a) criticised Gray for deviating from his Hayekian instincts and embracing communitarian ideas. He sarcastically questioned Gray's doctrinal consistency, posing the question, "where is John off to now?" (Minogue, 1997a, para. 11). Thirdly, Minogue argued that Gray misunderstood the relationship between conservatism and free markets. Minogue (1995i) emphasised that classical conservatives like Burke favoured free markets. Furthermore, he asserted that conservative support for free markets was not primarily motivated by economic growth but rather by its compatibility with the moral life of the individual. Finally, Minogue (1997a) contended that Gray, in his attempt

⁸ See chapter II.

to defend culture and community against market forces, ended up advocating for government control of the market.

The differences that emerge within the New Right coalition helps to explain Minogue's limited involvement with traditionalist groups such as the Salisbury Group for many years. Despite intellectual differences on conservatism, Minogue later contributed to the group's magazine, *The Salisbury Review*, which focused on social and cultural themes.⁹ The late-stage involvement with traditional conservative think tanks and publications in Minogue's intellectual life may suggest a hesitation to engage with groups primarily focused on community and social conservatism, which differed from his preferred conservative realism. Additionally, his initial optimism regarding the preservation of the moral life in Western society, combined with his delayed participation in the fight for these institutions and his membership in the Thatcherite-supporting LSE Right, might indicate a relatively minor role in the conservative counteroffensive for Western civilisation.

Several factors ended Minogue's hesitation. Firstly, he acknowledged that despite communism's collapse, ideology persisted and continued to undermine non-market institutions in Western society (Minogue, 1993c). This recognition made him aware of the danger these institutions faced from ideological assaults. Secondly, he personally admitted naivety in believing that conditions of freedom could self-defend against ideological attacks. Thirdly, he believed that effectively defending the individualist way of life necessitated a robust defence of non-market institutions. Consequently, to protect Western individualism from ideological fantasies, Minogue began incorporating cultural and social themes into his discourse, emphasising the importance of institutions such as marriage, the family, and Christianity.¹⁰

⁹ See for example; Minogue (2003c; 2009b)

¹⁰ See for example; Minogue (1995c; 1997b).

The preceding reasons are crucial because they demonstrate that Minogue's shift towards social and cultural themes is not attributable to the thesis put forth by conservative critics of Thatcherism. This thesis posits that during the heyday of the New Right, it failed to adequately defend conservative practices and institutions. Indeed, Minogue's defence of Thatcherism and his consistent arguments that a return to Thatcherite ideas is a necessary precondition for the future of conservatism signify his rejection of such a viewpoint (Minogue, 1993a; 1996d; 2007b).¹¹

The final reason for Minogue's shift was his loathing for the conciliatory and One Nation approach of John Major's premiership. In private correspondences, Minogue (1994f, para.1) expressed strong criticism of Major's administration, referring to it as an "un-conservative government". His opinion of John Major was scathing, asserting, "He might have a principle somewhere beneath his skull, I don't believe it" (Minogue, 1994g, para. 2).

Minogue's disagreement with John Major's government stemmed from the perception that it had betrayed the Thatcherite legacy of free markets and the restoration of the British way of life. In Minogue's (1993e) view, Major's government stood in opposition to the conservative realism he advocated, as it relied on the regulatory power of the state to address moral and social issues.¹² This approach, according to Minogue, undermined the significance of cultural and social institutions by positioning the government as the sole authority capable of resolving these problems. Minogue (1993g, para. 2) expressed strong criticism of Major's government, stating, "I take a very dim view of the precipitous decline of governmental competence here since the overthrow of the blessed Margaret". According to Minogue, Major did not inherit Thatcher's

¹¹ Minogue (1998e, p. 2) did not share the same view of Thatcher's contemporary, Ronald Reagan, arguing that his project was largely a failure, particularly in terms of his defence and foreign affairs policies, which Minogue criticised as being full of "utopian grandiosities".

¹² Minogue (1995h, para. 2) concluded about Major's betrayal, "the sooner he goes the better".

legacy but instead pursued an ideological agenda that undermined social institutions of authority, relying on government regulation to fill the void.

The same disdain for Major's regulatory tendencies extended to Tony Blair's New Labour government elected in 1997.¹³ While sharing a similar spirit, New Labour exhibited a more pronounced messianic fervour in utilising government power to address societal issues compared to Major's administration (Minogue, 1998b). Minogue (2001d, p. 2) expressed his criticism of Blair's government by labelling them as “the hopeless know-all of modern society”. In doing so, he highlighted his ongoing concern about the excessive regulation that was permeating British society and shaping a submissive mindset among its people.

Minogue (1999i) maintained a consistent stance as a critic of New Labour's government, primarily due to their assertion of a moral crusade that relied on extensive government intervention to address societal problems.¹⁴ His critique centred on what he referred to as ‘busybody power’, which involved restricting individuals from engaging in lawful activities based on moral judgments (Minogue, 1999j). The Labour government aimed to assist ‘ordinary people’ under the influence of the busybody power, resulting in an expanded government with increased spending, regulations, and constitutional changes.¹⁵ Minogue (1999j, p. 1) observed that New Labour's approach was inundated “with activists righteous enough to think they know how we all ought to behave”. He also criticised their ‘modernisation’ of the British constitution, particularly the Human Rights Act, which he believed facilitated judicial activism (Minogue, 1999b).

¹³ Minogue (1999h, para. 4) describes Tony Blair as, “a slightly absurd figure who is becoming a vehicle for the steady drift towards totalitarianism which haunts me”.

¹⁴ Although overtly critical of Tony Blair’s New Labour government, Minogue (ca2000s) supported the invasion of Iraq.

¹⁵ Minogue (1999k, para. 2) despaired about Labour’s approach to government writing, “Britain is being turned into an oligarchy and it is being done by the use of democratic slogans”.

However, Minogue's disillusionment with British politics extended beyond the Labour Party to include the Conservative Party. Making life uncomfortable for Conservative party leaders was a habit for Minogue, and this was no different when David Cameron became leader in 2005.¹⁶ Cameron positioned himself as a compassionate conservative, promoting the use of government to enhance societal welfare. Minogue (2007a, para. 3), however, dismissed this approach as “another masterly bit of triangulation. It is the ultimate in electoral bribery, offering the voters everything”.

David Cameron popularised the concept of the ‘Big Society’ as a political label for his compassionate conservatism, which served as a central idea in the Conservative party's manifesto during the 2010 general election. This ideology aimed to redefine Conservative politics in a post-Thatcherite context, emphasising social justice and social cohesion through increased state intervention (Espiet-Kilty, 2016). The concept of the ‘Big Society’ was an attempt to detoxify the Conservative party, which had been labelled by Theresa May as the ‘nasty party’ (White & Perkins, 2002). The Cameron project intended to transform the party from being a ‘nasty party’ with a narrow electorate to a governing niceness party with a wide coalition of voters.

This ‘niceness movement’ was to Minogue an attempt to rebrand the Conservative party into a Blairite party. Minogue (2009e, para. 21) argued that “it presents itself as benevolence but is often merely an evasion of hard decisions that the realities of human nature require”. Minogue criticised this approach as an abandonment of conservative realism and a masquerade of benevolence that failed to address the realities of human nature.

¹⁶ Minogue was critical of all Conservative party leaders after Thatcher with the exemption being William Hague. In a speech, Minogue (1999l, p. 3) declared Hague’s ideas were “a brilliant synthesis of conservative principles and contemporary political activity”.

However, Minogue did acknowledge certain aspects of the 'Big Society' concept that emphasised virtuous actions by individuals and social institutions (Duffy, 2010). Nevertheless, he expressed concern about the government's prominent role in promoting a virtuous society. Minogue cautioned that “when the state takes over virtues, that's a dangerous situation”. (Duffy, 2010, para. 24). He believed that in contemporary society, freedom is contingent upon the moral life, and giving the government a leading role in shaping individual virtues would marginalise social institutions of authority, leading to a servile dependence on the state.

David Cameron's remark, "I am the heir to Blair," reflected his alignment with Blair's political approach (Pierce, 2005, para. 3). Minogue (2007a) concurred with this statement, highlighting in his review of Anthony Giddens' book *Over to You, Mr Brown* the similarities between Blair's and Cameron's politics. Due to Cameron's conservative doctrine and identification with Blair, it was expected that he and Minogue would not see eye to eye. Indeed, Minogue's disapproval of Cameron's leadership and the post-Thatcher Conservative party, in general, is succinctly summarised in a letter explaining his decision not to renew his Conservative party membership. Minogue (2007b, para. 2-4) wrote:

I belong to that large set of people, especially those of my advanced generation, who view Cameron leadership with deep dismay. We currently endure the most wasteful and incompetent government since about Aethelred the Unready, and instead of an opposition we get “me tooism” rampant... I think that there is, from many different sources, a great well of discontent both with government and with the shape of British society, and that it both needs and deserves a voice.

All that seems to be happening today is an endless attempt to sing along with polling results, and that seems to me to be politically incompetent. What we ought to be having is a very few well-thought-out denunciations of the mess that New Labour has brought us to.

I do not have much hope at the moment, because Cameron's personality has become so enmeshed with these feeble messages that no change of direction is going to make him looking like anything more than an opportunist. Our situation is very gloomy indeed.

Throughout the latter stages of his life, Minogue maintained his role as a staunch defender of conservative realism and its prominent advocate, Margaret Thatcher. He continued to critique various issues related to traditional themes and remained an active writer for conservative publications like the *New Criterion*.¹⁷ However, Minogue's focus extended beyond social problems, as he also became deeply invested in Euroscepticism, making it a cause close to his heart.

III: The Eurosceptic Minogue

In the latter years of his intellectual life, Minogue dedicated a significant amount of time to opposing the European Union. Starting in the late eighties and early nineties, he became actively involved in the Eurosceptic movement, assuming leadership roles in organisations like The Bruges Group and publishing papers that criticised the European Union.

There are two possible explanations for Minogue's limited public commentary on Britain's European membership. Firstly, his earlier writings did not address the issue, suggesting ambivalence. Secondly, it is possible that Minogue (2010d) supported membership in the common market due to its alignment with free market principles, which was the prevailing stance within the conservative movement in Britain.

The second reason seems more likely. This is supported by the fact that during the seventies, when Britain joined the common market under Ted Heath's government, the

¹⁷ See for example; Minogue (2005; 2008c).

Conservative party was in favour of membership. If Minogue had opposed membership, he would have been isolated within the conservative movement and party, as it was not popular among free market advocates to oppose membership. Therefore, it is unlikely that Minogue would have had an influential role in the development and defence of Thatcherism if he opposed membership, as Thatcher herself supported it. Secondly, membership in the common market was considered compatible with free market principles. The aim was to enhance free trade among European nations, establish a single market, and reduce tariffs and regulations within Europe. Given Minogue's support for free market principles, it was only natural that he supported joining the common market in the seventies.¹⁸

Minogue's stance on Britain's membership in the common market underwent a shift towards a more Eurosceptic view in the late eighties.¹⁹ One significant catalyst for this change was Margaret Thatcher's speech in 1988 at the College of Europe in Bruges. This speech served as a response to the European Commission President Jacques Delors, who advocated for a more federal Europe in his address to the Trade Union Congress (TUC). Prior to his speech at the Trade Union Congress, Delors made a significant statement to the European Parliament, projecting that “in ten years 80 percent of the legislation related to economics, maybe also to taxes and social affairs, will be of Community origin” (Toeller, 2014, para. 2). This declaration highlighted the increasing influence of the EU Commission and support for a more federal Europe. In his address to the TUC, Delors (1988) emphasised the significance of preventing Europe from becoming a source of social

¹⁸ Minogue voted yes in the 1975 referendum. See; Minogue (ca2000s).

¹⁹ Minogue (ca1990s, p. 2) recognised the uphill battle of opposing European integration, “to challenge the steady growth of supra-nationalism in Brussels is often takes as a treason to the idea of peace”.

regression. Hence, he advocated for the strengthening of unions and social policies through European legislation.

Against the backdrop of Delors' support for increasing political integration, Thatcher delivered her response. Her speech focused on the formation of European identity, Britain's role, and contribution to the continent, and emphasised that Britain's destiny lay within the European Community. However, Thatcher (1988, p. 4) famously remarked, “We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at a European level with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels”. This remark emphasised her opposition to political integration and her defence of British sovereignty against the perceived threats of a federal Europe. While the speech expressed Thatcher's pro-European stance, as she clearly supported Britain's membership in the European community, her intervention is seen as a pivotal moment in British politics for her endorsement of Euroscepticism and for catalysing the Conservative party's shift towards a more Eurosceptic stance (Roe-Crines & Heppell, 2019).

Therefore, it is unsurprising that Minogue's Euroscepticism became widely known after Thatcher's speech, given his support and intellectual engagement with the Thatcher government. Minogue (1989e, p. 18) publicly endorsed the speech a year later, stating that it was “[a] classic document on our relations with Europe. Its importance lies in defining for Britain a middle way between an untenable isolationism, on the one hand, and turning into a Brussels poodle, on the other”.

Minogue's growing Euroscepticism was also influenced by the EEC's transition from a free market to a social democratic federal Europe. This shift began with the support of the Thatcher government through the implementation of the Single European Act in 1986. The objective of the new treaty was to establish a European single market by 1992, which the Thatcher administration

prioritised to promote trade liberalisation within the community. To accomplish this, the government made notable concessions. Firstly, they eliminated the national veto and expanded qualified majority voting in many areas to facilitate the creation of the single market (Whitman, 2013). Secondly, Britain committed to monetary cooperation, as outlined in the preamble of the treaty. Thatcherites viewed this treaty as a significant victory because it would enable deregulation and free trade throughout the community. However, it came with a trade-off: the treaty granted increased powers to the governing bodies of the European community in various sectors, including environment, research, technology, and social policy areas such as health, among others.

These new powers, which were deemed necessary by Thatcherites for deregulation and the expansion of free trade, started to be utilised for the establishment of a 'Social Europe'. Spearheaded by Jacques Delors, President of the EEC Commission, this project aimed to introduce social legislation at the European level to safeguard workers' rights (Matlak, 2018). The idea of European social policy led to extensive legislation, regulations, and centralisation, contradicting Thatcherite deregulation and free market principles. Minogue (1989d, p. 60) summarised the concerns of free market proponents within the European community, stating, "[m]any of us fear that the new Europe will be strangled in an umbilical cord of red tape even as it is born". This fear of increased bureaucratic red tape prompted numerous free market thinkers and organisations across Europe in the nineties to oppose the project, viewing it as a threat to individual freedom and free markets (Cornelissen, 2022). The European community, once a free market project, was turning into a social democratic entity, worrying British Eurosceptics. Minogue (1989b, para. 3) lamented the increasing social legislation and regulation from the community's governing bodies, saying: "The thought of yet another group of administrators with the power to impose their bright ideas upon us growing up in Brussels is profoundly depressing".

Minogue's support for Euroscepticism had a third reason: his concern for national sovereignty. He believed that the shift towards a social democratic project within the community undermined Britain's national sovereignty, which was not part of the initial agreement when joining in 1973 (Minogue, 1989e). However, this raises an important question: why would Minogue, who considered nationalist tendencies contrary to conservative politics, be concerned with it? The answer lies in his belief that the loss of national sovereignty was a consequence of internationalist or globalist ideology.

Minogue coined the term 'Olympianism' to describe an ideological form of internationalism. He defined it as "a state of mind in which individuals detach themselves from loyalty to their own state and identify with like-minded believers abroad in working for a world managed so as to guarantee universal human rights, peace and a safe environment" (Minogue, 2018, p. 231). As a result, international institutions and arrangements are regarded as preferable, as they are believed to possess superior wisdom and capabilities in addressing global and national challenges. Consequently, Olympianism advocates for the replacement of national sovereign states in favour of a unified global system.

Minogue, however, is not an uncritical supporter of the nation-state. In an article for the *National Review*, Minogue (1996b, p. 38) clarifies, "[d]on't think that I am sentimentalizing the national state. The state is a monster, but it is our monster, in the sense that it must endure some sort of accountability, in democracies, to us". Therefore, his scepticism about the European community is rooted in a concern for national sovereignty, rather than a love for the nation-state. National sovereignty, according to Minogue (200a, p. 2), refers to "the absolute power and authority disposed of by the rulers of a modern state as they regulate the public affairs of their peoples". It involves the enactment of binding laws within a civil association. This concept has

shaped European states but is now under threat from proponents of state subjugation to international organisations.

The final reason for Minogue's (2008b) Euroscepticism was the EU's shift from a free trade organisation to a regulatory body lacking democratic accountability. This led to increasing regulations imposed by the Brussels Commission, governing the daily lives of citizens in member states. Hence, the European project resulted in servility manifested in two realms. Firstly, member states of the European Union experienced servility as they were compelled to act in accordance with European interests, thereby relinquishing their ability to govern themselves and transferring that responsibility to European institutions (Minogue, 2012c). Secondly, individual citizens of member states also experienced servility as their personal autonomy were ceded to European bureaucrats who exercised regulatory control over various aspects of their lives. These reasons account for Minogue's shift towards Euroscepticism and opposition to European federalism. He characterised the European federal project as “attempting to create a European Union, in the tradition of the medieval popes, Charlemagne, Napoleon, the Kaiser and Adolf Hitler” (Usborne, 1989, p. 12).

This statement was made during a meeting of The Bruges Group in 1989, where Minogue served as Chairman and actively contributed. Lord Harris of High Cross and Patrick Robertson established the Bruges Group in February 1989 as an autonomous think tank (Weston, 1989). Inspired by Margaret Thatcher's Bruges speech, the group was primarily focused on resisting further centralisation and political integration in Europe. Their manifesto aimed to oppose "the increasingly interventionist nature of Commission directives that are being proposed through the misinterpretation of the internal market programme" and on supporting the completion of the European internal market (Dawkins, 1989, p. 2). Minogue was an active member of the Bruges

Group from its founding in 1989 until his passing. During that time, he made scholarly contributions characterised by their Eurosceptic stance, centred on his advocacy for British national sovereignty and identity. Some of these writings encompassed titles such as ‘Is National Sovereignty a Big Bad Wolf’ (1990), ‘Transcending the European State’ (1992), and ‘Are the British a Servile People? Idealism and the EU’ (2008). Notably, he also served as Chairman of the organisation from 1991 to 1993, coinciding with the Maastricht Treaty signed and ratified during John Major's administration.

John Major's (1991, para. 146) approach to Europe's policies was characterised by Euro enthusiasm, as reflected in his declaration to put “Britain at the heart of Europe”. This enthusiasm shaped Major's stance during the negotiations of the Maastricht treaty. However, the Bruges Group, of which Minogue was a member, held a distinct perspective and actively lobbied for their vision of Britain's objectives and goals in the negotiations (Atkins 1991a; 1991b; Bromley 1991; Oakley & Wood, 1991). They publicly and privately criticised the government's negotiating objectives and, in a significant move, published a letter in *The Times* outlining their opposition to a Federal Europe, emphasising the importance of obtaining the consent of the British people, and expressing concerns about the government's approach to the negotiations (The Times, 1991).

In December 1991, Major's government agreed to the Maastricht Treaty, which transformed the European Community into the European Union. The treaty included the establishment of a common citizenship, the development of a common foreign and security policy, enhanced cooperation in justice and home affairs, and the creation of a common currency. Major's government secured opt-outs from joining the common currency and certain social provisions in the treaty. Under the chairmanship of Minogue, the Bruges Group responded cautiously to the agreed treaty, describing it as a "successful damage limitation exercise" (Owen, 1991; White,

1991, para. 16). The group expressed its intention to closely scrutinise the details of the treaty and seek clarifications on certain aspects.

The cautious response and lack of critique by the Bruges Group can be explained by two factors. Firstly, as Major's government was approaching a general election in 1992, openly criticising the treaty would have highlighted the divisions within the Conservative party on Europe and potentially benefited the Labour party. Secondly, Major chose not to pass the Maastricht legislation in parliament before the election, rendering the agreed treaty without legal force in Britain. However, following the Conservative party's election victory, Minogue, as Chairman of the Bruges Group, strongly criticised the treaty. He stated, "It has become clear that the significantly vile prose of the Maastricht Treaty is a licence allowing the will of the British people to be continuously overridden by the unelected bureaucracy in Brussels" (Minogue, 1992c, p. 16).

Under Minogue's leadership, the Bruges Group actively campaigned against the passage of the Maastricht treaty bill. The group presented intellectual arguments both publicly and privately to oppose the treaty, including publishing open letters urging Conservative MPs to vote against the bill (Minogue, 1992b). As a result, the group gained support from a faction of Conservative MPs known as the Maastricht rebels, who opposed the ratification of the treaty in the House of Commons (Barrett, 2013). Although the Maastricht treaty bill ultimately passed through Parliament and received royal assent, the disagreement between Minogue and Major's government persisted long after the treaty became law (Bates, 1995). Even after stepping down as chairman of the Bruges Group, Minogue remained a prominent figure vehemently opposing Major's European policy. His vocal opposition continued to shape the discourse surrounding Britain's relationship with Europe (Henning, 1997).

Minogue's chairmanship of the Bruges Group ended in 1993, and it was marked by controversy. Prominent early members of the group included individuals such as Alan Sked, drew attention by "becoming an embarrassment to John Major" due to remarks about Major's Persian Gulf policy and by attempting to field candidates against the Conservative Party (Hodges, 1997, p. 18). Alan Sked criticised Minogue's leadership on two grounds. First, under Minogue's direction, the group lost its initial character as an advocacy organization and evolved into a fully-fledged think tank. Secondly, Sked suggested that the Bruges Group compromised its political independence by abstaining from fielding candidates against the Conservative Party (Hodges, 1997). While Minogue's decision not to field candidates can be understood in light of the potential divisions it could have caused within the Tories ahead of the 1992 general election, Sked (2014) argues that this choice led to an irreversible decline for the group. However, the claim that the group lost its political independence is debatable. In fact, it was under Minogue's leadership that the Bruges Group emerged as a prominent opponent of John Major's European policy, indicating its active involvement in the issue.

However, Minogue's own correspondence seems to support Sked's claim regarding the decline of the Bruges Group during his chairmanship. In private correspondence, Minogue (1992g, para. 2) acknowledged that the group "has shrunken and shrunken until it consists basically of me. The secretary has resigned, the office closed down. No one has been raising money for nearly a year".

Nevertheless, it is important to consider the political context during Minogue's leadership to understand his decisions and its implications for the Bruges Group. Minogue's decision not to transform the Bruges Group into a political party led to Sked's departure and the establishment of the Anti-Federalist League. Sked (1991) believed that challenging the Conservative Party's

electoral prospects would pressure Major to reconsider Maastricht. The League, which later evolved into the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), fielded several candidates in the 1992 election, although none were successful. Nonetheless, it remained active in opposing Major's European policy.

Therefore, with two prominent Eurosceptic groups expressing opposition to the Maastricht treaty, the Bruges Group led by Minogue faced a reduced pool of potential donors. It is plausible that many Eurosceptic donors believed that supporting the politically active Anti-Federalist League would be more effective than donating to a think tank like the Bruges Group. Minogue's acknowledgment of the group's decline and Sked's criticism should not be solely attributed to Minogue's leadership abilities, but rather to the political and donor landscape of the time.

The opposition to European policy and to the erosion of Britain's sovereignty, expressed by Minogue during Major's government, continued under Tony Blair's New Labour government. Despite returning to power in 1997, the Labour Party advocated for Britain to maintain its position as a leading player within a Europe consisting of independent nation states. This resembled Major's policy on Europe, affirming Britain's centrality but with a notable difference in tone. Major's party was divided and often took a negative or Eurosceptic stance, while the united Labour party approached European policy positively and constructively (Hughes & Smith, 1998).

Understandably, Tony Blair's New Labour administration did not dampen Minogue's criticism of Britain's European policy. Minogue (1999a, p. 21) specifically targeted Gordon Brown's approach to joining the single currency and expressed concern over attempts to weaken Britain's veto power in relation to the Nice Treaty: “we simply sign away our protection against bad policies. It follows that we must not abandon what little veto remains to us”.

Minogue further disagreed with the Labour government, now led by Gordon Brown, during the signing and enactment of the Lisbon Treaty in 2007. This treaty marked a significant expansion of European Union authority, surpassing even the Maastricht Treaty. It introduced broader qualified majority voting, enhanced the parliamentary authority of the European Parliament, and established the position of a High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Minogue argued that the Lisbon Treaty further diminished Britain's sovereignty. In his testimony to the House of Commons, he emphasised:

Governments seem to have been so seduced by the charms of international "clubbability" that they have continued to agree to measures that erode British autonomy, the most dramatic case being the prime minister of the time, Gordon Brown, "slinking off" to Lisbon to sign the Treaty alone, and inconspicuously (Minogue, 2010d, para. 5)

The critique of the Lisbon treaty, as Minogue consistently highlighted, focused on the erosion of national powers and autonomy. Another aspect of his critique was the absence of democratic authorisation for the treaty's adoption contrary to Labour party's (2005) manifesto pledge during the 2005 election, which promised a referendum to the British people on the EU constitution treaty. Minogue (2008b) argued that since the Lisbon treaty largely incorporated the provisions of the rejected EU constitution treaty, the Labour party had an obligation to hold a referendum on it. He criticised Gordon Brown for refusing to hold a public vote, claiming that Brown was "indelibly stained by the cowardly and evasive manner in which he has tried to get round the implications of Labour's Manifesto commitment to hold a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty" (Minogue, 2008b, p. 14).

During David Cameron's coalition government, Minogue remained an influential voice on Europe. He provided written evidence to the European scrutiny committee regarding the

government's European Union Act 2011, which mandated referendums for treaty changes (Minogue, 2010d).

Minogue passed away in June 2013, just before David Cameron's (2013) significant speech on Europe, in which he pledged an in-out referendum following renegotiations of Britain's terms with the European Union. Minogue's final writings and public statements do not reveal his position on a possible referendum or indicate support for remain or leave. However, based on private correspondences and interviews with Minogue's friends, it is clear that he would have strongly supported Britain's decision to leave the European Union (Minogue, 1999k; Rodriguez Burgos, 2021i). This is further supported by his longstanding affiliation with the Bruges Group, which advocated for Brexit. Minogue's deep concern for national sovereignty and identity would have made him unsympathetic to the idea of remaining in the bloc.

IV: National Identity and identity politics

The concern for national identity and identity politics was a prominent theme in Minogue's intellectual life, particularly during his more traditionalist phase. This concern emerged as a response to the efforts of proponents of a new globalist ideology, who aimed to establish supranational identities. One such example was the push for a Federal Europe and the creation of symbols like European Union citizenship and an anthem to foster a European identity. However, Minogue's exploration of national identity extended beyond Britain and Europe, as he also delved into the topic of Australia's own identity in his writings.

Minogue's concern about national identity stems from the encroachment of ideology into authoritative institutions. He observed that institutions like universities and churches have been increasingly dominated by ideological intellectuals who aim to dismantle national identity in

favour of ideological identities. In *Alien Powers*, Minogue (2008a) contends that these established identities are portrayed as products of oppressive systems, and individuals are encouraged to adopt new, emancipated identities.

This new national identity resulted from the ideology of Olympianism which sought to create a European or international identity, as an integral part of the federalist vision for the development of European and world integration. Thus, Minogue early writings on the subject such as 'Identity, Self and Nation' (1994) and 'Olympianism and the Denigration of Nationality' (1993), would be a defence of national identity against this ideology of Olympianism.

The defence of national identity is based on Minogue's (1994a) distinction between the nation and the state. This distinction reflects the influence of the intellectual debate between John Stuart Mill and Lord Acton. According to Mill (1861), nationality refers to individuals who share common sympathies and choose to live within a state. Mill argues that this shared attitude towards living together justifies the need for a separate government for the members of a nationality. Therefore, a multinational state has no value since a representative government cannot be formed if citizens lack the shared sympathy to live together. Mill asserts that it is a necessary condition for free institutions that government boundaries align primarily with nationalities.

Lord Acton (1949, p. 173) vehemently criticised Mill's theory as "absurd and more criminal than the theory of socialism", arguing that it would not lead to the desired liberty. Acton believed that Mill's emphasis on the collective will of the state as the primary value created a dangerous absolutist power, detrimental to liberty. In contrast, Acton argued that a plurality of nations within a state act as a safeguard against absolute power and ensures freedom.

This debate holds significance because Minogue (1967c) supports Acton's distinction between the nation and the state, emphasising that our nationality should not be confined to a nation within a congruent state, but rather emerges from a shared history within a modern state.²⁰ He emphasises that “linguistic and cultural unity constitutes a form of nationhood” (Minogue, 1993d, p. 74). Minogue (1993d) argues that our national identity is defined by the unity within the state, as evidenced by the presence of multiple nationalities within countries like the United Kingdom and France. Hence, Minogue's defence of nationhood is not rooted in nationalism; rather, it strives to preserve the national identity of a state that has evolved through the collective practices and interactions of its citizens.

The ideology of Olympianism threatens national identity by transferring sovereignty to international organisations lacking historical and traditional context. These international organisations take on characteristics of a supra-national state and seek the loyalty of their members, thereby attempting to establish their own national identity (Minogue, 1993d). However, this new internationalist national identity lacks any connection to the modern state and the nations that share its history. The European Union serves as an example of the Olympianism-inspired national identity. The EU aimed to replace allegiance to member states with a European national identity, through initiatives like European citizenship and a common anthem. The idea was that this European national identity would be rooted in allegiance to the European Union. This sentiment was evident in the 2016 referendum on Britain's membership, where a significant portion of remain voters identified themselves as European.

²⁰ A contrast emerges between Kedourie and Minogue. Kedourie (1961) argued that Mill's and Acton's theories were identical. In contrast, Minogue (1967c) asserts that Acton's differentiation between nation and State highlights the distinction from Mill's perspective.

Minogue's concern for national identity and nationhood extended beyond Britain to encompass Australia. The rise of republicanism in Australia during the nineties, supported by the Australian Labour Party, prompted Minogue's concern for Australia's national identity. Particularly when it became an official party policy of the Australian Labour Party. The ensuing debate between constitutional monarchy and republicanism dominated Australian politics throughout the nineties, ultimately resulting in the victory of the constitutional monarchy campaign in the 1999 referendum.

Minogue showed a keen interest in the monarchy versus republic debate in Australia, although he refrained from endorsing a specific model of government due to his residency abroad (Coleman, 1996). Nevertheless, his focus was on critiquing the arguments put forth by supporters of republicanism in Australia. Minogue particularly scrutinised the argument put forth by Australian republicans that transitioning to a republic would fulfil the egalitarian aspirations of 19th-century radicals (Coleman, 1996). He regarded this argument, akin to Olympian ideology, as reflective of a 'cultural cringe' that downplayed Australia's historical and future significance in favour of a novel national identity (Minogue, 1995d). Minogue saw this new national identity as a "servile desire to be like everyone else", rejecting Australia's unique past in favour of a global trend towards republicanism (Coleman, 1996, para. 125).²¹ But, for Minogue (ca1990s), Australia's past is what defines and shapes Australia's national identity.

Minogue's concern with republican arguments dismissing Australia's national identity inspired his 2003 Menzies Lecture at King's College London (Jones, 2013). During the lecture, he contended that Australia's identity was not experiencing a crisis and that successive governments

²¹ Minogue's argument showcases his civilisational attachment to the Empire and his belief that Australia should not sever the connections it still maintains with the United Kingdom.

had successfully preserved it (Minogue, 2003d). However, he cautioned that this identity was now endangered due to the growing acceptance of Olympianism among academic and political elites (Minogue, 2003d).

Minogue's apprehension towards constitutional changes in Australia was rooted in the potential impact on Australian national identity. This concern for national identity was also evident in his sentiments towards his country of birth, New Zealand. During the seventies and eighties, the New Zealand government initiated the Waitangi process to address historical injustices faced by the Māori population (Minogue, 1998a). This process, coupled with the sesquicentennial anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, played a dominant role in political discourse throughout the nineties in New Zealand. Debates during this period were largely divided between those who saw value in the Waitangi process and were resistant to any critique of the treaty, and those who harboured reservations about both the process and the emerging consensus around the treaty (Allan, 1997). Minogue aligned himself with the latter camp.

Minogue's involvement in these debates aimed to challenge, and offer an alternative perspective to, the prevailing political and scholarly consensus surrounding the Waitangi process. Firstly, Minogue (1998a) confronts the predominant themes of justice, grievances, and guilt over the political realities that have come to dominate the Waitangi process. Secondly, Minogue raises inquiries about the assertion that the treaty should be regarded as New Zealand's foundational constitutional document. Contrary to this view, he argues that treating the treaty as such has facilitated the rise of growing judicial activism within the country. Instead, he posits that while the treaty certainly holds a place in the constitutional history of the nation, it was never originally intended to serve as a foundational constitutional document. Finally, Minogue contests the notion that the entire process would universally benefit the Māori population. He forcefully presents the

argument that any successes or wealth attained would be compromised within the bureaucratic intricacies that underpin the process.

Minogue's critique of the Waitangi process distinctly underscores themes that became prominent in his later years, including concerns over constitutional reform. Nevertheless, the core underpinning of his critique is the preservation of New Zealand's national identity. As Minogue (1998a, p. 57) eloquently states, "At the root of the Waitangi process there is thus a basic contradiction between rectifying historic injustice, on the one hand, and recognizing the legitimacy and the identity of New Zealand in its present form". For Minogue, the Waitangi process had the potential to challenge the historical trajectory of New Zealand and its national identity. He contended that the process might impact race relations on the island, thereby affecting the unity of the country. Furthermore, he advocated against the arguments arising during the process that aimed to solidify a diversified New Zealand identity through constitutional reforms.

Minogue's focus on national identity was linked to his broader concern with identity politics. He witnessed the rise of such politics during the New Labour government's social policy agenda, which aimed to address discrimination through legislation like the Human Rights Act 1998, Civil Partnership Act 2004, and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Minogue (ca2000s) strongly criticised these laws as part of an ideological approach to identity politics. The rise of identity politics was driven by New Labour's adoption of social justice, defined by Minogue (1998c) as the belief in the inherent injustice in the distribution of goods resulting from economic activities and civil society interactions. New Labour aimed to create an egalitarian society free from discrimination based on factors like race, economic background, and gender (Minogue, ca1998).

The moral doctrine of ‘political correctness’ shaped what Minogue referred to as the new social justice society. This doctrine categorised individuals into specific groups, while those who held differing views were labelled as holding incorrect ideas (Minogue, 1999m). The desired outcome was a society where everyone felt harmonious and free from victimisation or offense. The challenge posed by the social justice society lay in its reliance on political correctness as its moral doctrine, aiming to create harmony, eliminate discrimination, inequality, and victimhood. However, this necessitated an increased state power over individuals' lives, seen through expanded government spending, regulations, and speech control to enforce ‘correct opinions’.

Minogue acknowledged that identity politics jeopardised individual freedom by aiming to perfect society and address suffering and victimhood. This transformed the state into an enterprise dedicated to achieving a socially just society, eroding individual autonomy (Minogue, 1998c). Therefore, in Minogue's later writings, the politics of identity and its impact on individual freedom were prominent concerns. He critiqued the creation of a new moral identity by state institutions and ideologically driven intellectuals (Minogue, 2005a). He also cautioned against totalitarian policies used to accommodate identity politics and multiculturalism, which undermined national identity (Minogue, 2005d; 2017).

Minogue's critique of identity politics stemmed from his concern that individuals were relinquishing their moral identity and personal responsibility to the state. He observed a troubling trend in the nineties, characterised by the excessive regulation of moral, social, and economic issues, which fostered a sense of servility among individuals. This preoccupation with servility, inspired by Anderson's ideas, took centre stage in Minogue's final book.

V: The Servile Mind: How democracy erodes the moral life

The book *The Servile Mind: How Democracy Erodes the Moral Life*, published in 2010, represents Minogue's traditional, doom and gloom, perspective on society and can be considered a sequel to *The Liberal Mind* (1963). These two books trace Minogue's intellectual journey and his transformation into a staunch defender of authority. In *The Liberal Mind*, Minogue expressed confidence about individuals maintaining moral standards, turning his criticism against the salvationist tendencies within society. However, in *The Servile Mind*, we witness a gloomier Minogue who doubts the individual's ability to uphold moral responsibility due to the erosion of authority.

I have previously posited that Minogue's emphasis on servility can be attributed to the influence of John Anderson on his intellectual growth. However, it is worth noting that Minogue rarely employed the term 'servility' until his thought and writings took a more traditionalist turn.²² During this phase, the vocabulary of servility became a recurring theme in his writings and remarks.²³

Minogue's preoccupation with the concept of servility is rooted in his apprehensions regarding the escalating state dependency and the course of democracy (Jones, 2013). These concerns are intrinsically linked to two primary factors. Firstly, Minogue (1996f) held a pessimistic viewpoint that the political victories achieved by the New Right during the eighties were gradually eroding due to the rise of more communitarian-oriented political ideologies. Secondly, his assessment of contemporary democratic developments reveals a regression rather than progression towards a societal framework aligned with his preferences (Gottfried, 2011). Minogue's unease with contemporary democracy echoes Tocqueville's concept of 'democratic despotism,' but it also

²² Some examples of Minogue's early use of 'servility'; Minogue (1976; 2001b).

²³ Some examples of Minogue's writing employing frequently the vocabulary of 'servility'; Minogue (1993h; 2008b; 2010b).

aligns with a broader conservative anxiety that such 'democratic despotism' constitutes a long-term trajectory for Western politics.²⁴ Due to these apprehensions, Minogue (2000d; 2012c) expresses a deep worry that liberal democracy is gradually being replaced by teleocratic politics, leading to a scenario where the state takes precedence over the moral autonomy of the individual.

In his review of *The Servile Mind*, Paul Gottfried (2011) observes the challenge in reconciling the book's criticism of contemporary democracy with Minogue's (2012c, p. 121) defence of liberal democracy as a "triumph of personal freedom". As Gottfried points out, numerous conservative thinkers have expressed reservations about the evolution of liberal democracy, including aspects such as the broadening of the voting franchise. Minogue (2012c), in fact, does not underestimate the potential perils associated with democracy, acknowledging its potential to diminish individualism. However, Minogue perceives the rise of liberal democracy as a consequence of the prevailing dominance of the modern individualist ethos. He contends that liberal democracy represents a substantial progression, giving rise to a novel form of civil association that ultimately shapes the contours of the modern state.

Minogue's concentration on the modern individualist world highlights the foundational concepts that have contributed to the erosion of the moral fabric and the emergence of the servile mind. These concepts revolve around the notion that ideologues endeavoured to restore the stability of traditional societies in response to the moral and societal quandaries posed by modernity. In traditional societies, individuals' actions and identities were shaped by customs and traditions, imposing a singular way of life. While Minogue (2011c) acknowledged the value of history and customs in traditional societies as important for identity, he prioritised the preservation

²⁴ See for example; Rahe (2009).

of the individualistic modern system. Within this modern framework, individuals function as morally autonomous agents, pursuing their chosen ways of life and identities. Minogue's (2011c, p. 3) inclination towards this perspective is evident in his declaration, "I belong in modernity", underscoring his preference for upholding the principles and values associated with modernity.

Minogue deeply feared the ideological attacks on the moral foundation of individualism, as he believed they directly undermined Western civilisation and human freedom. He recognised that the moral and social challenges arising from modernity were a result of the erosion of Western institutions of authority. These institutions upheld higher virtues, manners, and duties that individuals were expected to fulfil as responsible citizens of a free society. Minogue (1993a; p. 46) emphasised "that a free society needs not only law and morality, but also good manners". Therefore, it is not surprising that he staunchly defended these institutions, such as by asserting the indispensability of Christianity to the individualism and freedom of the West (Minogue, 2000c; 2012a; 2012c; Norton, 1995).

However, Minogue (2001a, para. 45) argued that "European civilisation has been attacked and conquered from within, without anyone quite realizing what has happened". The weakening of key institutions by Western ideologues led to a vacuum of authority, which the government filled. Consequently, Minogue (2012c, p. 192) observed individuals were being infused with a servile mind defined as "the abdication of moral autonomy and independent agency in favour either of some unreflective collective allegiance or of some inevitably partial and personal impulse for illicit satisfaction". This abandonment of individual responsibility, once nurtured by authoritative institutions, resulted in a servile mindset fostered by the state.

Reviewer Dario Fernandez-Morera (2013) suggests that Minogue's concept of the servile mind bears resemblance to the notion of the 'mass man' put forth by José Ortega y Gasset, and it

is possible that Minogue drew inspiration from it. In a similar vein to the mass man, the servile mind is not confined to any particular social stratum. Additionally, both the servile mind and the mass man exhibit a propensity to conform to established norms and trends, eschewing individual contemplation and personal moral responsibility. Consequently, as individuals strive for conformity to established behavioural patterns, their sense of individuality becomes diminished due to the increasing prevalence of standardised human conduct within society (Minogue, 2012c; Ortega y Gasset, 1994).²⁵

There are indeed notable parallels between Ortega y Gasset's ideas and Minogue's concept of the servile mind. However, the notion of the servile mind exhibits a particularly strong resemblance to Oakeshott's concept of the 'individual *manqué*'. This concept describes an individual who lacks the capacity for true individualism and instead seeks direction from a substantial purpose provided by the collective enterprise of the state (Oakeshott, 1991b). Minogue (1975b) highlights that this idea could be seen as a celebration of cooperative coexistence. Nevertheless, Oakeshott (2003, p. 278) emphasises that this individual is "intolerant not only of superiority but of difference, disposed to allow in others only a replica of himself and united with his fellows in revulsion from distinctions". This intolerance and inability to embrace individualism render the individual *manqué* susceptible to ideological influences. Nonetheless, Oakeshott (2003) asserts that the individual *manqué* is an inescapable reality, and the concern lies in the fact that their numbers have been increasing due to government interventions.

²⁵ Minogue's alignment with Ortega y Gasset indicates that he falls within the critiques of mass politics and its threat to the individual, as articulated by figures like Elias Canetti and Gustave Lebon. While Minogue did not directly engage with these thinkers, he would likely have been aware of them, especially given that Oakeshott's (1991b) discussion on mass politics parallels Ortega y Gasset's ideas.

Indeed, Oakeshott's concept of the individual *manqué* bears significant similarities to Minogue's notion of the servile mind. In both cases, these individuals lack the capacity for true individualism and instead lean towards surrendering their moral agency to a collective enterprise, often embodied by the state. However, key distinctions between the two concepts emerge: firstly, Minogue seeks to offer an explanation for the growth of servile individuals, whereas Oakeshott does not delve into this aspect. According to Minogue (2012c), the servile mind is a consequence of what he terms the 'politico-moral' ideology, characterised by the pursuit of social justice and the eradication of perceived oppression. This ideology establishes a new moral framework that guides government projects aimed at addressing societal flaws. However, as the state assumes the role of dictating behaviour and action, individuals are stripped of their responsibility and moral obligations, resulting in a state of servility.

Secondly, the individual *manqué* submits to all forms of authority, whether civil or governmental. However, in Minogue's (2012c) view, the servile individual behaves ironically. The servile individual seeks 'liberation' from all forms of authority, such as marriage, the church, and the family, which are the cornerstones of the conditions of freedom. To the servile mind and the politico-moral ideology, these institutions are perceived as sources of oppression. Paradoxically, though, as the servile mind and the politico-moral ideology advocate the rejection of civil authoritative conditions, they embrace governmental authority.

Minogue's concern with the conditions of freedom being rejected by the servile mind reflects a final important divergence with Oakeshott. To illustrate, in a critique of Andrew Sullivan's work titled *Virtually Normal: An Argument about Homosexuality* (1995), Minogue (1995c) argued it displayed an understanding of and appreciation for the Oakeshottian themes prevalent. Nevertheless, Minogue (1995c, p. 64) offered a critique of O'Sullivan for "disregarding

the fact that marriage is not solely a framework for fulfilling desires. It establishes families, and families encompass children, upon whom the perpetuation of our civilization depends". According to Minogue (1995c, p. 64), the expansion of homosexual marriage would undermine the original purpose of the institution, potentially "leading to the erosion of an already weakened institution".

The significance of this review lies in the fact that Andrew O'Sullivan is an adherent of Oakeshott's intellectual perspective. Minogue's endorsement of the institution of marriage illustrates his departure from Oakeshott's influence. In his later work, particularly evident in *The Servile Mind*, Minogue's (2012c) emphasis shifted towards the authoritative conditions of Western civilisation, which he employed as the bedrock for his critique of the prevailing social and cultural predicament in the West. This focal point on these foundational pillars within the social and cultural sphere stands in stark contrast to Oakeshott's ambivalence towards these matters.

Servility stems from the influence of the modern state, driven by the pursuit of social justice imbedded in the ideology of the 'politico-moral'. Minogue (1998b; 1999i) identified its emergence during the New Labour government in Britain, criticising their policies for undermining individual moral autonomy. The critique centred on the detrimental effects of New Labour's policies to the British way of life centred on the moral life of the individual (Minogue, 1998d).

Minogue (2012c) argued that modern states have become the main agents of the 'politico-moral' ideology, using policies, seduction, and corrupting parts of civil society. Perfectionist ideas dominate government policies, seeking to address moral and societal issues through state power and regulation. Additionally, the vocabulary of the 'politico-moral' has influenced modern states, with frequent use of terms like social justice and the marginalised. However, what troubled Minogue even more was the infiltration of the 'politico-moral' ideology into civil society institutions such as churches and universities, where the focus shifted towards promoting salvation

from various forms of oppression in the world. Paradoxically, these infiltrated institutions are advocating for their own destruction. As noted, before, the servile mind seeks 'liberation' from all forms of authority, except government.

The Servile Mind reflects Minogue's evolving perspective, as he becomes gloomier about the state of the individual and freedom. This pessimism stems from the dominance of the ideological 'politico-moral' society, which has permeated all levels of government and society, assuming the role of determining what is best for individuals. As a result, the actions and conduct of individuals are being dictated by ideologues in positions of power, leading Minogue to the disheartening conclusion that individuals are living in a state of servility.

Minogue's disenchantment, evident in the book, stands in stark contrast to his earlier intellectual years characterised by optimism. During those early years, much like Oakeshott, Minogue did not consider necessary to focus on the conditions of freedom. However, as time went on, his views gradually shifted towards affirming the conditions of freedom such as the institutions of authority. The decline of institutions of authority paved the way for government intervention in futile attempts to address the moral and social problems of society. These futile efforts further contributed to the erosion of the individual's moral life and the emergence of the servile mind.

Conclusion

To the average reader, Kenneth Minogue's advocacy for free markets and individualism would mark his political identity as a classical liberal. However, his emphasis on the significance of institutions of authority and their impact on the moral life of individuals, as well as his scepticism towards ideological utopianism, aligns him with conservative intellectuals.

This chapter has highlighted Minogue's evolving focus, transitioning from a primary emphasis on free markets and critiquing the perfectionist nature of ideology to expressing concerns about the institutions that are integral to Western civilisation. This shift began with his book *Alien Powers*, in which he demonstrated how the ideological strategy aimed to weaken institutions of authority by associating them with oppression. According to Minogue, these institutions imposed a contrived moral identity on individuals, while ideological salvationism sought to establish a harmonious society with a moral identity dictated by the ideologues.

After Margaret Thatcher's tenure, Minogue assumed the role of defending conservative values, highlighting the importance of authority in safeguarding individualism. He provided robust critiques of the permissiveness prevalent in society, particularly regarding issues such as drugs and the family. For Minogue, this permissiveness, stemming from the erosion of institutions of authority, gave rise to moral and social problems within Western civilisation. In response, Western governments, including post-Thatcher Britain, embarked on ambitious campaigns seeking to rectify these issues. Minogue advocated for the restoration of social institutions of authority as the appropriate mechanism to effectively address these challenges.

In his new role, Minogue engaged with conservative groups, including the Salisbury Group, despite certain philosophical disparities. These differences reflected a broader divergence between the liberal New Right and the traditional New Right. The traditionalist faction emphasised the communal and social aspects of the individual, while the liberal faction adopted a realist and sceptical perspective on politics. As a representative of the LSE Right, Minogue assumed the task of defending the moral principles of Thatcherism against conservative critique.

In his role as a defender of Thatcherism, Minogue also emerged as a prominent figure in the growing Eurosceptic movement within right-wing circles in Britain. While he initially

supported membership in the European community, Minogue's concerns about centralisation, the erosion of national sovereignty, and the promotion of a European identity led him towards a more sceptical stance on the European project. This scepticism prompted his involvement with the Bruges Group, where he criticised Britain's European policy and ultimately concluded that Britain should exit the bloc.

Minogue's critique of ideology and the European Union also positioned him as a staunch opponent of identity politics. He saw identity politics as a danger to individualism, as it aimed to establish ideologically sanctioned identities that bypassed national states and individuals. These ideological identities undermined individual choice and autonomy, promoting instead an emphasis on internationalism and political correctness.

The concern for authority and individualism led Minogue back to the intellectual influence that set him on this path: John Anderson's idea of the servile state. In his final book, Minogue expressed growing discontent about the state of Western civilisation, where individuals are increasingly dominated by a servile mind. This servile mind undermines individual moral responsibility and individualism, as it is dictated by the state. Servility has emerged due to the influence of ideology over authoritative institutions, but what is even more troubling to Minogue is the voluntary preference of individuals to be managed by the state. As a result, the cornerstone of Western civilisation, individualism, is being discarded in favour of an ideological utopia.

The traditionalist phase of Minogue's life marks the culmination of an impressive intellectual journey spanning sixty years. This particular period firmly establishes Minogue's conservative credentials and positions him within the conservative tradition. However, it also serves as an implicit acknowledgment that he had underestimated the impact of ideology on the conservative principles essential for a prosperous and free society. Minogue (2001a) candidly

admits, “there has been a revolution, then, but a silent one. It has taken place with such stealth, and so gradually, that people have become accustomed to it little by little”.

The limited attention paid to Minogue's works and life within scholarly circles, in contrast to other conservative thinkers, like Roger Scruton, reveals an intriguing aspect. In his review of books on Scruton, Minogue (2010a) expressed his lament over the extensive vilification and condemnation Scruton faced due to his views, as opposed to serious academic engagement. This lament from Minogue can be seen as a personal admission of regret, acknowledging that despite his public activism for conservative thought and politics, he did not encounter the same level of criticism and recognition as Scruton did. In fact, Minogue's delayed realisation and response to the revolution that swept through Western civilisation could offer an explanation for his relatively obscure standing even within conservative circles.

Part II

A Conservative Mind: Exploring Kenneth Minogue's political thought

The second part of this thesis embarks on a comprehensive exploration of Kenneth Minogue's political thought, unveiling the intellectual pillars that underlie his political thinking. Rooted in a profound appreciation for political thought, Minogue's ideas offer a solid foundation for examining significant contemporary topics, including the modern world, the relationship between the individual and the state, and conservative politics. This section delves into Minogue's key thematic contributions, traversing the realms of individualism, authority, modernity, conservatism, ideology, and politics.

This second part of the thesis examines three crucial themes in Minogue's thought. Firstly, his defence of individualism as the established and inherited Western way of life. Secondly, his perspective on ideology as an apolitical scheme that strives for total transformation, while politics involves the deliberation of the laws governing civil association. Lastly, his conservative realism, characterised by scepticism and realism concerning what is achievable in politics. Through an analysis of these three fundamental themes in Minogue's thought, my intention is to contextualise the significance of his ideas within the broader landscape of conservative politics and the emergent reactionary global Right.

Chapter IV

Conservative Individualism: Kenneth Minogue's defence of the individualist way of life

Individualism and morality evoke strong reactions in today's society. Both are often criticised in public debates. Individualism is often portrayed as selfish, consumeristic, and indifferent to the common good, while morality is sometimes dismissed as outdated or associated with moralism, a form of self-righteousness. Individualism emphasises the importance of personal desires, identity, and moral judgment, but morality implies a reasonable set of normative moral claims about the good (what is right) and the bad (what is wrong), that may leave the individual outside of moral deliberation.

Kenneth Minogue, however, saw no contradiction in adjoining these concepts. For him, both are tied to each other and are essential for freedom. He argued that the moral practice of individualism requires a framework of authority, while morality depends on morally autonomous individuals. Minogue called this the moral life, where individuals act ethically without relying on established moral systems. This chapter explores Minogue's perspective on the moral life by examining his ideas about individualism and morality. Individualism, for Minogue, values personal freedom over traditional social conventions. The moral life, on the other hand, proposes that individuals can maintain their individualist beliefs while still recognising right from wrong.

To understand Minogue's views on individualism, this chapter examines his primary influences. One such influence is Thomas Hobbes, whom Minogue admired for his defence of individuality, scepticism, and civil association. Michael Oakeshott's interpretation of Hobbes as

an individualist, rather than an absolutist thinker, further shaped Minogue's perspective. This section concludes with a discussion of Oakeshott's views on rationality and individualism.

In the following section, I will examine Minogue's perspective on individualism and its emergence, highlighting the tension between atomistic and community-based accounts in his story. Additionally, I will explore the influence of the Christian humanist concept of individual salvation and the humanist sceptic tradition of Montaigne. Finally, I will conclude by discussing Minogue's views on individualism as a disposition and its connections to Burckhardt and Weber.

The third section examines Minogue's distinction between individualism and individuality. His conceptualisation of individualism reveals the intricate nature of decision-making in human conduct as individuals strive for felicity and a consistent moral identity. I will then discuss how individualism can be viewed as a moral practice governed by formal, informal, and inner authoritative conditions.

The chapter concludes with an examination of Minogue's concept of morality through the lens of the moral life. I will emphasise his belief that morality involves both revealing our desires and exhibiting our moral character. Minogue considers this dualistic view of morality to be a unique feature of modernity and European culture. The section ends by discussing how the authoritative conditions of the rule of law, moral commitments, and moral character guide individual moral decision-making in determining the appropriate course of action.

I: Individualism in Hobbes and Oakeshott

Individualism stands as a pivotal concept for understanding our world and the role of individuals within society. Minogue's interpretation of individualism is firmly grounded in specific strands of tradition that view individualism through a historical and positive lens. Therefore, before

examining Minogue's ideas on individualism, it is essential to provide an overview of the two thinkers who have influenced his perspective: Oakeshott and Hobbes.

The individualist Hobbes

A take on the philosopher Thomas Hobbes as an individualist may perplex the average reader of his masterpiece, *Leviathan* (1651). Hobbes is frequently portrayed as a proponent of an absolute state that undermines individual freedom. This interpretation is somewhat valid based on a cursory reading of his work since Hobbes' theory commences with an individualistic portrayal of humanity but ultimately advocates for a sovereign with supreme power. Therefore, the absence of constraints on the sovereignty of the ruler is often deemed incompatible with his stance on individualism (Ryan, 2012).

However, the perception of Hobbes as an opponent of individualism is not universal. Michael Oakeshott, a distinguished scholar of Hobbes, convincingly argues that Hobbes advocated for a form of individualism that aligns with his civil philosophy. Oakeshott's interpretation of Hobbes contributed to the burgeoning scholarship in the 20th century that questioned cruder and more materialistic interpretations of his political thought (Trogenza, 2012). Oakeshott's reading of Hobbes focuses on scepticism about the efficacy of reason, the significance of individualism, and the importance of civil society (Franco, 2000). Oakeshott argues that these ideas align Hobbes's civil philosophy more closely with individualism than is commonly assumed. Oakeshott (2000, p. 67) contends that "Hobbes is not an absolutist precisely because he is an authoritarian...Indeed, Hobbes, without being himself a liberal, had in him more of the philosophy of liberalism than most of its professed defenders".

Kenneth Minogue's understanding of Hobbes is guided by Oakeshott's interpretation.¹ Minogue (1998b, p. 194) endorses Oakeshott's reading, remarking that Hobbes "grasped in his political philosophy most of the elements crucial to liberalism". Consequently, Hobbes is considered by Minogue (2012a) as one of the most significant contributors to the understanding of individualism as a moral practice. Therefore, to chart the intellectual influences on Minogue's perception of individualism, it is essential to acknowledge this interpretation of Hobbes, which serves as a foundation for Minogue's thinking.

Oakeshott's interpretation, and consequently Minogue's as well, encounters a dilemma, since many characteristics of the 'rationalist' perspective can be identified in Hobbes's thought (Malcolm, 2012). Nevertheless, according to Oakeshott (2000), there are distinct differences that position Hobbes as an anti-rationalist. These differences include his rejection of indisputable truths, his perspective on civil association, and liberty as the silence of the law. It is from these three themes that Minogue derives significant influences for his concept of individualism.

Hobbes (1998), rejection of indisputable truths, begin with the emphasis he gives to individuals as separate entities with independent experiences. This independence of substance underlies Hobbes's view of knowledge acquisition, which he believes depends on the individual observer's sensation of experience. This perspective also highlights Hobbes's sceptical inclinations, as he argues that because individuals are separate substances, their experiences and sensations of experience differ significantly, making it challenging to establish accurate conclusions (Baumgold, 2017).

¹ Minogue (1974e) acknowledges the distinctiveness of Oakeshott's interpretation of Hobbes, as well as the existence of alternative perspectives on his political thought.

Hobbes's view of knowledge is markedly different from the classical view, which held that nature and reason could provide definitive answers about human ends (Minogue, 1994h; Franco, 2000). According to the classical view, reason could provide direct guidance to individuals about what they should desire or what is valuable (Letwin, 2005). In contrast, Hobbes reduces reason to an instrumental role in sensory experience, providing answers to what individuals experience as desires. Therefore, Hobbes's view of knowledge is centred on reason that provides speculative and conditional answers about individuals' experiences (Oakeshott, 2000).

Hobbes's sceptical view of reason's ability to provide unquestionable truths is a significant contribution to individualism. By exploring political life through the artifice and will of human beings, rather than reason and nature, Hobbes emphasises the unique experiences of individuals in their lives (Minogue, 1973b). Through rationality, individuals determine their own thoughts, desires, and responses to the world around them, resulting in a multitude of potential outcomes rather than a certain 'good' result. Individuals' distinct desires, thoughts, and interpretations of the good mean that there is no ultimate end or intrinsic goal for human beings to strive for. Hobbes (1998, p. 65) states that "there is no such *finis ultimus*, (utmost aim,) *nor summum bonum*, (greatest good,) as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers". Therefore, Hobbes values the epistemological individuality of persons in determining their own desires and the means to achieve them (Ryan, 2012).

Minogue (1990) draws from Hobbes the idea that civil association and its politics cannot be governed by claims of indisputable truth about human conduct or politics. For Minogue (1973b), the value of Hobbes's sceptical outlook about reason and knowledge is that it emphasises the uniqueness of individuals. As a result, Hobbes's sceptical outlook allows him to grasp the

essence of the liberal civil association state, which accepts a society of different and unique individuals (Minogue, 1990).

The second influence on Minogue's concept of individualism is Hobbes's contribution to the idea of the civil association. For Hobbes, the civil association arises from a state of nature that precedes the formation of the polity (Minogue, 1990). This state of nature arises from the pursuit of individual desires which inevitably leads to conflicts with the desires of others, making it impossible to construct a political society based on a supreme good when there are conflicting conceptions of the good. Therefore, the natural condition of humankind cannot revolve around a political community pursuing the ultimate good, but rather exists in a state of nature (Minogue, 1990). In the state of nature, individuals are left to pursue their desires without a judge or higher authority to mediate conflict. With scarce resources, life is “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” (Hobbes, 1998, p. 84). In this situation of scarcity and lack of an umpire, individuals act upon their desires, particularly self-preservation (Minogue, 1994h). Hobbes (1998) thus concludes that the state of nature will be a war of all against all, where each individual must look out for their own self-preservation against others.

In the state of nature, reason provides two general rules for individuals: seeking peace whenever possible and mutually relinquishing certain rights for self-preservation (Hobbes, 1998). These principles Hobbes calls them the ‘articles of peace’ that allow individuals to live securely in communities. However, without an enforcer of these rules, individuals have no guarantee of others' compliance. Therefore, a sovereign power is necessary to enforce these rules (Minogue, 2013c). This necessity for a sovereign power with political authority leads to a voluntary agreement (social contract) of individual wills to form a commonwealth or, by the metaphorical name, *The Leviathan* (Hobbes, 1998).

Hobbes's contribution to Minogue's thinking on individualism does not lie in the cause or generation of the social contract. Instead, the significance of Hobbes's contribution to Minogue's thinking lies in the conception of authority at the heart of Hobbes's civil association. The importance of Hobbes, in Minogue's (1996b) view, is that it shifts the focus from nature and reason as the basis for political authority to a will-based account of political authority. Hobbes was the first to explore political philosophy from the perspective of the will of individuals, considering the will and individuality of humans as a supreme moral value (Minogue, 1994h).

Minogue (2013c) is influenced by the Hobbesian basis for civil association, in which individuals freely associate themselves within an association governed by subscription to a framework of laws. This individualist conception of political authority is at the heart of Minogue's (1995a) view of individualism, as Hobbes challenges the notion that rational individuals appealing to reason alone are capable of coexisting within society. According to Hobbes, authority arises from the reality of the uniqueness of individuals, each pursuing their own felicity and moral identity (Minogue, 1995a).

The final Hobbesian theme that influences Minogue's view of individualism is Hobbes's concept of liberty. According to Hobbes, liberty denotes the ability to act in accordance with one's own will without encountering external obstacles (Van Mill, 1995). This liberty, which was unattainable in the state of nature due to the absence of peace and security, can only be achieved within a commonwealth that has established civil laws to ensure the safety of its individuals. While these laws impose limitations on individuals, they are considered legitimate since they stem from the civil association and the rules subscribed to by individuals. Although Hobbes advocates for an all-powerful sovereign, he acknowledges that there are limits to the state's ability to control the individual (Minogue, 1983c). According to Hobbes (1998), individual freedom is most

pronounced when the law is silent. This implies that even an all-powerful sovereign cannot legislate for every facet of human conduct. When the law is silent, individuals are free to act according to their own will (Minogue, 1995b).

Hobbes's contribution to Minogue's thought lies in his emphasis on the absolutist sovereign and the liberty of its subjects. The authority of the sovereign is established and upheld by enforcing rules that enable individuals to coexist within a polity, a concept known as the rule of law. Unlike classical political thought, which relies on appeals to nature and reason to establish indisputable truths that legitimise authority, the rule of law is rooted in the individual itself, which serves as the source of the sovereign's authority and, consequently, the foundation of law. Hobbes understood that laws are not mere commands that are imposed upon the individual; rather, they are rules that condition the conduct of individuals (Minogue, 2017). Within the framework of laws agreed upon in the civil association, freedom is safeguarded. In a Hobbesian vein, Minogue (1995b, p. 35) contends that freedom "consists in acting in accordance with the law."

Oakeshott and the idea of individuality

Michael Oakeshott (1962) was a leading proponent of individualism, who defended the morality of individuality that emphasised the distinct wills, desires, thoughts, and identities of separate individuals. Unlike his contemporaries, Oakeshott's philosophical scepticism gave his defence of individualism a unique character. For instance, while Hayek was sceptical of collectivist undertakings, his solution was a free-market rationalist blueprint for society (Oakeshott, 1962). In contrast, Oakeshott's scepticism applied to all enthusiastic projects, whether from the left or the right, which aimed to perfect society.

Oakeshott's scepticism is a crucial element of his unyielding critique of abstract ideas based on universal claims. Rejecting indisputable truths does not equate to nihilism, as Oakeshott acknowledges that individuals can grasp the truth and the good. However, Oakeshott's skepticism is primarily directed towards rationalist claims and grand ideological projects within political activity, in contrast to his intellectual predecessors like Montaigne and Hume, whose scepticism encompassed all aspects of human conduct (Oakeshott, 1996). Nevertheless, Oakeshott is faced with the sceptic's paradox: reconciling the apparent orderliness of human existence while accommodating the individuality of human beings.

The solution to this conundrum does not involve prioritising reason over individuality, as was the case in classic and medieval philosophy, or deepening the rift between individuality and human rationality, as Hume (2007, p. 266) suggested with his description of reason as “the slave of the passions”. Oakeshott proposes using reason to acknowledge objective standards while simultaneously preserving individuality, rather than imposing arbitrary uniformity. Oakeshott (2011c) argues for a positive account of reason in morality as opposed to politics, rejecting the argument by Hans Morgenthau that rationalistic politics are doomed to fail due to human irrationality. Oakeshott (1962) posits that rationality is rooted in human experience and lacks a predetermined end. Instead, he views rationality as the human capacity to interpret and respond to life experiences. According to Oakeshott (1962, p. 109):

'Rationality' is the certificate we give to any conduct which can maintain a place in the flow of sympathy, the coherence of activity, which composes a way of living. This coherence is not the work of a faculty called 'Reason' or of a faculty called 'Sympathy', it springs neither from a separately inspired moral sense nor from an instrumental conscience.

Rationality is an individual's situational response in their everyday lives (Oakeshott, 1962). It relies on the individual's own resources rather than preconceived principles. As people interpret, respond, and act on their experiences, their unique perspectives and conduct create individuality. Thus, the diversity of our world reflects individual reasoning rather than irrationality or the absence of traditional reasoning.

The main resource individuals have for reasoning are themselves, however Oakeshott (2003) argues there is another piece to the formula: practice. Oakeshott (2003, p. 55) argues a practice is “a set of considerations, manners, uses, observances, customs, standards, canons, maxims, principles, rules, and offices specifying useful procedures or denoting obligations or duties which relate to human actions and utterances”. It is a resource that individuals have access to as they engage in particular activities. Practices are significant in discussing rationality and individuality because they provide guidance without imposing choices. Rather than commands, they are rules individuals agree to follow in order to participate in an activity. For instance, language offers the vocabulary, expressions, and proper usage for communicating with others, but it does not dictate what to say (Oakeshott, 2003). This common reliance on practice allows individuals to exercise their reasoning while pursuing different ends.

Oakeshott (2003) distinguishes two types of practices and conduct: moral and prudential. The former has no extrinsic purpose and centres on good and bad conduct. Oakeshott views morality as a skill or set of rules that individuals follow, without a formal system. He argues that morality is not a list of do's and don'ts, but an everyday practice that guide human deliberation (Oakeshott, 2003). Oakeshott (1983, p. 133) states, “a morality is not a list of licences and prohibitions but an everyday practice... it is never fixed and finished. [Morality] can never tell us what to say or to do, only how we should say or do what we wish to say or do”.

Prudential practice involves working towards a shared goal. Oakeshott (2003) relates this practice to an enterprise association (or *universitas*), where individuals join based on the association's effectiveness in achieving a common end. Hence, this form of practice emerges out of individuals voluntarily agreeing to managerial commands for a common purpose. A moral practice is non-instrumental, devoid of any explicit purpose. This type of practice is something that Oakeshott correlates with a civil association (or *civitas*), which is essentially an association founded on the shared subscription to non-instrumental rules.

Oakeshott addresses the sceptic's dilemma through these two themes. Firstly, he affirms the human ability to reason in response to experience, allowing individuals to distinguish right from wrong. However, he does not abandon his scepticism. Instead, the concept of practice explains how individuals can engage in an activity with common rules without arbitrary uniformity based on infallible truth. These common standards are created by humans, making them liable to change. Yet, they remain accessible to everyone, providing guidance in determining right from wrong. In this manner, Oakeshott's approach seeks to avoid nihilism.

Oakeshott's response to the sceptic's dilemma makes a significant contribution to our discourse on individualism and its influence on Minogue's ideas. Oakeshott prioritises the individual as an autonomous agent with intrinsic value, rejecting the sovereignty of reason and abstract ideas. Oakeshott (1962, p. 249) defines the morality of individuality as:

Human beings are recognized (because they have come to recognize themselves in this character) as separate and sovereign individuals, associated with one another, not in the pursuit of a single common enterprise, but in an enterprise of give and take, and accommodating themselves to one another as best they can: it is the morality of self and other selves.

Oakeshott's defence of the morality of individuality is grounded in his understanding of human conduct. He believes that human conduct stems from the inherent will, emotion, and intelligence of every individual (Oakeshott, 2003). Human conduct has two aspects: self-disclosure and self-enactment (Oakeshott, 2003). Self-disclosure refers to an individual's actions that require or solicit responses from others. Self-enactment, on the other hand, refers to the motives behind an individual's actions and what those motives reveal about their character. Oakeshott (2003, p. 241) argues that self-enactment has become the primary focus of the lives of human beings represented as “an adventure in personal self-enactment” in the development of modernity.

Modernity arose as traditional social and communal ties dissolved, freeing individuals from prescribed desires, ends, and identities (Oakeshott, 1991b; 2003). This newfound independence created a private sphere of sovereignty, which allowed for unprecedented individual choice and action. This shift brought about a new disposition that favoured the expression of individuality: individualism (Oakeshott, 1991b).

According to Oakeshott (Oakeshott, 1991b; 2003), individualism has its roots in the European Renaissance and the philosophical tradition of humanist sceptics such as Montaigne, who inspired his ideas. Oakeshott (2003, p. 236) defines individualism as:

a historical disposition to transform this unsought ‘freedom’ of conduct from a postulate into an experience and to make it yield a satisfaction of its own, independent of the chancy and intermittent satisfaction of chosen actions achieving their imagined and wished-for outcomes: the disposition to recognise imagining, deliberating, wanting, choosing, and acting not as costs incurred in seeking enjoyments, the exercise of a gratifying self-determination or personal autonomy.

Oakeshott (2003) argues that the intrinsic value of individualism is best realised through civil association, where individuals join together based on their shared understanding and

acknowledgement of a particular practice or activity, rather than seeking a common substantive satisfaction. This type of association, which Oakeshott traces back to the medieval period, known as *Societas*, is based on agreed-upon rules and practices, rather than a teleological goal. Language serves as a prime example of this type of moral association, as individuals accept the widespread practice of language not for instrumental purposes, but to simply know how to speak.

Civil association arises when the rules of a moral practice are systematised into laws with an established authority to create, modify, interpret, and enforce them (Oakeshott, 2003). Through the acknowledgement of these laws and recognised authority, individuals become *Cives* and create a *respublica* where they can pursue their substantive desires. The relationship between individuals in the civil association and the *respublica* is sustained by their subscription to the rule of law, or *Lex*. Unlike commands that dictate certain outcomes by telling individuals what to do, these laws are rules that individuals conform to for the attainment of felicity. Oakeshott (1991b) notes that the authority of the civil association must be strong enough to maintain order and enable the fulfilment of individual aspirations, yet not so strong as to pose a threat to individuality. It is within this framework of laws that the morality of individuality can fully exist and flourish in the context of a civil association of individuals.

Applying the concept of civil and enterprise association to the state helps to illustrate the importance of individualism. As an enterprise association, the state produces instrumental laws to compel its citizens towards a shared purpose or end. However, this means that the state may make substantive demands on individuals in pursuit of a common goal that not all may agree with. As a result, there are no limits on state power, as it must manage individuals to achieve the shared aim. Viewing the state as an enterprise association highlights its negative impact on individualism. Firstly, reason is used to determine indisputable truths about the end a society must pursue, leading

to the alienation of rationality from individuality. Secondly, laws implemented by the state are instrumental in nature for the collective good, turning laws agreed upon by individuals seeking coexistence into commands that undermine human agency.

In contrast, the civil association state aims to establish and uphold laws that enable individuals to pursue their chosen identities, ends, and desires. As a civil association, the state implements non-instrumental laws that place prudent constraints on individuals. The state's power is thus limited to creating conditions for peaceful coexistence and pursuit of individual desires. Oakeshott (1991a, p. 460) asserts that a civil association “is the only morally tolerable form of compulsory association”. Compulsory because, for Oakeshott, the state is a non-voluntary association with every right to use its authority of coercion. This remains true, be it a civil or an enterprise association state. However, the civil association state is preferred because it fosters individualism.

Individualism thrives in a civil association state because it allows for substantive choices by individuals, rather than making substantive demands for a common goal. The non-instrumentality of its laws affirms the diversity and individuality of its citizens in pursuing their self-chosen ends. Lastly, the non-instrumental nature of civil association laws is the only scenario in which individuals can genuinely enjoy their freedom.

II: Kenneth Minogue's take on individualism

Kenneth Minogue's lifelong emphasis on the importance of individualism is a recurring theme. This disposition was crucial to the emergence of the modern world, which saw the discovery of the individual and its unique qualities. This was a stark departure from the pre-modern era, where custom dictated the actions of individuals. The centrality of individualism to the modern

world led Minogue to defend society as an association of individuals pursuing their desires, ends and identities within the confines of the rule of law.

Although individualism is central to the development of modernity, many blame it for the imperfections of society. According to Minogue, “individualism has been under attack in some form or another for hundreds of years simply because people think that the solution to all social problems is to give up selfishness” (Norton, 1995, p. 25). Thus, he warns that striving for ideological visions of social perfection can harm the disposition that enabled the modern world.

To fully understand Minogue's perspective on the moral practice of individualism, it is crucial to highlight how Minogue views individualism as the key driver behind the arrival of modernity.

The tension in Minogue's narrative of individualism

Kenneth Minogue's genealogy of individualism resonates with the ongoing debates in political philosophy concerning the interplay between the individual, community, and self. One side of the debate argues that individualism stands apart from the community, while the opposing viewpoint contends that individuals are inherently social beings (Kymlicka, 1988; Walzer, 1990). Although, Minogue (1993b) maintained scepticism towards the normativism that underpinned these debates. His response to this intricate issue reveals a tension and potential challenge within his conception of individualism. Minogue endeavours to circumvent an atomistic perception of individualism, where the individual is isolated from their social context, while simultaneously rejecting the normative assertion that individuals are solely products of the community.

Minogue (2012c) seeks to reconcile this tension by proposing a middle way approach that views individualism as neither an achievement of society nor a product of atomism, but rather an

accomplishment within society. He rejects the atomist view by highlighting that individuals have attachments to various entities such as family, friends, and the state, thus rebutting the argument used by critics to decry that the ills of modernity arise out of individual pursuing their own interest and desires with no concern for others. Moreover, Minogue disputes the idea of man as a purely social being, as it equates society with the government and undermines individuality.

Instead, Minogue (2012a) posits that individualism arises with the recognition of the intrinsic value of individual desires, identities, and ends. For Minogue (1992a; 1997b; 2012a), the importance of individuals lies not only in determining right from wrong, but also in revealing their moral character through their actions. Despite being distinct concepts, community and individualism are intertwined, as it is within the community that an individual's identity is expressed (Minogue, 1986c). In this context, Minogue aligns himself with the middle ground approach advocated by Oakeshott and Wittgenstein. This perspective situates the individual as neither entirely detached from the practices of the polity nor strictly defined by them (Plotica, 2013).

However, Minogue's approach as merely a middle of the road one is insufficient. Indeed, if the individual's identity is ingrained with the community, then why wouldn't Minogue make the leap into the individual as a social being? This can be clarified by comparing the role of practice in relation to the individual with that of communitarian thinkers such as Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor.² Both MacIntyre (2014) and Taylor (1989) emphasise that practices play a foundational role in shaping human conduct and the individual's identity. Similar to these

² Minogue (1993b) expressed sympathy for Charles Taylor's view that Christian individuality involves a harmony of desires. However, he criticised Taylor for not adequately distinguishing between desires and impulses and for not sufficiently addressing the significance of moral identity in his analysis. Additionally, in passing, Minogue (2017) critiqued MacIntyre's book *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, arguing that it is a sophisticated critique of individualism that shares ideological hostility towards modernity and its individualist disposition.

communitarians, Minogue would concur on the significance of practices as a wellspring for moral and political activity. Indeed, in his critique of the liberal standpoint, Minogue (1986c; 2001b) contends that liberals do not fully grasp the importance of these practices.

Nevertheless, Minogue diverges from these communitarians by assigning more value to the individual agent. Influenced by Oakeshott, Minogue (2012c) perceives the individual and practices as intertwined yet contingent upon each other. For Minogue, practices derive their significance from the meanings and interpretations that individuals bestow upon them. Thus, in an Oakeshottian vein, Minogue (2012c, p. 249) writes, "In the individualist image of human life, everything in it is contingent. The individual must make something of events requiring interpretation as one aspect of an active life". Consequently, there exists a realm for individual agency that does not rigidly predetermine conduct and identity in the individual's relationship with societal practices.

Minogue's Oakeshottian stance stands apart from both the liberal and communitarian perspectives. Firstly, he underscores the significance of individuality, a facet that would be jeopardised if the communitarian stance were to enforce a uniform way of life or regard practices as inherently shaping the individual self. According to Minogue, there remains a space for individual agency to contribute to the formation of an agent's identity. Consequently, he rebuffs the communitarian notion of the community being the fundamental mold for the individual. Secondly, Minogue regards practice as a pivotal resource in human conduct. The community serves as the nurturing ground for the inheritance of traditions, skills, and activities that inform an individual's convictions and actions. Through the prism of practice, Minogue adeptly steers clear of the atomistic tendencies of liberalism by acknowledging the individual's connection to the community.

Intellectual influences on individualism

Minogue posits that Christianity played a crucial role in the genesis of individualism, primarily in two areas. Firstly, the distinction between the temporal and spiritual realms led to the emergence of independent moral standards and the separation of politics as a temporal activity, resulting in conflicts between the two realms and nurturing the traditions of pluralism and toleration in the West (Minogue, 1997b; 2012c). Secondly, Christianity transformed human values by emphasising the importance of each individual soul in responding to the grace of God and sin (Minogue, 2000b). This led to the view that “modern human beings must be conceived of in terms of will” shaping the inner life of the individual (Minogue, 2000b, p. 32). Unlike the classical philosophers, who believed that the pride of reason connects humans to God, Christianity emphasised the individuality of the human soul. As a result, Christianity shifted the focus of destiny and salvation from the collective community to the individual and its free will.

Minogue (2012c, p. 165) specifies the value of Christianity to the narrative as;

the direct and essential progenitor of European individualism...the source not only of individualism, but of the spiritual egalitarianism that individualism also involves. Each soul is unique and is valuable to God, with whom it has a central if (in many versions) mediated relationship.

It is worth noting that Minogue's assertion that Christianity is the source of individualism does not necessarily imply that this moral practice is inherently Christian. However, this view opens Minogue up to two forms of criticism. The first is the Christian critique that this moral practice is incompatible with the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Bible. The second is the ideological criticism that targets Christianity for its role in the origin of individualism.

The fundamental point of the critiques is that individualism fostered the intrinsic value of the individual against the harmony of the community. Minogue (2000b, p. 44) notes its

implications writing, “Christianity was an earthquake which shook the foundations of this conception of civil harmony... [it] taught Europeans to live within a divided society, and some of them have been trying to restore the lost unity ever since”.

Minogue's perspective on Christianity and individualism is shaped by Christian humanism's influence on his thinking. He acknowledges Christianity's impact on the formulation of the modern humanist tradition (Minogue, 2000b). However, Minogue overlooks his subterranean affinities with Christian humanists as his scholarly work does not engage with their writing. Nonetheless, Minogue's emphasis on individual will and choice in Christian salvation exhibits a vein of Erasmian humanism.

Erasmus, a proponent of Renaissance humanism, famously declared, "I cannot be other than what I am", which reflects his disposition towards humanism (Bainton, 1969, p. 176). Erasmus's influence on Minogue is reflected in the former's debate with Martin Luther on free will. Despite Luther's (1988) promotion of autonomous individuals, as seen in his idea of the 'priesthood of all believers', his perspective on the role of free will in salvation is anti-individualistic. Luther (1989, p. 176) argued that salvation is attainable through God rather than an individual's willpower, stating that “free choice is a pure fiction”. However, Erasmus believes that free will is a crucial aspect of human beings' ability to steer themselves towards or away from salvation. Erasmus (2002, p, 20) writes, “by freedom of the will we understand in this connection the power of the human will whereby man can apply to or turn away from that which leads unto eternal salvation”. Erasmus does not diminish the significance of grace and faith. Instead, he emphasises the importance of individuals' free choices in the Christian salvation project.

Erasmus's advocacy for free will in Christian salvation undoubtedly impacted Minogue's portrayal of Christianity's role in individualism. Minogue (2012c) highlights how Christianity

facilitated the development of the individualist will and nurtured a sense of responsibility towards attaining salvation. Additionally, Erasmus's notion of free will is reflected in Minogue's (2000b) emphasis on individuals' personality in confronting the challenges of sin in human experience.

The second considerable influence on Minogue's understanding of the roots of individualism is the Western philosophical tradition of humanist scepticism. This tradition values and empowers human beings by embracing philosophical scepticism about their ability to attain indisputable truth. According to Minogue (2017), this tradition finds its early modern exponent in Michel de Montaigne. His *Essays* (1580) is integral to the story of modern individualism.

Montaigne's *Essays* consist of short pieces on assorted topics, but for my purposes, I will focus on his contributions to scepticism and human association. Montaigne's scepticism challenges the classic philosophical belief, articulated by Aristotle, that reason is universal among all human beings. Montaigne (2003, p. 634) defines reason as the;

appearance of rationality which each of us constructs for himself – the kind of reason which can characteristically have a thousand contrary reactions to the same subject and is like a tool of malleable lead or wax: it can be stretched, bent or adapted to any size or to any bias; if you are clever, you can learn to mould it.

Montaigne argues that while all individuals are capable of reasoning, the outcome of this process is not universal. Reasoning is a private matter for the individual and not a public resource accessible to all (Montaigne, 2003). Montaigne emphasises the individuality of the exercise of reason by rejecting the idea of universal outcomes and that we should not overestimate our capacity to reason above that of others. Montaigne does not assert that human beings have no access to standards of conduct. He rather suggests that custom can serve as a helpful guide for the individual, despite the multitude of customs that exist around the world (Montaigne, 2003). Customs are patterns of human conduct that are accessible to every individual and make possible the life of a

polity. Therefore, Montaigne (2003) praises custom for its foundational role in the spontaneous birth of human societies.

Montaigne's scepticism regarding the power of reason extends to its applicability on the origins of political authority. He critiques the notion of using reason as the basis for political authority, instead advocating for the establishment of customs and laws to govern human conduct. Montaigne (2003) recognises the need for political authority but rejects the idea of basing it on reason alone. In his own words, "since philosophy has not been able to find a way to the good that is good in common, let each one seek it in his particularity" (Montaigne, 2003, p. 704). Montaigne (2003) suggests that the alternative to reason as a basis for political authority is an established authority based upon custom. The moral judgment of this established authority should be based on individuals' ability to pursue their own conception of the good freely. Basing authority upon custom would imply a tension with individuality. However, for Montaigne, custom does not necessarily imply public conformity; instead, it serves as a personal standard that individuals use in their private deliberation (Keohane, 1977).

Montaigne's (2003) second contribution was the concept of a human association called society. He argued that society was an extension of the private and domestic realms into the public sphere. According to Montaigne, the creation of society meant that there was now a sphere beyond politics where individuals could pursue their own good, limiting the government's power to simply creating conditions for this pursuit.

Montaigne championed individualism, emphasising the internal structure of individuals in their beliefs and behaviour. This philosophy placed the individual at the forefront of their pursuit of felicity. According to Minogue (2012c. p. 124);

Thinkers such as Montaigne and Hobbes recognized that a modern state was a new kind of association in which a considerable divergence of views about goodness (and particularly about how God ought to be worshiped) was no mere unfortunate accident of the moment, but a constitutive feature of modern life.

The story of individualism and the coming of modernity

Minogue (1996a) posited that individualism did not emerge from any particular philosophical or historical event, despite the contributions by Christianity and humanist sceptics. Rather, he believed that it arose from individuals' innate disposition to discover and pursue their own identities, ends, and desires in an entrepreneurial manner. This predisposition towards individualism also led to an ambivalence towards societal areas that had been settled by tradition and custom, fostering a sceptical and critical outlook on the status quo (Minogue, 2012a; 2012c). This, in turn, opened new ways of thinking about both individuals' self-conception and their relationship with the world around them.

Minogue agrees with those who trace the origins of the modern disposition to individualism to the 15th and 16th centuries during the Italian Renaissance (Minogue, 2012a). He credits Jacob Burckhardt's account of the Renaissance for shedding light on the emergence of this disposition. According to Burckhardt (1960), the Renaissance marks the moment when individuals started to distinguish themselves from the associative institutions of society. Additionally, the individual began to seek self-improvement, which Burckhardt termed personality. The focus of study also shifted from the collective (Men) to the individual (Man), especially in literature and the arts. Finally, the concept of fame encouraged individuals to pursue ambitions that would set them apart from the collective.

The emergence of the individualist mood in Europe represents the fundamental characteristic of the rise of modernity. According to Minogue (2000b, p. 44); “[t]he essence of

modernity lay in the development of this new sentiment of individuality: the disposition increasingly to guide one's life by one's own talents and inclinations rather than to fill the place into which one had been born". Individualism facilitated the remarkable progress that enabled Europe to create the modern world.

Minogue (2012a, p. 259) concludes,

The basic "secret," one might say, is that modern European states differed from other cultures by the moral practice of individualism, in which the wants and beliefs of individuals are recognized not as disruptive, but as valuable themselves. Intellectually speaking, individualism led to a revolution in the way in which Europeans thought about the world.

Individualism and the rise of modernity were distinctively European phenomena that created a divide with traditional societies, as described by Minogue. Traditional societies prescribed a single right order of life that dictated an individual's identity, desires, and purpose (Minogue, 2012c). These societies valued their customs and communal solidarity, which Minogue deemed outdated and regressive.

Minogue's (1988b) narrative of individualism also draws upon Max Weber's emphasis on the protestant reformation as creating a new complexity in moral action. This complexity, termed the 'calling', emphasised fulfilling earthly duties as the most significant moral obligation for individuals (Weber, 2001). The reformers were solely focused on the salvation of the soul, and not on promoting ethical culture, social reform, or cultural ideals. These teachings led to an individualistic spirit that viewed moral action as integral to an individual's identity, beyond simply distinguishing right from wrong (Minogue, 2012a).

Minogue (2012a) also concedes Martin Luther's influence when he incorporates his formula of combining law and dutifulness to understand the emergence of individualism. Luther

argued that Christ freed us from the law, but taken in an individualistic context, this could lead to a disregard for all restrictions. Minogue addresses this issue by highlighting the second part of Luther's formula: dutifulness. As modernity relaxed restrictions on individuals, a moral concern for dutifulness arose as human conduct became guided by individual reasoning and conscience. Therefore, for Minogue, individualism is not a license but a moral practice that entails a sense of duty, obligation, and morality.

Minogue's narrative of individualism and the emergence of modernity offers an opportunity to distinguish between conservative individualism and classical liberal individualism. The classical liberal tradition sees individualism as a triumph of moral independence by the complete liberation of inherited customs and conventions. Classical liberals see individualism as the power of autonomous individuals using their reasoning against the religious and monarchical customs and authorities in Europe (Minogue, 2012c). Consequently, in the narrative of classical liberal individualism, there is no space for Christianity, instead they emphasised moral autonomy with the constant rhetoric and codification of natural rights.

This emphasis on the moral autonomy of the agent suggests that classical liberal individualism carries a normative commitment to treating individuals as ends in themselves (Zwolinski & Tomasi, 2023). According to Zwolinski & Tomasi (2023), this normative commitment has political consequences, as all normative value is vested in the individual. Therefore, classical liberals are inherently sceptical of authority and more inclined to support the protection of individual rights and the promotion of structures of spontaneous.

Conservative individualism envisioned by Minogue is quite different. In Minogue's (2012c, p. 169) view, his account of individualism suitably explains why individualism is a European phenomenon compared to the "sterile legend" of liberalism. Minogue's explanation is

centred on the role of Christianity in the development of individualism and Western civilisation. As Minogue (2012a, p. 258) writes, “whatever religious belief we may entertain, Christianity is and remains at the heart of our civilisation”.

Although, Minogue would not disagree with the idea of treating individuals as ends in themselves, his reasons are not normative, but historical. Since, he sees in individualism the way of life that gave birth to the modern world. Furthermore, despite sharing some common ground with classical liberalism's emphasis on moral autonomy, Minogue's conservative perspective asserts that individualism is primarily a moral practice. This underscores the significance of inherited practices and moral values found in the authoritative traditions of Western civilisation in conditioning the pursuit of individual aspirations, goals, and identity. Such emphasis on these practices suggests that classical liberalism errs in treating authority as merely a necessary evil for preventing conflict between individuals. In contrast, the conservative individualist harbours no such hostility towards authority. As Minogue (1986c, p. 16) explains; “[t]he conservative support for what we have inherited arises from... a concern with our own concrete identity... a concern with the specific identity of modern people is exactly where liberalism, because of its addiction to abstract principles, is weak”.

III: The moral practice of individualism

Kenneth Minogue's writings consistently celebrated individualism. In his early and middle years, he championed individualism as a means to defend free markets and to warn against ideologies such as liberalism and nationalism that he believed had salvationist tendencies. Although the individualist and capitalist spirit eventually triumphed in the nineties, Minogue's work suggests that this victory over anti-individualist forces was not as straightforward as it may have seemed.

In the nineties, Minogue (1994b, p. 87) observed “[the] talk about “excessive” individualism is very much *à la mode*”, He believed that this trend undermined the moral practice of individualism, which he felt compelled to defend. In the later parts of his life, Minogue focused on the social institutions of authority, which he believed were being attacked by ideologues.³ Minogue (2012a, p. 264) referred to this as an assault: “our time has thus been a graveyard of inherited conventions”. His focus on social institutions of authority led to a shift in the discourse surrounding individualism, emphasising the importance of duty, obligation, and morality. Before exploring Minogue's ideas on the moral practice of individualism, it is necessary to first examine his conceptualisation.

Individualism and individuality

A challenge in discussing Minogue's view of individualism is his use of the term interchangeably with individuality. He does not make a clear distinction between the two concepts in most of his writings. For instance, in Minogue's (1988a, p. 102) definition of individuality, he describes it as “the practice of creating for oneself an individuality which is distinctively one's own out of the materials given by our own characters and the opportunities of the world in which we find ourselves”. This definition closely aligns with individualism, blurring the evolving debates surrounding the use of these terms and their applicability.

The debates in 19th century Europe surrounding the terms individualism and individuality had implications for their modern usage. Individualism originated in France as a reference to the ideas of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment (Lukes, 1971). As a result, the term acquired a mainly negative connotation within French intellectual circles. Conservatives associated it with

³ See chapter III.

the ills of the French Revolution, while collectivists viewed it as a recipe for economic and social chaos (Lukes, 1971). However, in Germany, individualism took on a positive connotation and became synonymous with the romantic idea of individuality. It represented the self-fulfilment of the individual and the natural unity between the individual and the community (Lukes, 1971). The varying connotations of the term individualism are evident in different contexts. In the United States, it is primarily associated with economic and political liberalism (Lukes, 1971). In England, it has been used as “an epithet for nonconformity in religion, for the self-reliant Englishmen, especially among the middle-classes, and for features common to the various shades of English liberalism” (Lukes, 1971, p. 63). The role of individualism in English liberalism encompasses a range of meanings, from free markets to state intervention (Lukes, 1971).

Minogue's use of the term's individualism and individuality in his writings is influenced by the debates about their meanings. He often used them interchangeably, partly because Oakeshottian thinkers primarily used the term individuality rather than individualism. Additionally, Minogue used individuality to emphasise his concern for the moral identity of individuals and to distinguish his account from the liberal one. Thirdly, he wanted to avoid the nation state connotation given to individualism in the German intellectual tradition. Finally, the term individualism was more commonly associated with classical liberalism and libertarianism than conservatism (Zwolinski & Tomasi, 2023). Therefore, by using individuality, Minogue sought to distance himself from the liberal connotations of the term individualism.

In his later years, however, Minogue made a clear distinction between individuality and individualism. He did so for several reasons. Firstly, individualism was more marketable in the Anglophone world, especially in the United States. Additionally, perfectionist doctrines accommodated the language of individuality in their critique of individualism. Thirdly,

individualism took a prominent place in the discourse of New Right politicians and thinkers. Finally, he wanted to emphasise that individualism is a moral practice that entails certain obligations.

Minogue (2012a) defines individuality as a characteristic of every human being and object. He traced this concept of individuality to Greek philosophy, particularly in the character of Socrates who stood against the abstract universalism of Athenian laws and customs (Minogue, 2017). In ancient Greece, before the emergence of individualism, individuality was seen as potentially destructive and even evil because individual choice could run contrary to the established order of things. For instance, in Plato's *Republic*, there is an argument for the extinction of individuality in the ideal polis.

Individualism, on the contrary, regards the unique characteristics that arise from human choice as inherently valuable. According to Minogue (2012a, p. 257), individualism is “the practice that accords to some personal acts, beliefs, utterances a legitimacy that may conflict with the dictates of custom and authority”. This moral practice places individual choice at the heart of how people pursue their rational desires and interact with one another. Individualism and the intricate decision-making process that it entails are the defining features of the free way of life in Western civilisation.

The individualist ethos is driven by the pursuit of self-interest and the quest for a fulfilling life as defined by each individual. Minogue's notion of the good life draws from Hobbes's concept of felicity, which involves the ongoing pursuit and fulfilment of one's desires. This idea of felicity highlights the intricate nature of choice and is framed by Minogue's differentiation between desire and impulse.

Minogue, inspired by Hobbes, regards individuals as beings driven by their desires. They have an ongoing passion for fulfilling their desires, but this passion is not irrational or uncontrolled. According to Minogue (2012c, p. 175), desire is a “rationalized passion”, a concept based on Oakeshott's positive view of reason as an essential aspect of the individualist human experience. Desires are shaped by the commitments individuals have made, whether they are related to duty or identity, as well as the reality of living in a society where others are pursuing their own desires. In contrast, Minogue (2012c, p. 176) defines an impulse as an “unrationalized passion” that fails to consider the nuances of individual reasoning and traditions of practice. Impulses are driven by needs rather than desires, creating an obligation to fulfil them (Minogue, 2001b). The satisfaction of these crucial needs often leads individuals to abandon their commitments to themselves and others, exerting pressure on the government to implement policies that run counter to individualism.

The fulfilment of felicity is but one part of Minogue’s view of the act of choice and the individual good life. The other part Minogue borrows from Oakeshott’s idea of self-enactment, which is the moral identity revealed through individual choice. This moral identity adds a layer to the complexity of choice because individuals seek to sustain an identity in their actions and interaction with others.

Suppose an individual, X, discovers a substantial amount of cash in a green field with no means of identifying the owner. Possessing the money would satisfy a desire that requires significant investment, presenting a significant personal advantage. However, X places immense importance on their identity as an honest Christian who adheres to the commandment against stealing, which complicates the decision-making process. In the end, X decides to locate and return the money to its rightful owner to uphold their moral identity, despite the personal benefits of

keeping the currency. Albeit there are always sinners, and individual X could have taken the money disregarding his valued Christian identity, the example of individual X illustrates that the individualistic spirit is not simply a matter of selfishly pursuing personal desires. It entails a complex moral dimension that considers how individuals construct and maintain their identities through the choices they make.

Minogue (1992a, p. 12) writes;

Preferences can be ranked in order of desire, but choice is a much deeper idea, because it includes consideration not only of what satisfactions different courses of action may give, but also the sense of moral identity revealed in choosing whatever we may choose.

Individualism as a moral practice

Minogue's defence of individualism may suggest a tension with authority. Indeed, his early writings reveal the importance of authority in his political thought. He faulted classical liberalism for challenging authority and showed reverence for it by supporting the administration of LSE against student protests in the sixties (Minogue, 2001b). In a letter to J.A.G. Griffith, ruminating about the troubles, Minogue (1988d, para. 1) wrote “I support authority and the rules made by authority”.

Throughout Minogue's intellectual life, there was a notable shift towards emphasising the importance of social institutions of authority, duty, and morality in individual conduct. This discourse emerged from a concern about ideological liberation from the social institutions of authority, which were central to the individualist disposition. Additionally, as there was a growing critique from both the left and the right against excessive individualism, Minogue's (2012c) reflections on individualism aimed to demonstrate that impulsive conduct did not corrupt it, but rather it was a disposition that had a mutualistic relationship with authority.

Minogue argues that individualism is not solely a matter of pursuing one's desires but is also a moral practice that entails adhering to certain obligations. He draws on Oakeshott's idea of individualism as a moral practice to support this view. According to Minogue, individuals who embrace individualism must subscribe to specific conditions that allow them to engage in activities without necessarily dictating the outcomes. These obligations, which are central to the practice of individualism, are grounded in three types of authority: formal, informal, and inner.

Minogue (1995a) considers formal authority to refer to the institutions of the state, mainly the rule of law. His concept of the rule of law was influenced by Oakeshott. This is evident in his definition of law as,

a set of hypothetical propositions specifying certain kinds of conduct that will attract sanctions if their occurrence should be proved in a court of law. The law does not command us to do anything. (Minogue, 2017, p. 217).

According to Minogue, the rule of law is a set of agreed-upon rules that individuals conform to and modify if deemed essential, rather than commands they must obey. These rules do not provide a certain course of conduct but rather seek to modify it, leaving other paths open to achieving felicity. Individual freedom is only threatened when the law imposes an unchosen end on individuals by commanding them. Therefore, the rule of law reconciles the individualistic disposition with the necessity of authority to counter human impulse.

The second form of authority is informal authority, which exists within social institutions like the family, church, and marriage. These institutions derive their authority from several sources. Firstly, their continued existence ensures a stable society without constant challenges to their authority (Minogue, 1995a). Secondly, they are the custodians of long-held traditions as a result of having stood the test of time. Finally, individuals voluntarily join these institutions to meet specific needs or common interests, thus creating moral obligations to them.

Social institutions provide informal authority that individuals subscribe to, thereby restraining human conduct. This type of authority fills the gaps left by the law's silence on various human experiences. As Minogue (1995a, p. 72) notes, “[i]nformal practical authority is the texture of authority within which we all live and the propensity to recognise it is the mark of a civilised person”. Therefore, informal authority is most effective in handling the ongoing challenge of living in a society of individualists.

Individuals also have an inner authority that guides their actions and choices, based on their responses to moral questions about what is right and what their choices reveal about their identity. Minogue (2010c) associates this internal authority with Montesquieu's concept of honour, which he links to individualism.

Montesquieu's typology of human association identifies three forms: despotism, in which a single individual wields power through fear; republican government, in which the people hold supreme power by prioritising the good of the state over individuals; and monarchical government, in which a monarch is subject to underlying laws and the principle of honour, which promotes ambition and divides power, contributing to moderation in the exercise of political power. Honour plays a vital role in maintaining civil order in a monarchy (Montesquieu, 2002).

According to Montesquieu (2002), honour is a prejudice that is present in every person and social rank, capable of inspiring great actions. He sees honour as nurturing the complexity of human character and promoting a higher form of ambition that pertains not to the individual's obligations to others, but to what they owe to themselves (Montesquieu, 2002). Honour demands self-mastery and a code of conduct that goes beyond the demands of formal and informal authority. It requires an inner introspection or self-assertion in making complex individualistic decisions about right and wrong and the moral character to be nurtured.

Similarly, Minogue (2010c, p. 63) argues, “[h]onour thus forbids acts that would reveal one as despicable. Such judgments are highly individualistic and vary greatly, of course, but they are what make the lives of Western peoples rich and morally complex”. Honour also promotes inner authority, which moderates the behaviour of both rulers and the ruled and contributes to the order that enables freedom in Europe (Minogue, 1983c).

Minogue argues that obeying authority does not contradict individualism; in fact, it is a prerequisite for it. Authority does not dictate what we should do but rather what we should not do, which creates the conditions for individualism to thrive. According to Minogue (1995a, pp. 67-68),

authority legitimately exercised would only frustrate what we ought not to do... If we are simply bundles of inclinations, and frustration is the worst thing that can happen, then authority does indeed frustrate. But if we recognise moral channels of conduct along which we must pursue whatever it is we desire, then authority merely keeps us doing, the right thing.

Minogue (1988d) offers three reasons why individualists should follow the rules of authority. First, the individual acts freely in abiding by the rules, since they are conditions that permit individuals to pursue their self-chosen ends. Second, it reflects the individual's moral commitments as a voluntary member of the association be it the state, a social institution and to himself. Finally, it encourages a sense of civility that is essential in a society of individualists. Thus, recognising the rules of authority means upholding the moral obligations of individualism.

IV: The moral life

Minogue (1999c) links morality to individualism since he considers the latter to be a moral theory. As a result, he rejects deontological and consequentialist moral theories for attempting to impose a predetermined pattern of moral conduct that undermines individual moral autonomy.

Minogue (2012c), following Oakeshott, advocates for a morality grounded in individual human experience and guided by practice, which he terms the Moral Life.

What is the moral life?

Minogue's (2012c, p. 130) concept of the Moral Life involves “that element of our experience in which we cultivate the duties we have to ourselves, duties to sustain a character we approve of, and one that will not suffer justified reproach from others, or from our own inner sense”. This approach reflects Oakeshott's dualistic view of morality, where individuals disclose their desires by cultivating their duties and reveal their moral identity by sustaining a particular character. In Minogue's account, individuals do not submit to external pressures, but instead make moral judgments through inner reflection. Morality, according to Minogue, is a non-instrumental activity conducted by autonomous moral agents who consider their actions in relation to others and themselves.

Minogue's emphasis on inner reflection and moral character aligns with several aspects of virtue ethics.⁴ Firstly, Minogue (2005e) agrees with virtue ethicists in assigning a significant role to virtues as qualities of human conduct. Secondly, like virtue ethicists, Minogue rejects the notion that normative ethics must provide an all-encompassing account of correct human conduct (Hursthouse & Pettigrove, 2022). In a similar vein, Minogue (2005e) contends that traditional virtues should be subject to individual deliberation and judgment. Thus, it is unsurprising that Minogue (1993b), for instance, would find common ground with virtue ethicists such as Bernard Williams in critiquing attempts to systematise moral theories, which promote a moral framework external to the self. Thirdly, virtue ethics places significant importance on practical wisdom—the

⁴ Scholars have not universally agreed on a standardised understanding of virtue ethics; nonetheless, its core essence lies in emphasising virtues and the moral character of the individual (Trianosky, 1990).

ability to discern and apply virtues in complex moral situations (Schollmeier, 1989). Similarly, Minogue's (2003f) consistent Oakeshottian-inspired critique of political issues recognises the significance of practical knowledge in guiding human conduct.

Nevertheless, Minogue diverged from virtue ethicists on various fronts. Firstly, he disagreed with Bernard Williams' internalist perspective on the role of blame in analysing moral conduct. According to Minogue, blame possesses an external aspect, wherein an agent responds to another agent's failure to fulfil their moral commitments or experiences moral luck, thus not enacting their moral identity. Secondly, Minogue would disagree with the teleological essence of virtue ethics, as exemplified by MacIntyre (2014), who correlated moral discourse with a concept of *telos*. Thirdly, while virtue ethicists have sought to construct an account of education for nurturing moral virtues (Carr, 2017), Minogue's disagreement lies not in the premise of cultivating moral virtues but in the idea of imbuing education, particularly within universities, with instrumental or extrinsic purpose (Minogue, 1974a).

Despite the focus on the self and lack of external pressure, individuals in moral deliberation can still consider other factors. Minogue (2012c, p. 133) acknowledges that the moral life “cannot avoid picking up some of the features of a complex moral tradition”. This complex moral tradition individuals learn through living with others in the polity. He emphasises that “morality consists in... the development of good habits and can only work through habit” (Minogue, 1980b, para. 20). Although individuals are primarily responsible for making moral judgments, morality requires adherence to external conditions such as the rule of law and voluntary commitments, as well as the internal condition of possessing a moral character. For Minogue, moral action involves staying faithful to these commitments, whether they are external or internal. By emphasising that morality

is a practice, Minogue makes it clear that a sense of right and wrong can be discerned through moral engagement.

Minogue (1999c, p. 3) posits that morality involves “subjection to law, and goodness consisted in sustaining a coherence between obligations in the course of responding to desires”. According to Minogue, the responsibility to act morally lies with individuals who must self-manage without relying on formal moral systems. He shares Oakeshott’s descriptive approach to morality, highlighting how pre-modern societies based moral judgments on communal customs and systems, which he termed ‘servile.’ Conversely, in modern societies, individuals have moral agency and make judgments independently. Minogue (2012c) views this autonomy of judgment as the kernel of liberty.

Hence, the moral life is the condition of freedom found in the moral idiom of individualism central to modernity (Minogue, 2012c). This distinct way of living is prevalent in the West, particularly in the English gentleman, whose conduct is guided by a range of factors and reasons (Minogue, 1983a). This moral tradition emphasises good manners and civility and is characterised by individuals making moral judgments while adhering to the conditions of the moral practice. Nevertheless, the moral life focused on freely choosing individuals translates as an endless process of deliberation lacking moral closure since individual actions will differ depending on the agent, and each action taken separately will demand a different response (Minogue, 1997b). As such, self-mastery, possessing a specific moral character, and consideration towards others are necessary for individuals to govern their conduct responsibly.

Minogue (2012c, p.137) writes:

[o]ne value of moral conduct in the lives we lead is that it orders our lives so that we can rely on other people, and other people on us. This is a supremely valuable basis of cooperative enterprise in social life. Confident expectation of the responses of others is the basis of much of the enterprise that distinguishes our culture.

For Minogue, the moral dynamism of European culture was based on the moral life of the individual, which entails acting honourably and considering both oneself and others. This consideration fosters voluntary cooperation among individuals within a polity, creating a civic space for moral agents to deliberate on their actions and pursue their felicity.

The moral act: What is the right thing to do?

Minogue's view that the moral life involves individuals doing the right thing raises the fundamental question of what exactly the right thing is. While acknowledging this question, Minogue (2012c) asserts that it is one he cannot answer definitively, as doing so would contradict the idea of the moral life as a practice for autonomous agents. Instead, he believes that moral philosophising can aid in understanding, explaining, and providing conditions for moral deliberation but cannot guarantee certainty in moral conduct.

Despite the lack of a definitive answer to what constitutes the right thing to do, Minogue asserts that the moral act involves fidelity to the external or internal conditions that an individual has accepted. However, a problem arises in determining which of these conditions holds more authority in the moral act, particularly if they conflict with each other (Minogue, 2012c). Minogue posits that determining and interpreting the authoritative condition is central to the dilemma of the moral world. This is because situations may arise where the right thing to do could require renegeing on our moral commitments. In such situations, according to Minogue, the individual relies on several tenets in descending order of importance to deliberate and determine the authoritative condition that would guide their actions.

Minogue believes that adherence to the law is the first tenet in determining the right thing to do. By following the law, individuals fulfil their obligations and duties as members of the polity, thus, doing the right thing is modifying our conduct conditioned by the laws of the state. However, the law is insufficient in guiding individuals in making moral judgments for the many circumstances where it is silent.

Minogue identifies another tenet that plays a crucial role in the moral act due to the silence of the law. This tenet is the self-chosen moral commitments that individuals have toward others and institutions, while some obligations such as family or country are inherited (Minogue, 2012c). These commitments create a sense of moral duty that needs to be fulfilled. Thus, doing the right thing entails fulfilling the duties and obligations of moral commitments. For instance, if one has committed to a marriage, the right thing to do is to act in ways that sustain the union.

However, there may be situations where fulfilling our moral commitments may present a dilemma in moral judgment. For instance, if a commanding general is asked by their country to act in ways that violate the rules of war, they may face conflicting obligations between their self-chosen and born-with moral commitments. In such cases, Minogue (2012c, p. 173) argues that “individuals sustain their self-respect, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of others”. This concept of self-respect for our moral character is therefore the final and most important authoritative condition in the moral act.

Maintaining a positive moral character in the moral act involves following rules of conduct and exhibiting good manners in interactions with others and oneself. An individual's character is shaped by both internal and external experiences, but it can be affected by justified blame and guilt (Minogue, 2012c). Blame refers to a negative evaluative judgment made by others about an individual's actions. The right thing to do involves avoiding moral blame for one's conduct since

it can negatively impact how others view the individual's character. External blame can be attributed to the individual for not fulfilling their moral commitments or for encountering moral luck. However, unconstrained blame in moral discourse can lead to government action against the individual. Hence, the internal response of guilt also plays a role in the moral complexity of deciding how to act in the right way.

Guilt is a self-conscious response to the violation of our moral character by our actions. It signals to the moral agent a wrong decision, often resulting in a desire to make amends. Minogue (2012c) contends that avoiding guilt is the basis of doing the moral thing. For instance, consider the example of a commanding general who is asked by his country to violate the rules of war. In this scenario, the officer will prioritise avoiding guilt in their judgment, leading them to strive for the moral act. In this case, the commanding general will prioritise his moral identity (honour) over the moral commitment to his country and disobey the order.

The focus on commitment and character of the commanding general does not reveal certainty of the moral choice to be done. The moral process and response of agents in such a position do not guarantee good conduct, as failure is inevitable. The pursuit of a perfect moral life is often theorised but remains unattainable. Despite this, when human beings deliberate by considering these authoritative conditions, they act as autonomous beings, instead of sacrificing their agency to external moral laws or systems imposing conduct (Minogue, 2012c).

The moral act depends on individuals who are guided by authoritative conditions within a practice. These conditions do not merely consist of a set of prohibitions, systems, and rules that aim to create a morally good society, nor do they dictate what action individuals should take. Therefore, these moral principles cannot guarantee that the individual will always make the right

decision. Instead, they provide a framework for individual moral judgment in the pursuit of desirabilities.

Conclusion

This chapter highlights Minogue's positive portrayal of individualism, which he views as essential to modern society and the unique moral life of Western civilisation. Minogue's perspective differs from narratives that associate the modernity with the advent of a permissive individualistic doctrine. Rather, he associates individualism with duty, responsibility, and moral conduct, emphasising its positive character rather than impulsive tendencies.

Minogue's notion of individualism is influenced by the ideas of Hobbes and Oakeshott, who both supported individualism in their own ways. Hobbes is known for his view that the individual is naturally individualistic and, out of necessity, becomes social through the social contract that creates the sovereign. Thus, the individual precedes the state in Hobbes' philosophy. On the other hand, Oakeshott's contribution to individualism lies in his morality of individuality, which values the autonomy of separate agents who seek their felicity while collaborating with others in society. This idiom brought with it a disposition that gave innate worth to the individual and the search for his felicity called individualism.

Minogue's account of individualism is shaped by the traditions of Christian humanism and scepticism. Christianity is credited for emphasising the inherent value of an individual's will and soul in the pursuit of salvation. This view is influenced by Erasmus' defence of the role of will and choice in salvation against Luther's criticism. Meanwhile, Minogue is also influenced by the scepticism of Michel de Montaigne, who argued that reason was a private matter not accessible to the public and created a private realm for individuals as part of society. Burckhardt's perspective

on the Italian Renaissance in the 15th and 16th centuries influenced Minogue's notion of individualism as a break from traditional societies that dictated the desires and identity of individuals. Instead, modern societies allow individuals to freely pursue their felicity while maintaining their moral character.

In this chapter, Minogue's concept of individualism is defined as the recognition of an individual's desires and moral character as legitimate. He emphasises that individualism is not a license for immoral conduct but a moral practice that requires adherence to authoritative conditions. These conditions include the rule of law, which allows for the pursuit of desires while maintaining social order, social institutions of authority that individuals are committed to, and the preservation of one's innate moral character through honourable actions.

Minogue's notion of individualism is intricately connected to his understanding of morality. He adopts Oakeshott's two-pronged approach to morality, which involves revealing our desires and manifesting our moral character through our actions. Minogue terms this approach the 'moral life', which refers to a person's inclination to make the right decision when faced with a moral dilemma. This moral conduct is critical in fostering trust between individuals and within oneself, which is necessary for cooperation and the ability to live in society.

According to Minogue, moral conduct is influenced by external moral systems, but not entirely determined by them. For Minogue, the moral act entails following the prerequisites of moral activity, such as obeying the rule of law, honouring commitments to others or institutions, and maintaining moral character. While adhering to these conditions does not guarantee moral certainty, it fosters the moral vigour that characterises Western culture's individualist moral life.

Chapter V

Ideology Unmasked: Kenneth Minogue on Ideology

The term 'ideology' is commonly used in public discourse and is generally conceptualised as referring to a set of ideas held by a group of individuals (Edlin, 2014). It is a label used to explain and understand certain viewpoints within a doctrine. Therefore, all political doctrines can be considered ideologies. The definition of ideology in the social sciences lacks scholarly agreement due to its diverse connotations and interdisciplinary use, with debates spanning its relationship to science, discourse, and politics. As Terry Eagleton (1991, p. 1) notes "the term 'ideology' has a whole range of useful meanings, not all of which are compatible with each other".

Kenneth Minogue views the term as politically and theoretically significant for analysing and critiquing doctrines that are anti-modern and apolitical, which he believes pose a threat to Western civilisation. Minogue defines ideology as a theory of liberation from an oppressive system, with modern Western civilisation representing the target of the ideologues. In his view, ideology is a specialised form of thought that seeks to eliminate the oppressive system of modernity and create a perfect society, seeking redemption for the oppressed masses. This view and critique of ideology is the main and recurring motif of his writings.

In this chapter, the primary objective is to provide an overview of Kenneth Minogue's perspective on ideology. However, before delving into Minogue's nuanced views on ideology, it is imperative to comprehensively explore his underlying concept of politics, which fundamentally shapes his analytical framework. According to Minogue, any doctrine that strays from the

established boundaries of politics is inherently ideological. Therefore, the first section of the chapter will meticulously examine the evolution of Michael Oakeshott's concept of politics and its profound impact on shaping Minogue's own perspective.

Next, the chapter delves into the intellectual lineage of the concept of ideology. This tradition encompasses three distinct connotations associated with the term. Firstly, there is the negative perspective, as elucidated in the writings of Karl Marx. Here, ideology is regarded as a mechanism for the representation of the ideas and interests of the ruling class, often perpetuating and justifying societal oppression. Secondly, the positive viewpoint is exemplified by figures like Lenin, wherein ideology is also conceived as the vehicle for conveying the ideas of the marginalised and oppressed masses, striving to challenge and disrupt existing power structures. Finally, there is the common interpretation of ideology as a tool for comprehending the individual ideas and beliefs that shape collective thought and action.

The third section explores Minogue's refutation of the end of ideology thesis, in which he argues that the salvationist tradition of liberalism has become the torchbearer of the ideological movement in the West. It also elaborates on Minogue's narrow view of the birth of ideology and the negative connotation he associates with the concept. It examines the difference between Minogue's and Oakeshott's concepts of ideology, highlighting the threat that ideology poses to modernity in their views. In conclusion, this section examines four ways in which Minogue has contributed to the debates about the concept of ideology: by considering it apolitical, delineating its components, drawing from the positive connotation, all while preserving its critical function in a non-Marxist form.

I: The concept of politics

To understand Minogue's critical attitude towards ideology, it is crucial to grasp his concept of politics. Minogue saw modern politics as a dichotomy between two types of doctrines: those that accept the world as it is as per the Western tradition of politics, and those that seek liberation from the oppression of modern society, known as messianic doctrines. Any ideas that go beyond the practical realm of politics, according to Minogue, qualify as ideology. Minogue's concept of the political draws heavily on Michael Oakeshott's ideas, and it is essential to examine the latter's concept of the political to understand what the former perceives as ideological thought.

Oakeshott and practical politics

Oakeshott's concept of politics centres around the evolution of his understanding of political philosophy, shifting from a broader focus on the State (Society) to a narrower focus on government. He believed that political philosophy has two primary tasks: constructive and critical thinking. The constructive task involves analysing the concepts, features, assumptions, and structure of political activity. Once this process is complete, the political philosopher can apply these ideas to the practical world of human experience and prescribe their value (Oakeshott, 2011b).

The second task of political philosophers is not just to understand but to critically examine political phenomena. Through this critical analysis, political philosophers can offer an adequate account of politics that is more connected to the totality of political experience than other

disciplines that consider the subject from a broader societal perspective.¹ Oakeshott (2011c, p. 120) defines political philosophy as “a general explanation of the character of political life and activity from the standpoint of its purpose and end, as distinct from merely social life and activity”. The distinctiveness of political philosophy becomes evident when one recognises its limited scope, which is confined to the realm of political activity, rather than encompassing the entirety of human conduct (Oakeshott, 2010b). In the perspective of Oakeshott (2010a), political activity represents a practical mode of experience that stands apart from the realm of political philosophy.

Oakeshott's conceptualisation of politics evolved over time, and his distinction between the totality of human activity and the scope of political philosophy is a modification of earlier views. In his 1946 introduction to Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Oakeshott (2000, pp. 4-6) argued that political philosophy examines eternity, which refers to the totality of human experience, to develop “conceptions of the natural world, of God, of human activity and human destiny”. However, in "The Politics of Faith and the Politics of Scepticism," Oakeshott (1996) narrowed the scope of his analysis to focus on the political activities of government, rather than Society, which encompasses all human activity.

This essay encompasses several key themes central to Oakeshott's thought. Oakeshott (1996) posits that modern politics is dominated by two conceptions of politics: faith and scepticism. The politics of faith represents the use of government to achieve human perfection. While Oakeshott does not necessarily mean this type of politics is utopian, it encompasses any project that aims to innovate upon the current system. The politics of faith involves pursuing

¹ Oakeshott's (2011b) avoidance of the word social and usage of more precise terms like civil society reflects his narrowing of the realm of political philosophy.

perfectionism through a singular right order imposed by government power. This perfectionism is characterised by a religious zeal to impose a single standard or way of life on the population (Oakeshott, 1996).

Oakeshott rejects perfectionism, deeming it unattainable on a grand governmental scale within a diverse polity of individuals. His critique of perfectionism rests on the premise that human conduct is incapable of achieving perfection at a societal level (Oakeshott, 1996). Any attempt to impose a perfectionist political order upon society would contradict human conduct, ultimately leading to “disappointment... and misery” (Oakeshott, 1996, p. 31). Disappointment arises from the recognition that pursuing perfection is destined to fail due to the realities of human conduct. Misery follows because Oakeshott believes that striving for perfection through the politics of faith would result in the establishment of a totalitarian regime, curtailing individual freedom. This totalitarian regime would promote a politics of terror, replacing individualism and diversity with a society governed by a singular right order (Oakeshott, 1996).

Oakeshott concedes that the politics of faith is not universally dismissed worldwide. Traditional societies, characterised by monolithic civilisations, still exist, and in certain circumstances, modern societies, known for their pluralism, there is a place for the politics of faith (Oakeshott, 1996). For example, in times of crisis, the politics of faith may be deemed necessary, such as when war is challenging a nation’s statehood. Nevertheless, these cases are rare, and the politics of faith is better suited to right order societies rather than the modern polities of the West (Oakeshott, 1996).

For Western civilisation, characterised by individualism, the appropriate politics is scepticism. Scepticism is directed not against the totality of existence, but against attempts to perfect the human condition through government efforts. According to the politics of scepticism, government is a specific and practical activity, not concerned with being “the architect of a perfect manner of living, or ... of an improved manner of living, or even ... any manner of living at all” (Oakeshott, 1996, p. 32). Although the politics of scepticism suggests a minimal role for government, it does not advocate for its complete absence. Scepticism recognises that individuals may come into conflict with each other and characterises the role of government as the maintenance of order. Thus, government has practical value in ensuring an orderly society where individuals can live and cooperate.

Rejecting the politics of faith for its extremism, Oakeshott also recognises the dangers of quietism in the politics of scepticism. The latter can be slow to respond to changing circumstances, which is why Oakeshott (1996, p. 128) seeks a “middle region of movement” that is sensitive to both poles of the political spectrum. Scepticism is necessary to balance attempts to oversimplify modern politics and provide a nuanced understanding of it.

This dichotomy of faith and scepticism in modern politics shows Oakeshott’s continued narrowing of politics towards a tighter analysis of the actions of government. The politics of faith and scepticism provides an essential tool for identifying radicalism, a tool Minogue relies on. However, this essay is not Oakeshott’s final statement on politics, instead, we find it in his distinction between a civil and enterprise association.

The book *On Human Conduct* (1975) comprises three essays in which Oakeshott provides his definitive description of politics. His definitive account of politics is understood through the distinction between enterprise and civil association, as applied to the modern state. In an enterprise association, people join voluntarily to pursue common interests or objectives (Oakeshott, 1975). This association represents the preferred model for the politics of faith, as it provides a shared purpose in pursuit of perfection. In contrast, civil association refers to a set of conduct rules that enable morally independent individuals to pursue their goals freely (Oakeshott, 1975). Oakeshott acknowledges that people have varying views, objectives, and purposes, which often result in conflict within a polity. The civil association acknowledges this diversity and allows individuals to pursue their goals within a common framework of practices, thereby upholding human autonomy and freedom. Therefore, the politics of scepticism aligns with civil association, as it acknowledges that a unified conception of the good life is unattainable in a society of individuals with distinct individualities.

Oakeshott applies these two association types to his analysis of the modern European state. The enterprise association, when applied to the state, refers to an “an all-embracing, compulsory corporate association and of its government as the manager of an enterprise” (Oakeshott, 1975, p. 311). In contrast, civil association applied to the state means a state that permits individuals to pursue their chosen ends within a legal framework.

Oakeshott's definitive view of politics becomes apparent when applying these associations to the state. While previously he saw politics as attending to “the general arrangements of a set of people whom chance or choice have brought together”, now it is focused on the activities of government (Oakeshott, 1962, p. 112). Hence, modern European politics is divided between supporters of enterprise government, which deliberates and expresses opinions on how to achieve

a shared purpose, and advocates of civil association government, which focuses on establishing conditions and rules for individual interaction within society (Oakeshott, 1975).

Oakeshott naturally prefers civil association politics because it is a form of government that respects freedom and individuality, while enterprise politics threaten them. As a result, Oakeshott's view of politics is limited to government and its rules within a civil association society and any doctrine that ventures away from it cannot be considered politics.

Minogue and practical politics

Minogue's conceptualisation of politics draws heavily from Oakeshott's narrower view. This is evident when he characterises politics as “the activity by which the framework of human life is sustained; it is not life itself” (Minogue, 2000b, p. I). For Minogue, politics is the study of the art of governing, not the science of theorising about society. Therefore, he sees political philosophy as “a speculative inquiry into the assumptions of the practical activity of politics” (Minogue & De Crespigny, 1975, p. IX). Minogue (1993b) is highly critical of the rise of normative political philosophy after John Rawls' publication of *A Theory of Justice* (1971), as he disdains theorising about society. This view extends to his critique of modern political science, which he describes as “a kind of master 'science' that the world needs in solving its problems” (Minogue, 2004a, p. 237).

Minogue (1986e; 2000b; 2006a) believes that politics is a contest of persuading fellow citizens to either maintain or alter government rules and actions. His use of the term persuasion acknowledges the complexity of politics in a society where people have diverse identities, beliefs,

and goals.² Persuasion also implies seeking agreement from others for the proposed rules, which legitimises them through consent. Additionally, persuasion requires knowledge of the traditional inheritance, history, and familiarity of current and proposed government rules and actions (Minogue, 2004a).

Minogue's emphasis on politics as persuasion about the framework of laws within a society reflects his adoption of Oakeshott's and Shirley Robin Letwin's ideal of a civil association. As an LSE colleague of Minogue's, Letwin shared his view of politics as a practical art rather than a theoretical science about creating a better system.³ According to Letwin (2019), the pursuit of perfectionism is attainable in the individual realm but becomes a folly when extended to a civil association state.

Letwin's view of civil association aligns with Oakeshott's interpretation of modern politics and human conduct. Both Letwin (2005) and Oakeshott (2003) argue that civil association allows individuals to coexist peacefully while pursuing their own projects. According to Letwin, the role of the government is to safeguard the pursuit of desires and enterprises, but this must be done under the rule of law. The rule of law must uphold individuals' ability to pursue their desires, but it does not mean an absolutist pursuit. Letwin (2005, p. 344) contends that “a community worthy of its name is bound to set certain limits”. To preserve freedom, individuals must adhere to recognised rules or norms of conduct (Letwin, 2005; Oakeshott, 2003). The government's role is akin to that of a referee in a game who does not enter the field of play but enforces the rules that

² Minogue (1986e, p. 340) writes, “The whole complexity of politics results from the continuing shift in the complex identities people take on, and the relation between those identities.”

³ Minogue (1996f, p. 165) described Letwin as, “combative and clear-headed... charming and accomplished social figure whose active enterprising spirit valuably complemented Oakeshott's social passivity.”

enable the game to proceed. Similarly, the government exists to enforce the rules that allow free individuals to pursue their desires.

Minogue (2017, p. 184), like Oakeshott and Letwin, believed that a civil association is “an association of individuals living within a framework of law and pursuing their own individual and cooperative enterprises”. Therefore, the role of the government is to govern and manage conflicts that arise within this framework. However, Minogue (2008, p. 2020) contended that this role is not limited to managing interests and desires but also involves “[providing] rules which transcend them”. He argued that government does not provide any absolute or revealed truth, but rather creates space for human beings to coexist within society, with all their characteristics.

Although government may not be entirely neutral and sometimes may favour special interests through laws or budgets, its neutrality is defined by the absence of an overarching purpose or truth (Minogue, 2008a). It is this formal and impersonal nature of government that facilitates the peaceful coexistence of distinct individualities. This view of government accepts the reality of human conduct and emphasises the activity of politics as persuasion for “changing judgements about conflicting desirabilities” within a civil association (Minogue, 2000b, p. 85).

Minogue (2000b, p. 107), drawing on the intellectual legacy of the modern state as a civil association, views politics as

the activity of dealing with the business of a civil association, the state, which provided the formal framework within which individuals could produce and consume, associate socially with each other, worship or not worship, and express themselves in art.

Minogue (2006a) views any doctrine or politician that departs from the finite view of politics as persuasion as engaging in the seduction of the individual. He believes that seduction involves enticing individuals with the idea that politics can achieve social perfection, which is an

unrealistic goal. Minogue's view aligns with Oakeshott's distinction between the politics of faith and the politics of scepticism.

Unlike Oakeshott, Minogue believes that there is no longer any prospect for a *via media* between sceptical and faith-based politics. He claims that the balance between the two has been lost, and faith has overtaken scepticism (Minogue, 2012b). Additionally, Minogue argues that Oakeshott mischaracterises the politics of scepticism as being resistant to change while trying to find a place for the politics of faith in Western politics. Minogue (2012b) points out that Edmund Burke, a practitioner of the politics of scepticism, understood the significance of change for preserving the institutions of rights and duties in society. Even though Minogue shares Oakeshott's view of modern politics as a division between two opposing poles, he does not believe that the politics of faith is necessary to balance the politics of scepticism. He argues that scepticism is open to change and that Oakeshott's attempt to incorporate faith as a balancer diminishes the danger of perfectionist change that faith can inspire.

In Minogue's framework, the politics of scepticism is the activity of governing focused on the rules that enable individuals to live and cooperate within a civil association. Politics seeks to persuade citizens of what rules should govern society. In contrast, the politics of perfection seeks salvation for the individual through a rationalistic blueprint of how society should function.⁴ It seduces individuals into embracing a teleological goal of a perfect society achieved through government.

Minogue argues that the politics of perfection, even limited to governing, is not politics at all for three reasons. First, it focuses on a blueprint of how society should be, rather than what

⁴ Minogue's use of the more charged term 'the politics of perfection' highlights the deviation with Oakeshott.

rules should regulate it. Second, it involves using government to force people into an enterprise association with the aim of achieving a perfect society, threatening human freedom. Finally, a fully perfected society would not require politics since disagreement would be seen as a threat to perfection. Therefore, Minogue (2000b, p. 78) believes that “any conception of a finally perfect state is incompatible with the very activity of politics itself”.

In this rejection of the politics of perfection, Minogue uses a conceptual analytical tool to distinguish ideological doctrines from those that operate within the rules of a civil association. The latter recognise that politics involves free individuals persuading each other, whereas ideology asserts that governmental power can create a perfect system and that freedom is an illusion perpetuated by oppression (Minogue, 2008a). According to Minogue, ideology eliminates politics by denying the value of individual freedom and promoting the unattainable goal of a perfectly ordered society.⁵

II: The intellectual tradition of Ideology

For Minogue, any doctrine that strays from the realm of politics enters the domain of ideology. His use of the term 'ideology' carries some idiosyncrasies but his interpretation and understanding of the concept are also influenced by academic debates surrounding the use of the term (Eagleton, 1991). Therefore, it is essential to provide a concise overview of the historical development of the concept of ideology before delving into Minogue's perspective on it.

Before Marx: The origin of Ideology

⁵ Although Minogue shares with agonistic theorists such as William Connolly, Chantal Mouffe, James Tully, and Bonnie Honig a view of politics as conflictual, there are two reasons why he differs from them. First, he rejects the perfectionist tendencies found in agonistic thought. Second, he does not believe that conflict in politics is justified by any teleological purpose. Thus, there is little theoretical affinity between Minogue and agonistic theorists.

Ideology is a modern term frequently used in political science that originated from the French word *idéologie*. The term was coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836), a survivor of the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution, as a synonym for the ‘science of ideas’ (Freeden, 2003).

De Tracy's project aimed to provide a rational explanation of ideas as an alternative to the irrationality of the terror during the French Revolution (Eagleton, 1991). He believed that this would allow for a solid foundation for the science of ideas, from which other sciences, such as moral and political sciences, would arise (Kennedy, 1979). De Tracy sought to reduce epistemological problems to what individuals sensed in the real world, meaning that the pursuit of knowledge should be empirically verifiable. As Michael Freeden (2003) notes, Tracy's project was aligned with positivism's objective of using natural sciences to study society.

De Tracy and the *idéologues* pursued this project through the *Institut de France*, which was established by the Convention in 1795 as the intellectual centre from which the revolutionary ideas would be disseminated (Lichtheim, 1965). These ideas included the separation of powers, republicanism, property rights, and freedom of expression and thought. Consequently, the *Institut* became a significant intellectual advocate for the revolution and played a crucial role in shaping political agents in France, particularly the educated middle class.

Ideology, therefore, began with a positive undertone in defence of the revolution. Its role was to focus on the ideas and push forward the fulfilment of the ideals of the revolution (Lichtheim, 1965). Embracing ideology was, consequently, so central to the attainment of power in revolutionary France, that Napoleon Bonaparte was an honorary member of the *Institut*, a supporter of *idéologues* and sought their support for his coup of 18 Brumaire (Eagleton, 1991; Kennedy, 1979, Lichtheim, 1965). However, Bonaparte's alliance with the *idéologues* was short-

lived, as their beliefs clashed with his authoritarian and imperial ambitions (Mannheim, 2003). As Terry Eagleton (1991, p. 67) notes, "as Napoleon began to renounce revolutionary idealism, the ideologues rapidly became his *bête noire*". The ideology, which stood for the ideas of the revolution such as individual rights and a republican system of government, was now an enemy of Bonapartist authoritarianism and the imperial vision for France.⁶ Consequently, Napoleon coined the term 'ideologist' as a form of abuse and ridicule to refer to the liberal adversaries of his French empire in the *Institut* (Mannheim, 2003).

The French Revolution and the reign of Napoleon gave rise to two distinct connotations of ideology. The first was positive, representing the revolutionary ideas that guided the French Revolution and seen as symbolising positive change and its preservation. The second connotation was negative, representing a threat to the established regime due to its advocacy of radical change. This negative conceptualisation imbues ideology with "a derogatory meaning which, like the word 'doctrinaire', it has retained to the present day" (Mannheim, 2003, p. 64).

Karl Marx would adopt this negative view of ideology in his criticism of the oppressive nature of Capitalism. As Terry Eagleton (2003, p. 69) contends, "The emergence of the concept of ideology, then, is no mere chapter in the history of ideas. On the contrary, it has the most intimate relation to revolutionary struggle, and figures from the outset as a theoretical weapon of class warfare".

Karl Marx and Engels on Ideology

⁶ Napoleon viewed the *idéologues* as enemies, leading him to dismantle the *Institut* section for moral and political sciences (Kennedy, 1978).

Ideology continued to exist as a mostly negative term in the aftermath of the French and Napoleonic wars, being used against intellectuals who aimed to challenge the established system. However, in the 1840s, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels adopted a negative view of ideology as they critiqued the young Hegelian argument that religion was the source of power. They saw ideology as a representation of the ideals of the status quo.

Marxism is a highly influential mode of thought that employs historical materialism, its own theory of history, to argue that power in society stems from ownership of capital. The ruling class controls capital, including the production and dissemination of dominant ideas in society. As the ruling class changes over time, so do the ideas that govern society, becoming universally accepted. Marxism views history as a progression of stages resulting from class struggles against the ruling class's ownership of the means of production and the accompanying ideals (Marx & Engels, 1998). This theory allows Marx and Engels to offer a comprehensive analysis of contemporary capitalist societies' social and economic conditions, including a thorough critique of ruling ideas.

Marxism posits that civil society consists of two key components: the economic base and the political superstructure (Marx, 2010). The former refers to the means of production and the relations between workers and employers, while the latter encompasses everything outside of production, such as the arts, politics, philosophy, religion, and ethics (Marx, 2010; Marx & Engels, 1998). According to Marxism, the superstructure comprises all institutions and principles that reflect the values of the ruling class. Marx (2010) argued that the base determines the ideals of the superstructure, while the superstructure maintains the structure of the base. To describe the ideas of the ruling class, Marx and Engels used the term ideology.

This relationship between the base and the superstructure sustains the Classic Marxist interpretation of ideology as representing the beliefs of the ruling class. According to Marx and Engels (1998, p. 67):

The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of their dominance.

In traditional Marxist thinking, ideology is viewed as a tool of the elites in society that creates illusions or 'false consciousness', which serves to protect the status quo (Eagleton 1991; Nielsen, 1989). Consequently, ideology does not lead to revolutionary change as Napoleon viewed it, but instead becomes an instrument of conserving and justifying the established bourgeoisie order. Interestingly, this shift in the concept of ideology in Marxist thought reflects a very different take on the concept than of its eighteenth-century inventors (Lichtheim, 1965).

The goal of ideology is to legitimise the ideals of the ruling class resulting in 'false consciousness' which misleads the members of the proletariat about the reality of living in an oppressive system.⁷ Marx and Engels (1998, p. 42) argue that this consciousness arises from social and material conditions:

Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc., that is, real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious being, and the being of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their relations appear upside-down as in a camera obscura, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.

⁷ The term False consciousness is first coined by Engels (1983).

This implies that for society to move towards freedom from the oppression of these social and material conditions, the oppressed proletariat must initiate a revolution, which will result in a new consciousness as they dismantle the oppressive system and create a new one that serves their interests. Therefore, while Marxism denounces bourgeois ideology, it inherits the *idéologues'* desire for revolutionary change. Terry Eagleton (1991, p. 72) highlights this legacy when he observes that “a materialist theory of ideology is thus inseparable from a revolutionary politics”.

The Proletarian Ideology

The Marxist view posits that ideas are a reflection of material conditions, and thus the ideology of the bourgeoisie is indicative of its dominant position in society. However, a question arises from this classical Marxist view: if material conditions are responsible for such ideas, then where does Marxist dogma come from? Vladimir Lenin (1969, p. 30) addresses this issue by highlighting the dichotomy facing society: “the only choice is between bourgeois or socialist ideology”.

Here, Lenin presents ideology as reflecting two distinct socially determined connotations. The classic negative view represents the consciousness of the oppressors (bourgeoisie) and the positive consciousness of the oppressed (proletariat). Ideology, instead of being only a conservative force, is also turned into a force for radical change. In the negative sense, it blinds the working classes to the oppression inherent in the system or the exploitation they face from the elites. In the positive sense, it becomes a set of ideas or beliefs, which allow the working classes to take over and radically transform society (Eagleton, 1991).

The positive view of ideology emerged due to the ongoing analysis of class struggles in society. During times of peace between social classes, the bourgeoisie continues to hold power.

However, during periods of conflict between the classes, criticism of the ruling class leads to an understanding of the proletariat's conditions and the development of their ideology. Therefore, the new role of the ideologist “is no longer one floundering in false consciousness but the exact reverse, the scientific analyst of the fundamental laws of society and its thought formations” (Eagleton, 1991, p. 90).

Lenin provided the revolutionary muscle of the ideology of the proletariat; however, the intellectual muscle was supplied by Western Marxist thinkers, such as the Hungarian Marxist György Lukács (Lichtheim, 1965). In his book *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (1923), ideology does not only represent the view of the dominant classes, but it also represents the political views of all social classes, which Lukács (1971) described as class consciousness.

Class consciousness encompasses two ideologies: that of the bourgeoisie, which fails to comprehend the true nature of social relations and the role of social conditions in shaping individuals, and that of the proletariat, which grasps the full reality of society and its potential for transformation (Eagleton, 1991). The proletariat's ideology necessitates revolutionary leadership, knowledge, and, if required, the use of force to achieve hegemony.⁸

Hence, ideology takes a more positive role as the proletariat seeks dominance over the superstructure. Ideology seen in a positive light now “refers to a set of beliefs which coheres and inspires a specific group or class in the pursuit of political interests judged to be desirable” (Eagleton, 1991, p. 44). The concept of ideology has now moved from a purely negative view

⁸ This idea is best seen through Antonio Gramsci's (2008) theory of hegemony.

within classical Marxism as the term for the ideals of the ruling class into a representation of all beliefs within society.

Jorge Larrain (1986, p. 77) notes the consequences of this change for Marxism and the concept of ideology:

The most significant consequence of this evolution from a restrictive negative concept in Marx to a general positive concept from Lenin onwards, is the loss or dissolution of the concept itself. Detached from its critical connotation, ideology loses what for Marx was its essential feature and becomes a concept which covers the whole range of social and political thought, whatever its origins, function or validity. Thus the value which the concept had in Marx's work as a tool of analysis and critique has almost disappeared.

Ideology outside of Marxism

The concept of ideology was not debated in isolation by Marxist intellectuals. An important development in the 19th century further complicated the meaning and function of the concept: the use of the term in social science to refer to individuals' beliefs. This development of ideology as a non-evaluative term is attributed to the thought of Karl Mannheim (1893-1947).

Mannheim sees the story of ideology as being an evolution from a particular conception to a total conception. The former refers to a sceptical view of opposing ideas and representations, which are seen as conscious disguises of the true nature of a situation, not in line with one's interests (Mannheim, 2003). This conception is similar to classical Marxism's view of ideology as the representation of ruling class ideals and the preservation of the status quo. The proletariat ideology is represented by a utopia, signifying individuals that have a vision for a better system and seek a new social order (Mannheim, 2003).

Mannheim's argument is that the particular ideologies and utopias are limited in their ability to understand the reality of the social situation, and he advocates for a total conception of ideology. This total conception refers to the ideology of a specific historical and social group, such as a class, and considers the entire structure of the group's mindset (Mannheim, 2003). It represents a comprehensive epistemology of the world that is shaped by the group's historical and social context, which Mannheim refers to as the sociology of knowledge.

According to Eagleton (1991, p. 109), this development, “defuse[s] the whole Marxist conception of ideology, replacing it with the less embattled, contentious conception of a 'world view'”. Both Mannheim and the common view of ideology moved away from its negative and positive connotation, instead using it as an epistemological, empirical, and philosophical tool for understanding the beliefs, opinions, and attitudes of individuals. Thus, the concept lost its narrow focus and critical edge, becoming a broader, non-evaluative, and historicist term.

Another way in which the term ‘ideology’ evolved into a non-evaluative term was in the social sciences, driven by scholars in the United States who conducted empirical field research into the attitudes and opinions of individuals (Freeden, 2003). The term ideology gained widespread acceptance as a non-evaluative analytical tool within social sciences, cementing its place in academic discourse.

Kenneth Minogue (2000b, p. 99) summarises this development writing;

words like ‘theory’ and ‘doctrine’ lacked the requisite technical panache for a developing inquiry, so ‘ideology’ came to be used to refer to this entire miscellany of beliefs, including both political ideas and what we are here marking off as a special kind of intellectual creation.

Ideology became a term used to analyse individual beliefs within social sciences, referred to as the 'common' view. This view defines ideology as;

a set of ideas, beliefs, opinions, and values that exhibit a recurring pattern, are held by significant groups [who] compete over providing and controlling plans for public policy... with the aim of justifying, contesting or changing the social and political arrangements and processes of a political community (Freedon, 2003, p. 32).

III: Minogue's concept of Ideology

Minogue's concept of ideology is situated within a rich tradition that has assigned the term various roles, including positive, negative, and non-evaluative connotations. However, these traditions alone do not fully explain Minogue's ideology concept. To understand it fully, we must consider his two intellectual aims guiding his scholarship on ideology. The first outlines a negative and narrower ideology concept to explain modes of thought beyond practical politics. The second refutes the end of ideology thesis prevalent in Anglo-American intellectual circles during the fifties and sixties. I will now examine the latter in more detail.

Minogue on the end of Ideology thesis

The dominant political doctrines of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as liberalism, socialism, and conservatism, actively avoided being labelled as ideologies. This was because they viewed political activity as a process of reform and change rather than a complete transformation of society. The label 'ideology' was mainly used to criticise doctrines that aimed to radically transform society, such as those of Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Stalinist Soviet Union, which promoted a totalitarian form of government (Eagleton, 1991, Freedon, 2003).

However, scholars such as Daniel Bell (1988a) and Edward Shils (1958), who examined the political and intellectual context of the 1950s and 1960s, argued that Western civilisation was undergoing the end of ideology. They drew upon the consensus of the American liberal tradition and pointed to the defeat of the predominant ideologies of their time: Fascism during the Second World War and the De-Stalinization of the Soviet Union under Khrushchev.⁹ According to Shils (1958, p. 453), “the very heart which has sustained ideological politics among intellectuals over the past century is gradually losing its strength”.

Shils presented several reasons for the end of ideology. First, were the political events that occurred in the thirties, forties, and fifties, such as the Moscow trials revealing the true nature of Soviet freedom, the decomposition of Marxism and the Berlin uprising of 1953 (Shils, 1958). The actions of Stalin and the Soviet Union led to a disenchantment and ended the infatuation with Soviet communism held by the regime’s apologists of the 1930s and 1950s (Bell, 1988b). The second reason was the apparent collapse of faith in ideology by intellectuals and politicians that had seen it in practice in the activity of government and had become disillusioned (Shils, 1958). The waning rivalry between capitalism and socialism, due to the success of Western economics over Communist economic planning, represents the final reason (Shils, 1958).

These reasons lead Shils (1958, pp. 456-457) to conclude:

There seems to be no alternative ideology for the intellectuals to turn to now, nothing to absorb all their devotion, nothing to inflame their capacity for faith and their aspirations toward perfection. The conservative revival, though genuine, is moderate. People take Burke in their stride. They have become "natural Burkeans" without making

⁹ For scholarly work on the consensus of the American Liberal tradition see; Hartz (1955); Hofstadter (1989).

a noise about it... There seem to be no more grounds for ideological politics. Thus, it appears reasonable to think that the age of ideological politics is gradually coming to its end.

Daniel Bell's 1960 book *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* similarly discusses the decline of ideology. However, the notion of the end of ideology was limited by its ethnocentric character, which Bell (1988a) himself recognised by acknowledging the emergence of new ideologies in Africa and Asia.

Bell argued that in the West, ideology has been exhausted for several factors. The first factor was, "a rough consensus among intellectuals on political issues: the acceptance of a Welfare State; the desirability of decentralized power; a system of mixed economy and of political pluralism. In that sense, too, the ideological age has ended" (Bell, 1988a, pp. 402-403). Another factor was that the West has become more secular and less attached to the Marxist belief that the capitalist West will be overthrown in a proletarian revolution (Bell, 1988a).

The end of ideology created an opportunity to reconstruct politics. Shils (1958) advocated for a politics of civility that would replace ideological politics with prudent use of authority. Bell's (1988a) proposal replaces ideological politics with public policy-focused politics, without aiming for total societal transformation.

Therefore, the proclamation of the 'end of ideology' was the intellectual climate in which Minogue found himself. It was a climate governed by a 'war of ideas' as pro-Western intellectuals sought to respond to the lasting sympathies toward Soviet communism (Bell, 1988b). Moreover, as post-war politics began to adopt more centrist and conciliatory policies and political discourse, intellectuals such as Bell (1988b) held the hope that this would usher in a new non-ideological style of politics.

Minogue held no such hope. For him, the celebratory mood about the end of ideology was premature. Thus, one aspect of Minogue's scholarship on ideology is refuting the end of ideology thesis. This refutation begins in his first major publication, *The Liberal Mind* (1963).

In the preface of the book, Minogue informs the reader of his judgment in his own words. Minogue (2001b, p. XIII) writes:

Not so long ago, we were arguing over the issue of a planned economy or free enterprise, and liberals confronted socialists with identities fixed. But the life has gone out of such issues, and political parties find themselves nestling together around the same set of political principles. Some have greeted this development with joy. Some have accepted it as the "end of ideology." Others have responded with boredom.

The aim of this book is to analyse the long tradition of liberalism. It regards the current fluidity of political boundaries as due to the fact that an enlarged and somewhat refurbished liberalism has now succeeded the ideologies of the past.

Minogue's words are revealing. The end-of-ideology academics such as Bell (1988b) noted the return of ideology in the 60s and 70s. However, at the time of the publication of *The Liberal Mind*, as in a later edition Minogue (2000b) admits, these events had not happened. Therefore, before the 'troubles' of the 60s and 70s, Minogue challenged the idea that Western civilisation was experiencing the end of ideology, despite certain ideologies like Fascism and Marxism being discredited by historical and political events. Instead, modern liberalism had become the dominant ideology. Nevertheless, he agreed with Bell (1988a) that ideology was flourishing in Africa and Asia, particularly due to modern liberalism's support for nationalist movements. Minogue (1967c, p. 134) asserts:

in the twentieth century, liberal sympathy has embraced nationalist movements throughout the Afro-Asian world...So long as nationalism looks like a special case of the demand for freedom, then liberals, softened up by arguments based on exploitation and the corruptions of power, will listen sympathetically.

Modern liberalism had gained dominance in the West due to its emphasis on technical knowledge in tackling societal problems and prescribing state solutions (Minogue, 2001b). However, Minogue (2001b) argued that liberal ideology had become disillusioned with modernity as it encountered situations of suffering, transforming politics into a moral battleground where one side was composed of oppressors and the other of victims. For modern liberals, politics was no longer a limited activity of governing but a broader pursuit of achieving an ideal society.

Minogue (2001b) referred to this view of politics as the salvationist tradition of liberalism, which posits that through state intervention, human nature can be perfected and a new, redeemed world can be ushered in. However, Minogue argued that salvationism is simply a form of perfectionism that is hostile to politics because politics is an activity of free individuals, and individual freedom makes the pursuit of perfection an unrealistic goal. According to Minogue (2001b, p. 179) salvationism represents “a radical misunderstanding both of politics and of truth-seeking: the belief that politics will put an end to the necessity for politics, and that the acquisition of knowledge will put an end to the search for truth”.

Minogue's rebuttal of the ‘end of ideology’ thesis attacked factors underlying it. The first factor was the rise of the post-war consensus intelligentsia that advocated policies like pluralism, a mixed economy, and the welfare state. Early in his intellectual life, Minogue appeared uninterested in engaging with this intellectual consensus. For instance, when reviewing Charles Parkin’s, *The Moral Basis of Burke's Political Thought* (1956), he commended Parkin for not compromising "with the welfarist notions no modern thinker can avoid" (Minogue, 1957, p. 172).

However, the consensus that emerged had not brought the end of ideology since the struggle between politics and ideology had moved. Minogue (2001b, p. 13) argues, “there was a time not so long ago when political debate was polarised in terms of free enterprise or a planned economy, but this polarisation has now virtually disappeared from the political scene; the main battlegrounds of propaganda now lie elsewhere.” The new battleground was between persons who saw politics as a limited activity and those who saw political activity through the lens of oppression and oppressors. Hence, for Minogue, the existence of new intellectual battleground challenges the notion of the end of ideology.

Intellectuals have often proclaimed the end of ideology following major political events. The first such attempt occurred in the aftermath of the collapse of fascism and communist Stalinism after the Second World War. The most recent example was the collapse of Soviet communism in the nineties, which resulted in the dominance of the politics of liberal democracy and was used as a historical and political justification for intellectuals to revive the end of ideology thesis.¹⁰ However, Minogue's concern about the state of Western civilisation after the collapse of the Soviet Union suggests that ideology was very much alive.

According to Minogue (1993c), the collapse of communism did not lead to the end of ideologies as many had predicted. In Minogue's view, the drive for ideological salvation continued, but its form had changed. Previously the goal of modern liberalism, was to deliver people from oppressive situations, now it had become a project focused on fulfilling individuals' needs and creating a just society. This involved transforming government into a management enterprise aimed at achieving social justice (Minogue, 1993c).

¹⁰ See for example; Fukuyama (1992).

In the early sixties, Minogue (2001b) was confident that institutions such as churches and universities in the West could resist the ideological tendencies of liberalism and that politics would survive. However, years later, in the preface of the Liberty Fund edition of *The Liberal Mind*, he admitted his scepticism upon revisiting his earlier optimism and confidence (Minogue, 2001b). Minogue did not anticipate the collapse of these social institutions of authority due to the ideological assault, and decades later, he found himself becoming a leading defender of their role in Western society and its way of life.

The defeat of Soviet communism did not generate a triumphalist mood in Minogue and contemporary anti-communists. Instead, as Minogue (1992f, p. 83) recounted attending a meeting of anti-communist intellectuals in 1992, “a sense of gloom more real among the participants than any sense of triumph” as speakers identified new threats to Western civilisation. The victory of capitalism over communism did not bring about a world Minogue felt fully comfortable with. On the contrary, Minogue’s youthful optimism for the West braving the ideological storm would be superseded by a gloomy outlook for the future of Western civilisation as the ideological dream lived on.

The enduring global prevalence of ideology raises the question of its persistence. Experiences from the inter-war and post-war periods indicate shortcomings and, as noted by Minogue, even disastrous outcomes for ideologies like modern liberalism and nationalism. Minogue (2009c, para. 15) recognises the enduring allure of ideology, stating, “[p]erfectionist dreams are never long absent from the margins of political life”. However, Minogue seeks to explain its persistence despite historical and intellectual arguments against it.

Firstly, he argues that the impact of ideology is harder to discern in liberal democratic countries, particularly those with a strong political tradition like the Anglosphere nations

(Minogue, 2001b; 2009c). Secondly, the demise of Soviet communism has benefited the ideological project, as there is no longer the option to point to the Soviet Union to illustrate its disastrous effects. Minogue (1993c, p. 17) writes:

[T]he collapse of Communism was in many ways immensely beneficial to the project of socially managed perfection. The collapse of the Soviet Union liberated ideologists from a standing reproach about the real consequences of their enthusiasms. They were once more free to follow their fancies wherever inclination should beckon.

Thirdly, ideology demonstrates remarkable adaptability to its political context. Minogue (1993c) cites the contemporary focus on social justice in political philosophy as an example of ideology's ability to reinvent itself. Fourthly, it is politically attractive, creating a dichotomy between elites (oppressors) and the rest (oppressed), seemingly explaining societal suffering. Fifthly, the aspiration for a better world fosters ideological thinking (Minogue, 2009c). Lastly, the prevalence of individuals unable to adjust to individualism's reality makes them highly susceptible to ideological capture (Minogue, 2012c).

Minogue on Ideology

Minogue's take on ideology adopted a negative view of the concept. This allowed Minogue to use the term to criticise modes of thought that extend beyond the realm of politics. Furthermore, Minogue seeks to disassociate the concept from the sociological, empiricist, positive, and epistemological connotations attributed to it by the intellectual tradition of ideology.

Minogue distinguishes between the term 'ideology' and the concept of ideology. He agrees that the term ideology originates from Destutt de Tracy but argues that the true content of ideology is found in Marx's conceptualisation (Minogue, 2008a). This makes Minogue's focus on the concept narrower, and as a result, Marxism is used exclusively to conceptualise and chart ideology. Therefore, it excludes previous perfectionist projects, such as puritanism, from Minogue's story of

ideology. The focus on Marxism to chart ideology, also denotes Minogue's goal to resurrect the critical function of ideology in a non-Marxist form.

Minogue's (2008a, p. 50) conceptualisation of ideology defines it as "a form of social analysis which discovers that human beings are the victims of an oppressive system, and that the business of life is liberation". While Minogue's definition does not provide a moral assessment of ideology, it does contain indications of the critical and negative spin he gives to the concept. The terms 'liberation' and 'oppressive system' suggest a negative connotation, as the focus is on the need to free oneself from the constraints of an oppressive system.

The term 'liberation' implies that individuals are victims of oppression within the social system. Minogue (2008a, p. 42) argues that human beings are subject to "a single system of dehumanization which determines everything that happens, and which cannot be changed except by a complete transformation". The idea here is that if society is not transformed or liberated, victimhood will remain a daily reality (Minogue, 2017). The concept of an 'oppressive system' is equally important in Minogue's definition of ideology. While political doctrines typically focus on reforming or innovating the current institutions of society to improve governance, ideology does not limit itself to government alone. The emphasis must also extend to society as a whole, as changing the rules of the current system alone is insufficient to eliminate oppression and suffering. Since the individual lives within a system of oppression, ideologues want to shift the conversation from changing the rules of the current system to complete transformation of society. Thus, the ideologue in its goal to eliminate the oppression facing individuals aims to liberate society. The ideological aim can only be understood by homogenising society as a system of oppression which, in turn, justifies its radical transformation.

According to Minogue, who follows Oakeshott, ideology involves striving for perfection. This connection between ideology and perfection is reflected in Minogue's (1993c, p. 20) definition; "the project creating social perfection, by managing society". In other words, ideology is a project aimed at establishing a perfect state where individuals can live in harmony without oppression or conflict. Therefore, ideological aspirations for a better system than the present one can be seen as a form of perfectionism in politics.

Minogue's characterisation of ideology as a form of perfectionism is the first sign of the negative connotation he attaches to the term. As we've seen, perfectionism is incompatible with politics because it aims at the elimination of conflict among free individuals. Thus, Minogue's concept of the political cannot include ideology, since it shifts the focus of politics from governing the civil association to pursuing a shared goal of creating a free society that is supposedly perfect.

Minogue uses the apolitical nature of ideology to criticise left-wing thought, but he also warns of the potential of free marketeers to become ideological, especially during their dominance in the eighties. According to Minogue (1986c), adherents of Hayek's ideas promote an ideal order that contradicts the reality of human conduct. He criticises Hayekians for believing that their ideas represent the ultimate political wisdom and for seeking to abolish politics altogether by pursuing a *telos* of how society should be arranged. Therefore, Minogue argues that free marketeers, like other political doctrines such as socialism and conservatism, must engage in political persuasion rather than claim they possess revealed truth.

Minogue recognised that his critique of the apolitical nature of ideology only applies to total ideology. Therefore, he would be willing to accept ideologies like feminism that aim to reform the laws and conventions of society to address illogical rules (Minogue, 1993c). This concession demonstrates the significant distinction between radical ideologies, which view politics as a means

of achieving salvation from conflict, and political doctrines that operate within the bounds of politics.

The second sign of the negative connotation that Minogue associates with ideology is his modernity thesis. According to Minogue (2008a, p. 5), modernity comprises “liberalism in politics, individualism in moral practice, and the market in economics”. He argues that the triumph of individualism over attempts to impose a single, correct way of life characterises modernity.¹¹ However, ideologues see this triumph as the breeding ground for structures of domination that oppress individuals. For ideologues, a world where individuals are in conflict with each other in politics, have distinct identities, and pursue their economic interests is unacceptable. Therefore, Minogue (2008a, p. 298) asserts that “ideology is essentially hostile to modernity” and represents a modern doctrine with an anti-modern purpose. Here, Minogue’s assertion reveals an idiosyncratic view that he draws from his Oakeshottian sympathies, but also his interpretation of modernity. Scholars such as Eagleton (1991) denote the modern construction of the concept, an idea that Minogue would not disagree with. However, paradoxically, the critical function of ideology presupposes modernity as oppressive and the solution to this oppression to be a return to anti-modern ideas of a single right order.

Minogue's political stance may lead some to believe that his modernity thesis is primarily applicable to left-wing ideologies. Grant Morrison (1988) highlights in his review of *Alien Powers* that Minogue expresses concerns about certain strands of conservative thought. These strands share an ideological disdain for modernity and a preference for anti-modern societies. Truth be told, Minogue downplays in the book that conservatives may also exhibit similar ideological

¹¹ See chapter IV.

tendencies (Ryan, 1985). Nonetheless, Minogue's critique of ideology must also encompass conservative traditions that exhibit an ideological attachment to a dogmatic past and agenda.

Minogue's (2008a, p. 203) statement, "the ideological model thus happens to share with conservative thought a conviction that the remoter the past, the better the conditions, for both tendencies take off in some degree from hostility to what one might broadly call modernity", illustrates his disapproval of conservative thought driven by premodern nostalgia in response to the modern individualist West. Here, Minogue aligns with Mannheim's view on the inherent utopian tendencies within conservative strands of thought. As Mannheim (2003) demonstrates, the conservative mentality often transitions from critiquing revolutionary change to advocating for a future age that remedies the ills of modernity. Thus, Minogue (1987c, p. 6) expresses concerns about the growing conservative hostility towards the modern world, exemplified by his comparison of neoconservative Allan Bloom to Marx, both being "backward-looking critics of modernity who yearn to revive the shattered world of classical Greece".

Minogue argued that these conservative traditions sought to combat the perceived negative effects of modernity by adopting a reactionary 'conservative ideology' as the only legitimate political doctrine. This, in turn, would result in the annihilation of other valid political doctrines and ultimately the eradication of politics as a whole. Minogue's (1986b, p. 17) criticism of conservative ideology is evidenced by his comparison of Scruton's conservatism to "the radicalism of the 1960's" of "dogmatic, conviction that there is one right path in politics." He recognised that conservative nostalgia for the past could cause them to veer away from active politics and towards unattainable utopian visions.

Terry Eagleton (1991) argues that conservatives like Minogue are cautious about their beliefs being labelled as ideological. Minogue's critique of dogmatic conservatism demonstrates

his effort to distinguish the Oakeshottian tradition of thought from radical conservative tendencies. This is not surprising, since if Minogue's views were classified alongside radical conservatism, they would be in political opposition and subject to criticism.

Minogue's concept of ideology reflects an all-encompassing view of how society can be cleansed of oppression. His condemnation of ideology marks the apex of his intellectual contribution to the debates over the concept. The impact can be summarised in insisting on its modern origins with Marx, its negative connotation, and the idea that all ideologies are apolitical. Although, Minogue's use of ideology in a pejorative sense aligns with other critics of ideology, such as Daniel Bell and Edward Shils (Ryan, 1985). We can appreciate Minogue's contribution to the subject by comparing it with Oakeshott's concept of ideology.

Oakeshott (1962, p. 17) traced the origins of ideology to the philosophical foundations of rationalism, specifically, the "exaggeration of Bacon's hopes and the neglect of the scepticism of Descartes". While Oakeshott views ideology as primarily negative, he acknowledges that it may be useful in some circumstances in political life. However, he believes that any usefulness is outweighed by the destruction of traditions in the name of moral improvement of society (Oakeshott, 1962).

Oakeshott sees ideology as a political activity of providing technical knowledge about how to best guide society, disregarding the practical knowledge of authority, prejudice, and practice. Oakeshott argues there are two dangers with ideology, first providing a blueprint of how society should be arranged, offering as examples the American Declaration of Independence and Declaration of the Rights of Man. The second danger is the expectation that ideology is a kind of all-knowing guide to political activity such as Machiavelli's guide to rulers in the *Prince* (1513) (Oakeshott, 1962).

Here, we observe a difference between Minogue and Oakeshott's ideologies. While Minogue considers ideology as a modern idea that arose from Karl Marx's writings, Oakeshott traces the concept to an earlier period. As a result, Oakeshott's concept identifies the origins and mode of ideological thought more broadly, as seen in his examples of the history of rationalism. Minogue's narrow approach would fail to address projects of perfectionism that existed before the emergence of Marxism. Therefore, it appears that Minogue's preoccupation with the anti-modern nature of ideology overshadowing the problem of perfectionism.

Minogue's main concern with the anti-modern nature of ideology helps to distinguish between his and Oakeshott's outlook on the role of perfectionism in ideology. According to Minogue (2008a), ideological perfectionism claims a revelation of superior knowledge that exposes modern society as an oppressive system. Therefore, the transformation of society must be total and not just a return to pre-modern ideas of social solidarity. In Minogue's view, ideologies are pseudo-scientific intellectual systems that aim to transform society completely. In contrast, Oakeshott's concept of ideological perfectionism does not claim revelatory knowledge for emancipation of an oppressed class but claims absolute knowledge of political activity in the modern world. Ideological perfectionism for Oakeshott is a sweeping generalisation of human conduct that can be turned into a creed to perfect society.

The contrasting role of perfectionism in ideology provides an explanation for Minogue's interpretation of ideology as a modern doctrine with an anti-modern purpose. While previous rationalist projects shared destructive characteristics such as salvationism, ideological perfectionism goes beyond its limits by using scepticism to claim a revelatory understanding of modernity. This understanding leads to the conclusion that modernity is a sham and that individualism, its guiding moral practice, leads to the systematic oppression of individuals.

Therefore, while ideology emerges and benefits from the analytical tools of modernity, its assumption of possessing the totality of truth about society and acting upon it gives it an anti-modern purpose, according to Minogue.

To summarise, Minogue's concept of ideology differs from Oakeshott's in three ways. First, he sees all ideologies as apolitical since they seek salvation that renders politics unnecessary. Second, ideologues view society as a battlefield between oppressive and redemptory politics. Third, Minogue's concept of ideology is hostile to modernity, while for ideologues previous projects of perfectionism simply augment that oppressive modernity individuals live in.

Therefore, drawing on Minogue's intellectual legacy and perspective on ideology, we can establish a clear definition of the concept from his viewpoint. Ideology is a mode of thought that aims to supplant modernity by renouncing politics and striving for an ideal world of harmony. This definition encompasses the two negative aspects of ideology as perceived by Minogue. Firstly, perfectionism, which aspires to establish a new utopian system, resulting in the eradication of politics. Secondly, in a post-modern ideological future, pre-modern societal values of social harmony will constitute the foundation of a new way of life, instead of individualism.

Eagleton (1991) contends that Minogue's perspectives on the apolitical nature of ideology are striking. Eagleton's remarks provide a solid foundation for discussing how Minogue redirects the focus of debates surrounding the concept of ideology, taking it back to its critical origins. First and foremost, Minogue's assertion that ideologies are incompatible with politics suggests that this concept does not merely represent an individual's political views but rather consists of doctrines that operate independently of the political realm. In a review of *Alien Powers*, Noël O'Sullivan (1986, p. 236) offers an appraisal of Minogue's contribution in extricating politics from ideology, stating:

The most important task of contemporary political philosophy is to re-establish the autonomy of politics...*Alien Powers* is a major contribution to this task, seeking as it does to disengage politics from ideology and to restate the presuppositions of limited politics.

Hence, ideology cannot be perceived merely as a non-evaluative or descriptive term referring to an individual's political inclinations. Minogue challenged the prevailing notion of viewing ideology as 'non-evaluative,' as advocated by Mannheim (Grant, 1988). According to Minogue (2008a), Mannheim made a mistake in distinguishing between ideology and utopia. While Mannheim (2003) contends that ideology represents those supporting the status quo, and utopia represents those seeking radical change, Minogue argues that ideology claims a higher form of knowledge, independent of the oppressive social context. Additionally, Minogue posits that ideology shares the futuristic outlook of Mannheim's concept of utopia, as ideologues advocate for a better future. Secondly, since, according to Mannheim, ideology is conditioned by the social context, the concept loses its critical value in identifying political and ideological doctrines in political activity. Thus, Minogue (1993c, p. 10) concludes:

As converted into the sociology of knowledge by writers such as Karl Mannheim, it promised a scientific treatment of the social origins of beliefs, but like the Marxist theory of dialectic, which also promised to make the world transparent, it has as a theory remained little but a set of dogmatic assertions about the false consciousness of opponents.

Secondly, Minogue's critique of the concept draws from a positive view of ideology. Although Minogue (2008a) would reject the notion that the concept of ideology can be used to mean any set of ideas held by social classes across society, he borrows the idea that ideology does represent the expression or inspiration of the interests of an oppressed class from which the project of emancipation will emerge. This is clear, as Minogue (2008a) emphasises that victimhood serves as the underlying inspiration for every ideology. However, Minogue's concept shifts the debate by

asserting that this sense of victimhood is not tied solely to social circumstances of an oppressed class but extends to an entire system that oppresses human beings (O’Sullivan, 1986). The solution for ideologist, according to Minogue (2008a), is not the hegemony of these oppressed classes, but lies in complete transformation of the system. Therefore, ideology is not, as Lenin (1969) argued, merely the ideas that are tied to class origins but rather a pseudo-scientific doctrine that claims to possess complete knowledge for emancipating the oppressed from both their oppressors and the oppressive system.

The third contribution of Minogue’s scholarship towards ideology is the delineation of the anatomy that every ideological doctrine shares (O’Sullivan, 1986). The first component of ideology is false consciousness, which seeks to explain, from the ideologist view, why emancipation of the oppressed has not transpired if the agents are living in an oppressive system? In classical Marxist theory, false consciousness refers to individuals' lack of awareness that they are oppressed by a system (Minogue, 2008a). Since individuals are unaware of the actions, habits, or components of the oppressive system, any institutions or practices that have endured through history are liable to be targeted for ideological liberation. As Minogue (2008a, p. 163) asserts, “the particularities of patriotism, religion, family background are entrapments from which the believer must liberate himself by embracing the universality, the comprehensive understanding of the revelation”.

False consciousness serves to conceal the oppressive system and deprive individuals of the knowledge or education needed to comprehend the oppression they face. For ideologists, false consciousness is embodied by modernity, which keeps individuals trapped behind the façade of freedom. It functions as an analytical tool enabling ideologues to categorise even progressive state actions as part of the oppressive system. Consequently, the concept of false consciousness raises

two critical questions: How can individuals break free from this state? And how can ideologues assist others in comprehending and overcoming their oppression?

The answer to these questions lies in Minogue's (2008a) second component of ideology: social criticism.¹² This process is ongoing and involves exposing the oppressive system, challenging its general acceptance perpetuated by the oppressors, and ultimately leading to liberation (Minogue, 2008a). This form of ideological criticism consists of a two-step process. First, the ideologist seeks to expose the oppressive nature of modernity, aiming to falsify society (Minogue, 2017). Secondly, the ideologist seeks revelation, with the goal of shattering false consciousness and emancipating the oppressed (O'Hear, 2021). Minogue (1993b; 2008a) argues that ideological revelation considers itself superior to all other forms of knowledge, including religion, mathematics, philosophy, and academic criticism.¹³ It is a process through which individuals attain the truth, resembling a mystical form of epistemology that unveils the true oppressive nature of the social system while also providing the means for emancipation. Therefore, as Minogue (1993c, p. 7) suggests, criticism offers ideologists "truth of a higher kind, and thus illuminates the darkness of that other sense of ideology as false belief".

The third component of ideology involves a particular view of history, which focuses on identifying the agents or causes of the oppressive system. By constructing a history that highlights these agents of oppression, ideology aims to instigate anger and resentment towards the oppressive system, ultimately leading to its dismantling (Minogue, 2008a). Ideological history draws upon

¹² The concept of social criticism can function as a bridge between Mannheim's (2003) assertion about the role of intellectuals as intermediaries between ruling elites and the broader population and their capacity to transcend the universality of social determinism.

¹³Minogue draws on Karl Popper's ideas to underscore the resilience of ideology and its resistance to criticism. Minogue's perspective on Popper is nuanced; he readily uses Popper's falsification doctrine to criticize ideologues who neglect the falsifiability of their beliefs. However, Minogue (1995e; 1995f) did not hold a favourable view of Popper's *The Poverty of Historicism* and his philosophy of critical rationalism.

Hegel's linear perspective of history, where the trajectory of human history leads to human freedom (Little, 2020). According to this viewpoint, history progresses toward completeness and fulfilment, mirroring the ideology's theory of history. The history of humanity has been one of oppression, but through liberation, human beings can achieve completeness and live in a reality of freedom. Ideologues argue that history is still unfolding because humanity remains under an oppressive system. Consequently, humanity is still dominated by oppressors and has not yet reached the true end of history: liberation from oppression (Minogue, 2008a).

These elements reveal the paradoxical nature of ideology, critiquing religion either as an instrument of oppression or an impediment to perfection, while simultaneously incorporating religious features (Minogue, 2003e). Minogue (2003e, p. 6) sees religion as “a set of stories and a set of beliefs human beings tell themselves to account for what lies behind the manageable world... in which we live”.¹⁴ Similar to religion, ideology presents itself as a revelatory belief that modern society is merely a façade for an oppressive system. Hence, for Minogue (2003e), ideology adopts three distinctive features from religion: first, an epistemological superiority, where ideologues possess knowledge of the oppressive system and how to emancipate individuals from it. Secondly, like religion, ideology has a kind of monotheistic centre; for example, for the Marxist, it is the proletariat. Finally, ideology is a proselytizing movement, seeking converts to the revealed truth of the oppression of the modern West.¹⁵

¹⁴ In the upcoming chapter, I will delve into Minogue's association with religion, specifically within the framework of his conservative realism.

¹⁵ Minogue (2008a, p. 153) specifies that ideology and religion are "different species of the same genus, differing in crucial respects and should not be confused. While, for some purposes, the appropriate genus would be that of the 'belief system,' from a rhetorical standpoint, revelation is the most suitable universal from which to take our bearings."

Minogue's final contribution to the study of ideology is his retention of the negative function of ideology in a non-Marxist form. While Minogue's view of ideology as a critical tool can also be found in the thought of Eric Voegelin¹⁶(1987) in his critique of Gnosticism and Michael Oakeshott (1962) in his critique of rationalism, Minogue's contribution remains significant. Firstly, Minogue's position diverges from that of Voegelin and Oakeshott, as he contends that ideology is a modern idea with an anti-modern purpose (Grant, 1988). Secondly, Minogue uses his concept of ideology to defend the modern world against the ideological challenge. Noël O'Sullivan (1986, p. 240) aptly characterises this aspect of Minogue's contribution by stating, "Minogue transforms the whole contemporary discussion of ideology by relocating it within the broader perspective of classical political theory". O'Sullivan's (1986) words highlight Minogue's emphasis on disassociating ideology from the Western political tradition, as it is in such a disassociation that Minogue can underscore its threat to Western civilisation.

This transformation lies in Minogue's appeal to his views of conservative individualism and politics to challenge the ideologist's critique of the modern West, its view of state and politics. Ideologists argue that the state is not a neutral arbiter but an instrument of systematic oppression. In response to this claim, Minogue (2008a) argues that since political doctrines and the state are not based on a *telos*, political activity and governance have a limited character. This allows modern states to accommodate the realities and features of individuals pursuing their own felicity and moral identity, which would become irrelevant under an ideological vision. Therefore, Minogue (2008a) reaffirms that this form of human association is the only appropriate one for the modern West and the disposition that gave birth to it; individualism.

¹⁶Minogue expressed approval of Voegelin's ideas. However, Minogue (1999n) would disagree with Voegelin's conception of modernity, which is based on Gnosticism.

For Minogue, much like Marx, ideology is used to identify and critique modes of thought (Grant, 1988). Marx defends a feature of the modern world in his distinction between science and ideology, with the former playing a significant role in the social, cultural, political, and technological changes marking modernity. Indeed, Marx distinction is to emphasises that his own ideas were not ideological, rather scientific socialism had uncovered the oppressive nature that has befallen human society. The key distinction from Marx is that Minogue employs the concept of ideology as a means to identify and defend modern individualism against ideological attacks. Minogue's concept of ideology then is used to defend a specific aspect of modernity that Marx finds problematic in line with his conviction that modernity is a phenomenon initiated and driven by individualism, and that ideology is inherently hostile and dangerous to it.

Conclusion

Anthony O'Hear (2021) argued that *Alien Powers* is a must-read for understanding the development of the past and present to avoid an ideological future. This chapter has aimed to affirm O'Hear's statement about the value and contribution of Minogue's concept of ideology by examining his views on politics and the contextual and intellectual heritage that informed his ideas. Minogue's scholarship on ideology sought to recapture the critical value of the term while simultaneously mounting a spirited defence of Western civilisation.

Minogue's concept of ideology is based on his understanding of the political, which is primarily influenced by Michael Oakeshott's evolution of the concept as the activity of governing. Minogue's inheritance of Oakeshott's conception leads him to argue that politics is concerned with persuading individuals about the best rules for the polity, rather than attempting to conceive a new and ideal system through perfectionism. This political perspective enables Minogue to distinguish between political doctrines and ideological ones.

The intellectual tradition of ideology plays a significant role in Minogue's concept of ideology. It began with Destutt de Tracy coining the term, which took on a negative undertone during the Napoleonic era. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels used the term to describe the beliefs of the ruling bourgeoisie class, and Marxists claimed that ideology was connected to the material conditions of society. However, this belief led to the conundrum of where proletarian ideas come from. This conundrum gave ideology a positive connotation, as it came to represent the beliefs of class consciousness. Outside of Marxism, two major developments occurred in the story of ideology. The first idea pertains to Mannheim's concept, which embodies the beliefs of society. Secondly, it involves the usage of ideology in the social sciences to describe the beliefs of individuals. Consequently, the concept became a non-evaluative tool used to study the origins and beliefs of individuals.

However, the intellectual and political contexts have brought a new paradigm to the story of ideology: its end. Scholars such as Daniel Bell and Edward Shils argue that because debates about economics have reached a consensus and the collapse of total ideologies in the West such as Fascism and Stalinism, we are heading towards the end of ideology. However, Minogue disagrees with such assertions and argues in *The Liberal Mind* that modern liberalism has taken the mantle of the ideological cause.

Minogue's concept of ideology departs from mainstream understandings by retaining its critical function in a non-Marxist form. He diverges from his intellectual predecessor Oakeshott and other scholars by proposing that ideology is a modern doctrine that originated with Karl Marx. According to Minogue, ideology seeks to socially perfect the modern world by seducing individuals into believing in the existence of a better system that abolishes politics. Moreover, this perfect world would erase the fundamental aspect of modern Western civilisation: individualism.

Chapter VI

An endangered species: The conservatism of Kenneth Minogue

Conservatism is associated with preserving the familiar to every individual. Although what is considered familiar may vary, G. A. Cohen (2011) argued that all individuals possess an inherent appetite for conservation, indicating a conservative disposition. This disposition arguably is applied to all aspects of human conduct due to its practicality, conviviality, and familiarity. However, political conservatism is not innate but arises in response to political circumstances. It is a response to ideologies or doctrines that seek to replace the familiar with innovations. Therefore, conservatism in politics seeks to maintain the familiar and manage change, guided by the practices of the polity (Oakeshott, 1962).

Conservatism is not a uniform political doctrine, and, like languages, it has various dialects and tones. Traditional forms of conservatism, such as those traced back to Edmund Burke, place greater emphasis on social and cultural issues. Sceptical conservatives, influenced by writers like David Hume, are wary of innovation and realistic about the achievable in politics (Kekes, 1997). Despite these differences, conservatism shares common themes, including authority, honour, tradition, balance, prudence, duty, community, and responsibility.

Conservative traditions have long been present in our political landscape, with some strands more dominant than others. However, in recent times, a global reactionary Right critical of modernity has gained ground, overshadowing more liberal conservative traditions. One such tradition is conservative realism, a term coined by Kenneth Minogue to describe the conservatism he championed.

This concluding chapter focuses on Kenneth Minogue's conservative realism, which was sceptical of radical ideas but realistic about what doctrines, such as his own, could accomplish through politics. Minogue's conservatism was a critical, yet positive, discourse on modernity and its central practices, which was reflected in his active participation in defending Western civilisation against ideologies hostile to its moral principles.

I begin this task, by examining conservatism through three perspectives. First, Quintin Hogg's portrayal of conservatism as a political ideology for parties. Second, Roger Scruton's emphasis on the communal nature of the individual rooted in the traditions and customs of the polity. Third, Michael Oakeshott's description of conservatism as a disposition, neither philosophical nor ideological.

The second part of the chapter discusses the origins and reasons for the term Conservative realism. Kenneth Minogue coined the term in recognition of members of the LSE Right and the evolving political and intellectual landscape of the New Right. I then explore the central tenets of Minogue's conservative realism as a disposition. Lastly, I examine my claim that his conservative realism is a threatened tradition, due to similarities with liberalism and its secular character.

In the final part of this chapter, I analyse the disagreements between Roger Scruton and Kenneth Minogue on the nature of conservatism. I highlight Minogue's concerns about Scruton's tendency to move from the political to the ideological, which mirrors the propensity of the global reactionary Right to do the same. Lastly, I discuss the significance of Minogue's ideas for understanding and engaging with the rise of the global reactionary Right.

I: The accounts of conservatism

Debates about the concept and nature of conservatism are endless due to some strands appealing to universal tenets such as natural law, while others appealing to local circumstances (Kekes, 1997). Thus, within this study, it is difficult to address the totality of conceptualisations and debates about conservatism across Western political thought. Therefore, this study focuses on three main accounts of conservatism to examine a particular set of thinkers that influenced Minogue or with which he engaged. The first account is conservatism as a political programme for a conservative party.

Conservatism and party

The account of conservatism as an argument for a political party is a relatively new addition to the tradition, unlike the other two accounts that have a long lineage. It arose in response to the emergence of conservative political parties across the West during the 19th century. This account of conservatism serves two main purposes: first, it seeks to redirect the policy direction of a party, and second, it responds to political circumstances that require intellectual and programmatic introspection. Quintin Hogg's *The Case for Conservatism* (1947) is a notable example of this type of account.

Hogg's book was a response to the Conservative Party's defeat in the 1945 general election at the hands of Clement Attlee's Labour Party. The defeat of the party led by popular wartime leader Winston Churchill prompted a period of introspection on the part of conservatives. Hogg (1947, p. 228) gives his verdict: “[the election] cannot be explained on any other thesis than one of those massive movements of public opinion away from the men, the principles of policy, and the party by which we have been governed for a generation”.

The Conservative Party's response to this electoral shift was to adopt a middle-ground approach, influenced by Tory realism, which sought to balance the new welfarist reality and radical ideas by using conservative principles and reconciling them with popular collectivist ideas, such as the National Health Service. Hogg (1947) argues that this approach emerged from the remarkable convergence in policies between the Labour and Conservative parties leading up to the election. For instance, both parties were committed to establishing a National Health Service.

Applying traditional Tory principles to contemporary political realities, Hogg advocated for a middle-way approach of conservative tolerance towards redistributionist policies as the proper response for the Conservative party. Hogg's (1947, p. 300) statement, “the future cry of the Conservatives should be Social Democracy without Socialism”, captures the conservative hostility towards a radical egalitarian society. However, Hogg believed that accepting welfarist policies was necessary for conservatism to have any future electoral success.

Hogg's book made a compelling case for the Conservative Party during the post-war period by emphasising traditional Tory values of balance and moderation. He argued that the party needed to find a middle ground and resist the popular trend of radical egalitarianism (Hogg, 1947). His account of conservatism aimed to revive a party that had suffered electoral defeat and prepare it to regain power.

Conservatism, culture, and community

Conservatives have always recognised the importance of human attachment to customs and traditions. However, the communal tradition of conservatism also emphasises in philosophical and social theoretical forms the nature of the individual as a social animal. This tradition can trace its language to the works of thinkers such as Burke and Hegel (Kekes, 2001; Viereck & Ryn, 2005).

Unlike the type of conservatism espoused by Minogue, this tradition has been the subject of extensive intellectual inquiry throughout history and continues to be so today.

The depth of thinkers in this tradition goes beyond the scope of this chapter to address comprehensively. However, for the purpose of this discussion, I will focus on a prominent thinker whom Minogue engaged with socially and intellectually: Roger Scruton (1944-2020). Scruton's extensive scholarship and reputation in conservative circles for his robust defence of the traditions, history, and culture of Western civilisation make him an ideal candidate for further examination.

Scruton (2014a) became an intellectual conservative as a response to the perceived excesses of the sixties that he believed were a threat to Western civilisation. The emergence of the New Right in the seventies, which sought to challenge collectivism in politics, propelled Scruton's rise as a public intellectual. This movement was a coalition of two groups: free marketeers and traditionalists (Gamble, 1994). Scruton was a part of the traditionalist group, advocating for the revival of social, moral, and political traditions in Britain.

Although Scruton supported the New Right's advocacy of Margaret Thatcher's administration, he was critical of the dominance of the free market wing in the Conservative party and conservative discourse. Scruton (2001, p. VII) shows this disquiet, for example, in his celebrated book *The Meaning of Conservatism* (1980), writing in a later edition:

I sought to distinguish conservatism from economic liberalism and also to counter the Conservative Party's emphasis on free markets and economic growth. Conservatism, as I describe it, involves the attempt to perpetuate a social organism, through times of unprecedented change.

Scruton's communal approach to conservatism rests on two main pillars. Firstly, he advocates for the Conservative party to embrace a particular dogma from the traditionalist New Right and incorporate it into their policies and discourse. Scruton argues that conservatism does

not stem from liberalism and its economic aspects but instead should be grounded in more organic considerations. The second pillar involves broadening the scope of what is considered relevant to conservatives in the political sphere.

The second pillar of Scruton's communal account of conservatism responds to Maurice Cowling's (1978, p. 23) call to expand "discussions and considerations which are not primarily or necessarily political". In response, Scruton (1978) wrote "The Politics of Culture" in the same collection of essays, arguing that a deep understanding of the cultural language of the community is a prerequisite for the activity of politics. Therefore, politics cannot be reduced to merely laws that enable individuals to coexist; truly conservative politics must also prioritise social and cultural themes.

Therefore, Scruton's perspective on conservatism stresses the importance of belonging to a pre-existing social order and recognising the cultural and social practices of the polity. Conservatism must place central emphasis on the cultural and social practices of the polity as an 'organism' whose claims must be recognised given its familiarity and value for social order (Scruton, 2001). Thus, conservatism in Scruton's view must give allegiance to the nation, reverence to authority, and respect to tradition.

Scruton's (2017) account of conservatism, influenced by Burke, emphasises the value of familiarity and trust in the longevity of a community. As such, he expands the scope of conservative politics to address the alienation of individuals from their traditional social and cultural contexts, which shape their identity. Thus, Scruton (2001) argues that the central preoccupation of conservatism is not freedom per se, but rather the social and cultural factors that enable society to endure, reproduce itself, and allow individuals to be free.

This does not mean that Scruton does not value freedom, instead, he seeks to distinguish conservative freedom from liberal freedom. He dismisses the minimalist liberal accounts of freedom as the power to satisfy one's desires and argues that one must distinguish between desires that individuals will fulfil to attain satisfaction and those that they will not (Scruton, 1983). Consequently, political action that obstructs desires that individuals do not intend to satisfy does not threaten their freedom. Second, freedom must be nurtured through individual participation and interaction with the institutions of society rather than solely within the inner self (Scruton, 1983). Scruton's (2014a) view of freedom shows the influence of Hegelian philosophy in emphasising the importance of a shared culture in forming individual identity. Hence, this language of identity is not confined to a singular person but reflects the plurality of national practices that shape individuals.

Scruton's conservatism's primary aim is to safeguard the inheritance of customs, traditions, and institutions, which are integral to the identity of the nation and its citizens. This preservation is crucial for the nation's subsistence and freedom. Conservative governance should strive to counter the unchecked liberal tendencies of institutions and the laws that have contributed to a disordered social order. Thus, conservatism offers a "better kind of government—a government that embodies all that we surrender to our neighbours, when we join with them as a nation" (Scruton, 2014, para. 28).

Therefore, Scruton sees conservatism as more than just an economic doctrine, but rather a governing and intellectual doctrine that embraces the land and culture of a society that has emerged and been nurtured through the historical process. This tradition emphasises the importance of preserving, restoring, and defending the associative traditions that form the prerequisite of the identity of the individual and the nation (Scruton, 1993). Hence, Scruton (2007, p. 207) concludes:

The core belief of modern conservatism [is] the belief in the Burkean contract between the living, the dead, and the unborn...[and] the most important thing that future generations must inherit from us is culture...the experience of a community sanctified by time.

Conservatism as a disposition

Conservative thinkers have long argued that conservatism is not an ideology, agenda, or credo but a disposition (Kirk, 2021, Viereck, 2005). This rejection of ideological dogma and abstraction in favour of practical inherited wisdom implies that conservatism is primarily a way of life rather than a set of explicit beliefs. While conservatism as a disposition has significant support within conservative circles, it has been marginalised in contemporary conservative discourse. This marginalisation is reflected in the limited number of thinkers within this tradition, resulting in a restricted impact primarily due to its inability to produce a program of action to address modern societal problems.

Michael Oakeshott's account of conservatism as a disposition has been marginalised in contemporary conservative discourse, despite his enduring popularity as one of the foremost conservative thinkers of the 20th century. In his collection of essays *Rationalism in Politics*, he dissected the damaging effects of modern rationalism upon Western civilisation. However, his essay "On Being Conservative," which presented conservatism as a disposition, raised suspicions from more communal or dogmatic conservatives, resulting in his marginal impact in conservative circles.¹ As historian Gertrude Himmelfarb (1975, p. 407) noted, "Oakeshott's appeal is to a much more limited circle". In a similar vein, philosopher Anthony Quinton (2001, para. 1) observed Oakeshott's lack of lasting impact, noting that he had "practically no direct philosophical legacy".

¹ As an example, Irving Kristol (1996) critiqued the secular nature of Oakeshott's conservatism and its contrasting character to the American experience.

For Oakeshott (1962), to be conservative is to have a disposition that conditions the choices and manners of human conduct. Conservatives do not adhere to a political programme, dogma, credo, or ideology, but rather adopt a specific attitude toward human affairs. Thus, Oakeshott (1962, p. 169) declares:

To be conservative, ... is to prefer the familiar to the unknown, to prefer the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded, the near to the distant, the sufficient to the superabundant, the convenient to the perfect, present laughter to utopian bliss.

Oakeshott (1962) argues that the preference for the familiar does not mean that the conservative individual idolises it and rejects change. Instead, conservatives must distinguish between change and innovation. Change is a reality of life that conservative individuals must adjust to, even though it creates feelings of loss. As a result, the conservative disposition is a natural response to the unfamiliarity and sense of loss that change brings, allowing individuals to adapt to the new reality. On the other hand, innovation is not a natural process but rather a deliberate attempt to initiate change with the hope of improvement. Because it is instigated change, the conservative individual must be sceptical of any proposed innovation and demand a high burden of proof from the instigator. Thus, the conservative individual is prudent and tends to indicate their approval or opposition in gradual terms rather than absolute, evaluating the situation based on its potential to disrupt the familiarity of their world (Oakeshott, 1962).

Oakeshott (1962) notes that the conservative disposition is not all-encompassing and that individuals can have conservative leanings in certain areas of human activity while being radical in others. He explains that the conservative disposition does not provide indisputable truths but instead reflects a habitual approach to deliberation on conduct. As such, this disposition sets itself

apart from other habits of deliberation by relying on a body of knowledge gained from practical experience for guidance on moral and political conduct.

Oakeshott (1962, p. 184) applies the conservative disposition to politics and argues that politics is “the provision and custody of general rules of conduct, which are understood, not as plans for imposing substantive activities, but as instruments enabling people to pursue the activities of their own choice with the minimum frustration”. The conservative disposition adopts this view of politics, but it also recognises the need to temper inevitable change and moderate the passion for innovation. This is in contrast to the rationalist, who views politics as salvation from chaos and brings a passion for innovation (Oakeshott, 1962).

The conservative disposition is sceptical of inevitable change and instigated innovation that disregards human experience. This type of conservatism views politics as having a limited scope of concern. Therefore, the role of government is to preserve social order, moderate change, and resolve disputes between individuals. The conservative disposition values familiar practices and institutions for their perceived benefits to society. Oakeshott (1962) traces these fundamental ideas of the conservative disposition to the sceptical tradition in the works of Hume, Hobbes, and Montaigne. These ideas form the beliefs of the LSE Right, of which Oakeshott was a part. Minogue coined the term ‘conservative realism’ to describe their beliefs.

II: The Conservative Realism of Kenneth Minogue

The term ‘conservative realism’, for Minogue, represented a rediscovery of a conservative attitude that had been overshadowed by collectivist ideals. He lived his life in accordance with the spirit of conservative realism before coining the term in his later years. To understand the tenets of Minogue's conservatism, it is important to first explore why he developed the term.

The origins of the term Conservative Realism

‘Conservative realism’ is a term coined by Minogue in the nineties to describe a brand of intellectual and political conservatism often forgotten but which he sought to revive. This conservatism emerged in the late seventies and eighties as part of the post-war coalition that criticised collectivism and praised the Western way of life while seeking the election of like-minded individuals.

Conservative realists participated in the post-war coalition due to their shared criticism of collectivism and support for free markets, influenced by figures like Hayek (Minogue, 1996f). However, they were distinct from other members of the coalition such as classical liberals and traditionalists. Firstly, Conservative realists believe that free markets required more virtues than classical liberals acknowledged. Additionally, classical liberalism tends to become an ideological doctrine by rejecting the concreteness and contingency of politics. Thirdly, they emphasised the unique condition of freedom in the West, while classical liberals saw it as an inevitable evolutionary process (Minogue, 2013a). Fourthly, classical liberals give an instrumental role of the practices of Western civilisation because of their values to free markets. However, conservative realists contend that such practices play a non-instrumental role in shaping human conduct, particularly in shaping the moral identity of the individual (Minogue, 1986c). Finally, unlike traditionalists such as William Buckley Jr. and Irving Kristol, conservative realists did not consider religion essential to conservative conclusions (Minogue, 1996f).

Minogue coined ‘conservative realism’ at a time of significant change, marked by the end of Margaret Thatcher's reign and the Cold War. In Minogue's (1994i, para. 2) words, this time of vast change became a “time of confusion”, during which the language of conservatism was lost. Therefore, the nineties were a time of rediscovery and relaunching of the conservative realist

tradition for Minogue. A central impetus for coining the term was to pay tribute to deceased members of the LSE Right.² This tribute initially took the form of a conference sponsored by the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) for Shirley Letwin (1924-1993), a former director of the Centre.³ After the loss of Michael Oakeshott and Elie Kedourie, Minogue expanded the conference's scope to include a tribute to them and a discussion of conservative realism's state.

Minogue's coining of conservative realism as a tribute to these thinkers is not surprising. Oakeshott recruited Kedourie and Letwin to LSE and, together with Minogue, they were at the forefront of the intellectual and public policy support for Thatcher's administration. This support ranged from Kedourie's work for CPS on the Middle East to Minogue's and Letwin's sustained moral and conservative defence of Thatcherism.⁴ However, their support was not granted unconditionally as these thinkers were critical of Thatcher's Higher Education policy and the centralising tendencies of her administration.⁵

The loss of prominent figures of the LSE Right in rapid succession left an intellectual and political vacuum that Minogue keenly felt. Therefore, devising the term conservative realism as a tribute presented Minogue with an opportunity to acknowledge the ideas of Oakeshott, Letwin and Kedourie, situate them within the tradition of conservatism, and reclaim them for the future. Additionally, it provided a chance to reinvigorate conservative politics into the nineties, which Minogue (1994j, para. 2) felt was "a bit out of breath".

The lack of breathing space for New Right politics is the second reason Minogue coined the term. Politics, which Minogue understood as a reinstatement of conservative realism

² For a more thorough look at the LSE conservatives, see chapter III.

³ The conference titled, 'On Contemporary Conservative Realism' was held from April 21st to 23rd 1995 at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Great Park.

⁴ See chapter III.

⁵ Ibid.

overshadowed by post-war collectivism. The victory of the capitalist West over the communist East with the end of the Cold War in the nineties did not bring about a more desirable world, according to Minogue. Instead, the shadow of collectivism still lingered in the world. Moreover, the political context changed with the fall of Margaret Thatcher and the ascension of leaders, such as John Major and Bill Clinton. This led Minogue (1996i, para. 2) to lament that “there is a pervasive sense, and not merely in Britain, that rulers have lost sight of what conservatism means, indeed, lost sight even of sane and limited politics”. Minogue's lament highlighted the decline of New Right politics in political discourse and power.⁶

Minogue's criticism of John Major's government is evidence of the waning of New Right politics.⁷ He believed that the government had abandoned the Thatcher administration's conservative realist policies in favour of a government-centred approach to problem-solving, which he deemed ‘un-conservative’ (Minogue, 1994f). The emergence of Third Way politics, exemplified by Clinton's administration and Blair's New Labour, further marked a departure from New Right principles. These politics aimed to renew centrist policies by rejecting collectivist ideas and adopting a more practical, managerial approach.⁸

The term ‘conservative realism’ was employed by Minogue as a means of preserving and reinvigorating the achievements of New Right politics from the eighties. By doing so, he hoped to counteract the emerging “new fashion for taking moral and political bearings from the community”, which he later referred to as the ‘politico-moral world’ (Minogue, 1996f, p. 155).

⁶ For a look at the New Right movement, see chapter II; III.

⁷ For a thorough look at Minogue's critique of John Major, see chapter III.

⁸ For more on Minogue and the Third way, see chapters II; III.

Finally, Minogue reconstructed 'conservative realism' to address the intellectual rifts that surfaced within the New Right coalition. The coalition consisted of a free market wing and a traditional wing, both of which opposed the social collectivism that had dominated post-war politics. Although they emphasised different aspects - small government and free market capitalism vs. authority, culture, and community - both wings of the coalition supported Thatcher's administration's, despite differences in their understanding of conservatism, politics and the role of government (Gamble, 1994).

Thatcher's ousting prompted a leadership election and sparked conservative contemplation on the government's legacy in the eighties, ultimately causing the collapse of consensus. John Gray and prominent members of the New Right's traditional wing challenged the moral and conservative legitimacy of Thatcherism.⁹ Minogue defended Thatcherism as a moral restoration of British life, so the critique was not new to him.¹⁰ However, what alarmed Minogue was that members of the Liberal New Right such as Gray were making these criticisms.

Consequently, Minogue developed conservative realism to morally defend the policies of Thatcherism and its conservative credentials. He believed that Thatcherism exemplified conservative realist politics, and together with its emphasis on restoring the British way of life must be viewed within the context of the broader conservative tradition.¹¹

Minogue's moral defence of Thatcherism was noteworthy because he argued that her monetarism was not an ideological agenda. Instead, it was an attempt to reject the collectivist blueprint of previous administrations and acknowledge the imperfections and realities of society

⁹See chapter III.

¹⁰See chapter II.

¹¹See chapter III.

(Minogue, 1986g). This perspective is significant because many conservatives depicted Thatcherism as a purely neoliberal rationalist scheme.¹² According to Minogue, the proper use of money by Thatcher's government reinstated long-held conservative beliefs. Additionally, Minogue believed that critics of Thatcher misunderstood her conservative realism, which was not purely economic, but rather a call for the moral restoration of the British way of life.¹³ This restoration focused on individual pursuit of felicity and moral identity within a civil association. Therefore, for Minogue, Thatcher's politics, which he faithfully defended, were not ideological but rather a practical and realist conservative response to Britain's circumstances.

The conservatism of Kenneth Minogue

Minogue was influenced by Oakeshott's belief that conservatism is a disposition, which is reflected in Minogue's (1967b, p. 195) view of conservatism as a “preference for what has grown up over a long period of time in contrast to what has been made by deliberate human contrivance”. Minogue argued that conservatism does not dictate specific beliefs or moral theories about right and wrong, but instead encourages a preference for the familiar over the unfamiliar. Like Oakeshott, Minogue rejected the notion that conservatism is a creed or ideology, as this would subject it to criticism.¹⁴

Minogue's conservative disposition is grounded in his aversion to radical innovation and his recognition of the complexity of human conduct. The hostility to radical innovation and complexity of humans means that in politics conservatives understand that “the reality of any society is to be found in its historical development, and therefore that the most reliable, though not

¹²See for example; Gilmour (1992).

¹³ See chapter II.

¹⁴ See chapter V.

the sole, guide for governments is caution in interfering with what has long been established” (Minogue, ca1980s, p. 1). The focus on historical development means that conservatism sees practice as the springboard of the present and future achievements of mankind. Minogue believes that conservatism should not be seen as the only guide for politics, but rather as part of a larger European political tradition that includes socialism and liberalism. He emphasises that conservatism should not be the sum of all political wisdom, but rather as a temperament and an approach to politics.

The central ideas demarcating Minogue’s conservatism are themselves typical of the plethora of traditions of conservative thought. However, Minogue specifies that the tradition he represents is of a particular character. He writes: “‘conservative realism’ ought not to be confused with Tory realism, a much more specific and locally rooted view of politics - one which might be described as ‘poetic’ rather than philosophical” (Minogue, 1996d, p. 5). According to Minogue, ‘Tory realism’ emphasises the communal and social nature of the individual, and strives for balance with collectivist ideas through policies of national unity.¹⁵ The term ‘poetic’ is used to describe conservative thinkers who yearn for a return to pre-modern times as reflected in their writing style.¹⁶ For Minogue, the main feature of his conservative realism was scepticism and realism about all utopian ideas being pursued through politics and a defence of the established way of life in the West.

These characteristics reveal the three principal tenets of Minogue’s conservative realism. The first is scepticism vis-à-vis claims of indisputable truth about human conduct. This scepticism

¹⁵ See chapter III.

¹⁶ The absence of participants from traditional conservatism in Minogue’s conference on Conservative realism, further specifies the character of his conservatism.

was undoubtedly influenced by Oakeshott's moderate scepticism.¹⁷ However, Minogue's views were also shaped by the early sceptical and realist outlook of John Anderson. Anderson was a proponent of what A. J. Baker (1986) termed to be Australian realism, whose central notion is a positive account of reality as a rival to the idealist tradition. Anderson (1930) criticised idealists for their belief in an all-encompassing reality of the absolute and the prime place they accorded to reason as the revelatory instrument of the absolute. For Anderson (1939), all claims of reality had to be tested based on a critical outlook guided by experience and logic. Anderson's realism applied to social and political studies would be critical of every -ism dominating society, particularly in education (Minogue, 1996e).

Minogue's scepticism, influenced by Anderson's realist outlook, is evident in his critical stance towards ideologies.¹⁸ The Andersonian influence is pronounced in Minogue's (2017, pp. 140-141) writing on education, where he notes that, “[the] way to kill a tradition is to believe that any particular theory of what the story means is true”. Here, Minogue emphasises the importance of a sceptical outlook towards claims of indisputable truth, and the dangers it poses to academic education. However, Minogue also recognised the dangers of unrestrained scepticism, particularly in education, as it could fuel the nihilistic spirit of critical ideologies and contribute to the ‘fragmented culture’ of postmodernism (Minogue, 1999d; 2017).

Minogue's response to this danger is akin to Oakeshott's solution to the sceptical dilemma of accounting for an orderly existence. For Minogue, this scepticism must work in conjunction with the Oakeshottian idea of practice. Therefore, the sceptical spirit must be coupled with “an imaginative sympathy with the deeds and customs of times past” and “a piety toward what we

¹⁷ For more on Oakeshott's scepticism, see chapter IV.

¹⁸ For more on Minogue's critique of ideology, see chapter V.

have inherited” (Minogue, 2017, pp. 141-142). This approach underscores the importance of individuality in the face of indisputable assertions, and the role of practice in explaining the world's order without resorting to arbitrary claims of truth.

Minogue (1967b, p. 196) highlights the importance of scepticism for conservatism writing: “doubting the existence of any universal human nature about which we can validly generalize, [conservative realism] limits itself to the dispositions of men as they are known in the modern world”. This outlook would appeal to many conservatives who reject the use of abstract or utopian ideas for radical social change.

Minogue's scepticism, however, in politics has a specific character. Minogue's concept of the political is restricted to laws that enable individuals to coexist within a society.¹⁹ This narrow view stems from his belief that politics should not involve theorising about the overall organisation of society, but rather concentrate on persuading fellow citizens about the laws of the civil association. In his opinion, when every aspect of society is politicised by doctrines turning into ideology, it signals the end of politics.²⁰

It is thus unsurprising that Minogue did not endorse Maurice Cowling's (1978) call to broaden the realm of conservative concerns in politics. That said, Minogue's relationship with these conservatives became more amicable over time; for instance, he contributed an essay to Cowling's *Conservative Essay* (1978), eventually wrote for *Salisbury Review*, and in general, became more concerned with social and cultural themes in the latter stages of his life.²¹ Nevertheless, his apprehension about the ideological implications of expanding beyond the narrow confines of

¹⁹ See Chapter V.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ See Chapter III.

politics makes it challenging to align him with the cultural and social conservative tradition or bridge the gap between him and the traditionalist Right.

Minogue's distinct conception of politics represents the second defining characteristic of his conservative realism. This becomes evident when he states that a conservative in politics;

Governs, rather than [imposes] some dream or other upon its subjects, [he] will be guided, not by a vision of truth, nor by the attempt to impose one project upon its subjects, but by the evolution of the society it rules (Minogue, 1967b, p. 197).

In Minogue's words, two conservative realist principles are at play. Firstly, his scepticism leads him to deny the existence of a complete vision of the truth, and to rejecting the notion that government is the reservoir of it. Consequently, there cannot be an appeal to reason or metaphysical realm that can provide indisputable truth about political wisdom. Secondly, his concept of politics emphasises the role of government in preserving the rules of conduct that individuals adhere to in society, rather than imposing a blueprint on society. These principles lead Minogue to advocate for a conservatism that remains suspicious of grand plans proposed by both the Left and Right, and realistic about what can be achieved in politics.

The suspicion about grand plans means that conservatism does not approach politics with the question, what sort of society do individuals wish to live in?²² For Minogue (1967b), if a conservative asks and answers this question, the answer becomes a conservative blueprint for society. Here, conservatism shifts to the realm of ideology because it abandons the sphere of the political and endorses the *telos* of a good society. Minogue (1986c, p. 8) writes, “the quintessence of conservative wisdom is contained in denying any possibility of a *telos* in the conditions of

²² For Minogue (ca1984), the type of society depends on the moral life and historical trajectory of the people who live in it.

modern politics". As a result, for Minogue, conservatism is not an ideology prescribing the correct political wisdom, but rather a disposition to navigate and keep the ship afloat in the boundless ocean.

Minogue's scepticism and concept of politics raise the question of what he seeks to conserve, if not a preferred conservative society. The answer is the individualist way of life that characterises Western civilisation. This may seem surprising, as individualism is not typically associated with conservatism and is often seen as promoting the 'ills' of modern society. Additionally, it implies hostility towards any authority that may constrain individuals from pursuing felicity. Yet, for Minogue, it characterised the Western-built modern world and played a significant role in his political thought.²³

Minogue sees the moral practice of individualism as a central aspect of modernity and a key factor in fostering the distinctiveness of every person. He acknowledges that individualism can lead to conflict and disorder, but he argues that this reflects the vitality of the Western world and the wonder of the human condition. For conservatism, it is important to acknowledge the reality of unique individuals and their desire to pursue their own felicity and identity in peace. Thus, Minogue (1984, p. 2) asserts that conservatism is "an affirmation and affection for the way of life we have".

That said, acknowledging the potential issues of unrestrained individualism, Minogue also argued that it is a moral practice. By doing so, he emphasised that there are specific conditions that must be met for individuals to participate in it. These conditions are formal, informal, and inner authority, which work together to restrain human impulses and provide opportunities for human

²³ See chapter IV.

felicity and moral identity within a civil association.²⁴ Therefore, Minogue believed that there is no conflict between authority and individualism since the former is a necessary precondition for the latter. This mutually beneficial relationship became even more important for him as he broadened his critique of the effects of ideological liberation in the latter stages of his life.²⁵

According to Minogue's (1996d, p. 2) conservative realism, “there isn't much salvation around (certainly not in politics), and that most of it will come from the vitality and resourcefulness of the people themselves”. Therefore, conservatism, in Minogue's view, serves as a defence of Western civilisation's vitality, which is rooted in its way of life and practices. Unlike abstract ideologies, Minogue's conservatism emphasises the concreteness of human conduct guided by practice. As a result, Minogue's conservatism values the moral life of the individual and seeks to preserve practices that reveal our moral character.

Minogue's scepticism towards utopian projects, his late defence of the practices of Western civilisation, and his historical narrative of the modern world are tied to his negative outlook on the Enlightenment. For Minogue (2017), it was the Enlightenment in which many ideas, such as rationalism and salvationism emerged and nurtured ideological beliefs. According to Minogue (1981b; 2013d), the story of the individual and modernity, influenced by sceptical, realist and Christian ideas, took a disconcerting route due to the radicalness of the Enlightenment. Minogue (2013d, para. 14) writes, “We do indeed owe some of our tolerant openness to the writers of the Enlightenment, but we also owe to them the nightmarish passion to meddle with human life and to attempt to create utopian societies.”. Unsurprisingly, Minogue's conservative defence of the Western way of life and its practices suggests affinities with the Counter-Enlightenment tradition.

²⁴ See chapter IV.

²⁵ See chapter III.

The Counter-Enlightenment tradition, a concept introduced by Isaiah Berlin, has sparked debates in intellectual history regarding the term (Smith, 2018). The Counter-Enlightenment can be characterised by its identification and denunciation of the corrosive effects of the Enlightenment on Western Civilisation (Berlin, 2013b). These corrosive effects were evident in the universalism, materialism, and rationalism that dominated Enlightenment thinkers (Sternhell, 2009). The Counter-Enlightenment tradition focuses on two fundamental aspects. Firstly, it critiques the emphasis placed by Enlightenment thinkers on reason and the scientific method as the exclusive sources of knowledge. Secondly, it argues that the Enlightenment's inclination to universalise or homogenise rational principles has contributed to the emergence of conditions that have led to tyrannical ideologies (Berlin, 2013b).

Minogue's affinity with the Counter-Enlightenment tradition is evident in his critique of rationalism in politics, which he drew from Oakeshott. For Minogue (2005b, p. 109), rationalism is a “cast of mind that “privileges”...science and philosophy over history, practice, and other narrative ways of responding to the world”. The problem with rationalism is that, by exclusively relying on technical knowledge, rationalists wrongly believe that they can technocratically govern and improve society (Minogue, 2005b). Consequently, in rationalism Minogue (2006b) viewed the foundation of ideological politics, the promotion of a politics of salvation where the state is seen as the solution to all societal problems. He believed that rationalism created a space for “crazed sorcerer's apprentices” who sought to fundamentally transform human life (Minogue, 1991b, p. 375).

Another area of affinity between Minogue's conservatism and the Counter-Enlightenment lies in their shared appreciation for tradition. In Counter-Enlightenment thinking, the significance of historical traditions and heritage in the development of civilisation and society is emphasised

(Sternhell, 2009). Minogue shared this sentiment, viewing tradition as a crucial aspect of our present society and a more dependable guide to political activity (Minogue, 1967b; 1986c). However, it is important to note that Minogue did not attribute an instrumental value to tradition, which sets his view apart from the traditional Counter-Enlightenment perspective. Counter-Enlightenment thinkers value tradition for its contribution to a stable social order and the preservation of historical and cultural identity. Minogue (1986c; 1993b; 2004a), however, ascribes a non-instrumental value to tradition, relating it to the individual's identity and conditioning all aspects of human conduct.

Nevertheless, despite the affinities, there are divergences with the Counter-Enlightenment tradition. The first divergence is on Conservative individualism. Counter-Enlightenment thinkers were critical of individualism, arguing that it led to moral relativism, social fragmentation, and isolated individuals (Berlin, 2013b; Smith, 2018). They envisioned a new modernity anchored in traditions, subordinating the individual to the community (Sternhell, 2009). In contrast, Minogue (2017) rejected the notion that individualism had created a society of isolated individuals. He viewed individualism as a way of life that emerged in Europe, allowing individuals to cultivate their own spheres of interests and exercise a certain degree of detachment from the community. Minogue's (2012c) perspective can be characterised as a critical acceptance of the individualist way of life, which, in his view, did not lead to disorder but rather contributed to a dynamic social order that brought about the modern world.

Following Minogue's acceptance of the modern world, another divergence arises in terms of the reactionary nature of the Counter-Enlightenment. Counter-Enlightenment thinkers and conservatism have often been associated with a reactionary stance against the beliefs that fostered the Enlightenment (Berlin, 2013b; Robin, 2011). While Minogue (2011a) acknowledges the merits

of reactionism, particularly its emphasis on loyalty to concrete experience in contrast to the abstract ideals of the Left, he firmly rejects any attempt to equate reactionism with conservatism.

Firstly, Minogue (1969b; 1984) argues that reactionism is inherently tied to destructive populism and ideological doctrines. Therefore, reactionary conservatism is inherently unpolitical and alien to Western political tradition (Minogue, 2001b). Secondly, he rejects the rationalist perspective that idolises the past and opposes change. The reactionary inclination to idolise the past arises from a belief that modernity has been a disaster. However, Minogue embraces modernity and acknowledges that while he may have reservations about certain aspects of the modern world, he does not entertain the illusion that the past can be resurrected through a rationalist plan. Unlike reactionaries, Minogue recognises that change is an inevitable part of life, and conservative scepticism should be directed at imposed innovations. Therefore, Minogue's (1986c) argues that reactionism is not a fundamental tenet of conservatism, but rather a characteristic of revolutionary radicals who aim to create a utopian future based on an idealised past.

Distinguishing between reactionism and Minogue's conservatism is crucial, given his focus on conservative individualism centred around the concept of the English gentleman. Minogue's emphasis might appear to the reader as akin to an account of a Victorian moralist born too late, especially since he consistently praises the moral life of the Victorian era and, being a child of the empire, may hint at nostalgic yearning for those times (Minogue, 2017). However, it would be erroneous to assume that Minogue harboured reactionary nostalgia for Victorian morality. He believed that a free society required more than just Victorian values, viewing the Victorian age as merely an intellectual reference point. His objectives were to challenge critical accounts that equate conservative individualism with impulsive conduct, underscore the

distinctiveness of the morality that enabled Europe to lead modernity, articulate the paradigm of conservative individualism, and ultimately, revitalise a demoralised West by reinstating civility, good manners, and dutifulness integral to the moral practice of individualism.

Minogue's conservative realism, while aligned with the Counter-Enlightenment tradition, possesses distinct characteristics that can be identified as the realist strand of the Counter-Enlightenment (Guilhot, 2017). Unlike the reactionary thinkers, this strand draws inspiration from earlier sceptical philosophers such as Montaigne. The political realists aimed to challenge the dominance of rationalist politics that sought to establish a utopian post-war world (Berlin, 2014; Guilhot, 2017). What sets them apart from the reactionary Counter-Enlightenment thinkers is their ability to reconcile a conservative defence of the modern world alongside their anti-liberal rhetoric (Guilhot, 2017).

Minogue's affinity with the political realist tradition becomes evident when examining the four key commitments of realist thinkers.²⁶ Firstly, political realists recognise politics as a distinct realm of human activity (McQueen, 2017). Minogue (2000b) shares this understanding by acknowledging the unique character of politics. Secondly, realists emphasise politics is conflictual (McQueen, 2017). Minogue (2000b) agrees that politics involves reconciling conflicting individual desires and interests. Thirdly, realists prioritise a stable society, as it serves as a foundation for other important values such as justice and freedom (McQueen, 2017). Similarly, Minogue (2000b) recognises the significance of a stable civil association governed by the rule of law, which enables individuals to coexist and pursue their own felicity. Lastly, political realists reject ideological approaches to politics (McQueen, 2017). Minogue (2000b) shares this view, as

²⁶ Minogue's (1986e) affinity for political realism was not without criticism, as he noted that realists often do not take into account the role of rhetoric in their analysis.

he believes that ideologies undermine the essence of politics by striving for a utopian society that eliminates conflict.

An endangered species

Minogue's conservative realism raises a crucial question: what kind of conservative is he? This question is fascinating because when labelled as a libertarian he did not shy away from such a characterisation (Norton, 1995).²⁷ His emphasis on individualism and free markets aligns with classical liberalism, but this study has shown that his life and core political beliefs align him with the tradition of conservatism. For example, this study highlighted his focus on authority and practice, which describes him as a conservative.²⁸ Nevertheless, his conservatism has affinities with liberal ideas such as pluralism and individualism. As Minogue (2017, p. 166) describes himself;

I am a conservative, a liberal, a democrat... I am a conservative because I believe that initiative in society should generally rest with the people rather than the state, and this is also the reason I am a democrat. I am a liberal because I believe that freedom—responsible freedom—is a value in itself, quite apart from its advantages.

Despite sharing some affinities with liberalism, Minogue (1967b) was critical of its classical form for its persistent questioning of authority and of its modern form for its inclination towards salvationism. He distinguished his conservatism from liberalism on three key points: conservatism is concrete and historical rather than abstract and timeless, it expresses scepticism rather than absolute value on principles like free markets and autonomy, and it advocates for a

²⁷ Minogue specified his view on libertarianism stating “I'm half sympathetic to the view that libertarians are also a species of political idealists. I think they're a bit less dangerous.... I'm sympathetic to libertarianism. I suppose I'm basically a conservative but for some purposes I'm a liberal” (Colvin, 2009, para. 10;12)

²⁸ See chapter III.

strong yet limited government to protect individualism. (Minogue, 1967b; 1985). For Minogue, the government's role must balance protecting individualism without threatening it.

Nevertheless, Minogue's (1984) conservatism shares similarities and affinities with liberalism, notably in their conception of the state as a civil association based on the rule of law and focus on the individual in political discourse and inquiry.²⁹ This focus stems from the belief that individualism has been a positive phenomenon in the lives of individuals.

Minogue's conservatism informed his critical perspective on the salvationist elements of liberalism. He recognised the inherent dangers of Liberalism, but he did not fully acknowledge them until the latter stages of his life. The primary peril was liberalism's constant challenge to authority and the effects it would have on the established way of life in the West. Despite being aware of this threat at an early stage, Minogue (2001b) expressed confidence that the institutions of the West were capable of resisting it. This confidence allowed him to focus on critiquing the perfectionist tendencies of ideology and the dominance of collectivist discourse in the West.

Liberalism's campaign to free the individual from authority led to ideological thought and government managerialism filling the resulting void. In his later years, Minogue lamented this situation and acknowledged his failure to recognise the danger inherited practices where in.³⁰ While Minogue defended Thatcherism's restoration of the British way of life, he realised later on that a more effective defence needed to include social and cultural themes. His embrace of traditionalist conservatives' themes and sympathy for groups traditionalist groups, was an admission of the importance in emphasising these themes.

²⁹ See chapter IV.

³⁰ See chapter III.

It could be argued that Minogue's defence of traditional themes reflects an inner conflict between his support for free markets and his concern for society and culture in his conservative realism. However, Minogue himself maintained that there was no contradiction between these two positions. On the contrary, he saw a mutually reinforcing relationship between the market and order, with the coherence of his conservative realism deriving from this relationship. In his view, free markets required a strong moral foundation to sustain them properly.³¹ Thatcher was the epitome of this coherence, according to Minogue, as she was criticised by both the New Left for being a conservative authoritarian and by traditionalists for being a free market liberal.³²

I would argue that his conservative realism is not undermined by his turn toward cultural themes. For Minogue, conservative realism is a response to the specific circumstances of a given time and place, which explains his earlier emphasis on the perfectionist tendencies of ideologies. However, after the 'victory' of conservative realist politics in the eighties, the agenda of liberation from practices that sustained the Western way of life dictated a response attuned to cultural and social themes.

Minogue was not alone in giving more prominence to social and cultural issues. The post-war anti-collectivist movement had already begun to incorporate more traditionalist themes into their discourse (Pilbeam, 2003). Yet, Minogue's thought does not fit easily into libertarian or traditionalist characterisations that emerged after the Cold War. Minogue's post-Cold War defence of the practices of Western civilisation can better be appreciated if it is compared to and differentiated by third wave libertarianism, in particular one of its strands called the paleo-libertarian movement that emerged during the 90s (Zwolinski & Tomasi, 2023). Paleo-libertarians

³¹ See chapter II.

³² See chapters II, III.

strove to reconcile a concern for social and cultural themes with their defence of free markets and liberty. This paleo-libertarianism was committed to the preservation of “Western culture [and] social authority—as embodied in the family, church, community, [and] objective standards of morality, especially as found in the Judeo-Christian tradition” (Rockwell, 1990, p. 35).

Minogue would not have disagreed with the objectives of paleo-libertarians in preserving these institutions and practices central to the conditions of freedom. However, Minogue's defence of these institutions and practices extended beyond their instrumental value for the conditions of freedom. For Minogue, these practices had the role of conditioning the individual in their pursuit of felicity and moral identity. Moreover, third-wave libertarians, in their defence of the conditions of freedom, often appeal to the rationalist instinct, believing they can devise a political programme to address all the ills that afflict liberty (Callahan, 2012). Finally, the late Minogue incorporated other themes and critiques against globalism and social justice that fall outside the purview of these libertarians.

In its distance from third-wave libertarians, Minogue's conservative realism emerges as a distinctive response to the post-Cold War world. Indeed, the late Minogue's shift towards traditionalist themes reflects his attempt to safeguard the individualist Western way of life and the modern West from radical and rationalist liberal tendencies ingrained in society and modern politics, as well as from radical reactionary tendencies that tend to emerge in response. Thus, Minogue's conservative realism assumes a threefold role: firstly, to warn against the ideological projects that envision a better, futuristic world. Secondly, to position his conservative realism as a counterbalancing force to these projects by reaffirming the realities of human conduct. Finally, Minogue (1986g, p. 22) writes, “Conservatism must thus appear not as a reluctant entrant into the modern world, but an essential guarantor of its continuing possibility”.

The lack of popular and academic interest in Minogue's life and thought may stem from his relatively late entry into the cultural and social debates that have consumed the West. Additionally, the affinity of his conservatism with liberalism may also further explain this lack of engagement. The current rise of reactionary global Right's discourse is highly critical of liberalism, linking it to the disintegration of social and communal bonds (De Orellana & Michelsen, 2019).³³ Minogue's conservatism, with its optimistic stance towards modernity, individualism, and capitalism, does not resonate with reactionary circles. Furthermore, his association with free-market groups such as the Mont Pelerin Society could raise suspicion among reactionary conservatives who reject liberal economics and instead endorse communal solidarity and nationalism (Varga & Buzogány, 2021). Consequently, Minogue's intellectual and political connections to liberalism and its economics, along with his belated defence of culturally conservative values, diminish the appeal of his conservatism and renders it a rare and endangered species.

Another reason for the unpopularity of Minogue's conservatism is its secular character. According to Minogue (1967b, p. 196), “[c]onservatism need have no connection at all with religious belief”. For Minogue, conservatism is comprehensible without the need to invoke the metaphysical realm. Minogue's non-religious conservatism is rooted in one of the two traditions of British conservatism, both bound by the belief in the imperfection of human conduct (Quinton, 1978). One of these traditions can be traced back to Richard Hooker, grounding the politics of imperfection in the conservative implications of the Christian religion. The other tradition approaches the politics of imperfection without presupposing the need for the Christian dogma.

³³ For an example of this discourse see; Hazony (2019).

Influenced by the latter tradition, Minogue argues that conservatism should appeal to secular ideas, scepticism, and the history of practice to arrive at conservative conclusions. In adopting Oakeshott's distinction between the conservative disposition and its application to politics, Minogue (1967b, p. 297) asserts, “[this] brand of conservatism is strictly political; it allows the possibility of being conservative in politics but in little else”.

Furthermore, on a personal level, Minogue never bought into religion and was hardly a nominal Christian (Rodriguez Burgos, 2021a). His personal relationship with Christianity was sympathetic but not keen. Minogue (2003e, p. 7) elucidates this relationship, stating, “I am a simple child of secular times, yet one impressed by the grandeur and complexity of Christian intellectuality”. His upbringing by his atheist father and encounters with religious family members contributed to this perspective. Also, it is important not to overlook the Andersonian influence of scepticism and empiricism that challenged ideas of a supernatural being in his intellectual and personal outlook.

The secular nature of Minogue's conservatism is in contrast to the prevailing religious discourse of the reactionary global Right, both politically and intellectually. This movement advocates for the return of Judaeo-Christian values in public policy and the public sphere and is grounded in religious themes such as natural law or providential order (Tjalve, 2021). Additionally, other conservative traditions also emphasise the importance of the Judaeo-Christian religion, further setting Minogue's conservative realism apart (Kekes, 1997; Kirk, 2016; Kristol; 1996). This could cause concern among reactionary and other conservative traditions that prioritise the prominence of the Judaeo-Christian religion in political thought and discourse.

Minogue's early and middle-life political colloquy provides ample evidence for reactionary and traditional conservative misgivings. He rarely mentioned the Judaeo-Christian religion in his

writings, only acknowledging its value to education and the way of life of the West (Minogue, 1974a; 1983c). Despite Minogue's (1965) initial conviction that religion could withstand ideological attacks, he eventually recognised the ideological corrosion of the authoritative role of the Judaeo-Christian religion (Minogue, 1986a; 1997b; 2003e). Thus, in his later years, Minogue's political language incorporated the Judaeo-Christian religion more extensively, emphasising its centrality and importance to Western way of life.

Yet, although Minogue later emphasised the importance of the Judeo-Christian religion, which may appeal to many conservative circles, he did not articulate a conservatism based on religious belief. His scepticism prevented him from defending such a conservatism, which could turn it into an ideology. Moreover, his concept of politics could not accommodate a theo-political mission to implement a conservative blueprint for society. As this thesis argues, Minogue viewed ideology as hostile to the modern world and the condition crucial for securing freedom: individualism.³⁴ Therefore, his conservative realism remained secular, and an outlier compared to traditional and reactionary doctrines that value the Judeo-Christian religion.

III: Conservatism and the reactionary global Right

In today's political climate, Minogue's conservative realism faces challenges from the rising reactionary global Right, which seeks to undermine the practices and institutions of the modern world. Nevertheless, his perspective offers an alternative vision that acknowledges modernity's shortcomings without rejecting it completely. Thus, it has the potential to make a significant and enduring contribution to debates on the nature and future of conservatism. In the

³⁴ See chapter V.

concluding section, I will explore the reactionary global Right and how Minogue's conservative realism can enlighten scholarly discussions on this movement.

Minogue vs Scruton

Although Minogue did not write a comprehensive work on conservatism, we can still appreciate his contribution by examining his divergence from Scruton's conservatism. As previously mentioned in earlier chapters and the previous section, Minogue's concerns about ideology were a central point of departure between the two.³⁵ This section aims to delve deeper into the nature of their disagreement to better understand conservatism in the present day.

Minogue and Scruton were both part of the conservative intellectual scene, but they did not directly engage with each other on conservatism. This is not surprising, given that Minogue was hesitant to associate himself with Scruton and his colleagues at the *Salisbury Review*, which Cowling (1990, pp. XXVIII-XXIX) referred to as, “the nearest intellectually reputable thing that England has had to... authoritarian Conservatism”.

Minogue and Scruton held contrasting views on conservatism, with their disagreement stemming from Scruton's portrayal of conservatism in his book, *The Meaning of Conservatism* (1980). While Minogue acknowledged some of Scruton's insights, he highlighted several issues with his approach. For one, Scruton positioned his conservatism as the sole, absolute truth, and the exclusive path for the Conservative party.³⁶ Minogue (1980c, p. 1) believed that Scruton's conservatism presented itself as the only ‘correct’ and ‘valid’ political doctrine, which resulted in

³⁵ See chapter III, V.

³⁶ Maurice Cowling (1990) also noted Scruton's account of conservatism as representative of ‘secular truth’ and religious zeal.

“the annihilation of all other legitimate possibilities other than conservatism, and hence the abolition of modern politics altogether”.

Minogue (ca1984) argued that Scruton's attempt to provide philosophical justification for his conservative beliefs turned conservatism into an ideology. Scruton's response to Cowling's suggestion to extend the political domain to cultural and social matters further compounded the issue. Minogue's notion of ideology and politics clarifies his opposition to Scruton. Scruton oversteps the boundaries of conservative politics by attempting to enforce a conservative blueprint through state coercion, which, according to Minogue, violates the fundamental principles of politics as the art of persuasion.

Minogue further challenged Scruton's view of conservative dogma as a philosophical system. For Minogue, conservatism is a pragmatic and historical doctrine that acknowledges human fallibility and limitations. It is not grounded in abstract theorising, but rather critically responds to attempts to theorise about how society should be (Minogue, 1986g). By portraying conservatism as a philosophy with a singular conservative *telos*, Scruton eliminated the need for politics, since when the *telos* is attained there is no need for alternative doctrines such as socialism and liberalism.

Minogue (ca1984, p. 1) found it perplexing that Roger Scruton's account of conservatism criticised liberalism and its role in English tradition while portraying Marxism as “warm and lovable”. This puzzlement arose from Minogue's (1980c) perception that Scruton embraced a Marxist theory of alienation. Despite Scruton's disagreement with Marxist notions of alienation, he did endorse the idea that individuals are culturally and socially alienated from their communities (O’Sullivan, 2019; Scruton; 2001). In contrast, Minogue (ca1984) thought that Scruton's view of Western modernity exaggerated the perception of individuals as fragmented and helpless. Minogue

did not share the belief that individuals were completely detached from their communities or devoid of social connections; instead, he saw individuals as achievements within the community.³⁷

Furthermore, in Minogue's view, Scruton's idea of alienation is problematic for several reasons. First, by making alienation a central concern, conservatism becomes an ideological pursuit aimed at liberating individuals from this condition. Secondly, Minogue challenges Scruton's claim to possess special knowledge of the condition of alienation. For Minogue, Scruton relies on ideological tools to uncover this special knowledge about the world. This includes using social criticism to undermine key ideas of Western modernity and arguing that it has led to the alienation of individuals from their communities. From this critical analysis, Scruton posits the truth of the oppressive nature of modernity and advocates for transformative measures to achieve liberation from it.

Minogue's critique suggests that he sees Scruton's approach as excessively dependent on ideological frameworks and is sceptical of its claims to offer unique insight into the modern world. In Minogue's view, Scruton's conservatism follows a common trajectory observed in ideologies that aim to achieve their goals. Scruton criticises liberal institutions, arguing that they impede the revelation of the conservative truth necessary for navigating the modern world. Scruton's solution to this condition involves using coercive state power to implement the conservative agenda and bring about the desired societal transformation.

Minogue criticised Scruton's attempt to turn conservatism into an ideology, as it disregarded the practicality and realism of conservative politics and its historical trajectory in

³⁷ See Chapter IV.

Britain. Minogue (ca1984) also pointed out Scruton's failure to appreciate the importance of the Anglo-Saxon tradition. According to Minogue (ca1984, p. 2),

What Dr. Scruton has done is to fossilise an important aspect of Conservatism and the British tradition (namely, its respect for existing communities and arrangements) into the dream of a regulated utopia (cohesive families and aesthetic regulations) which is not only impossible but, in many respects, untrue to the Anglo-Saxon Tradition.

Minogue was not alone in this view. Maurice Cowling (1990) also thought that Scruton's conservatism had more affiliations with French conservatism than the English tradition. The crux of their disagreement is that Scruton misunderstood what conservatives aim to preserve. According to Minogue (ca1984), conservatism seeks to protect the British free way of life rooted in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. In this free way of life, there are inescapable principles of liberalism that are essential for British conservatism that his ideological account of conservatism would make moot. Scruton (2014a, p. 69) found the 'truth' of liberalism in the development of English liberties, where "the individual is sovereign over his own life". However, Scruton's historical reading, takes the wrong turn by connecting English liberties with a Hegelian emphasis on the nourishment of social bonds through the institutions and traditions of England. While Minogue agreed with Scruton on the importance of the practices of England as conditions of freedom, conditions he would slowly affirm in his later years. He believed that the 'condition' of freedom found in England was displayed in the figure of the English individualist and their conduct in affirming their moral identity and felicity. In Minogue's view, essential liberal principles, augmented by conservatism's concern with loyalty to the historical practices of Britain in attaining felicity and moral character, represent the kernel of British conservatism.

The nature of conservatism and the reactionary global Right

Scruton and Minogue's disagreement is a starting point to examine conservatism in the context of the global reactionary Right. Minogue's critique of Scruton's perspective on conservatism, highlights the main threat conservatism faces in this context: the risk of becoming ideological when encountering unfamiliar circumstances. Early on, Minogue (1967b, p. 198) recognised this problematic tendency among many conservatives writing;

[the] main danger besetting the conservative is that he may become so enchanted with the particular things that he finds suitable for conservation at his particular time that he will begin to construct a fixed ideology—a static blueprint of a good society.

Minogue's statement carries weight as it may reveal his thought about debates within the American conservative movement during the fifties and sixties concerning the creation of a 'conservative ideology'.³⁸ Indeed, Minogue's warnings about the ideological tendencies in American conservatism mirror the same warnings that Peter Viereck (2005) issued regarding the New Conservatism's disregard for the wisdom of practice if it achieved their desired goals.³⁹ Despite Minogue's usual association of ideology with left-wing doctrines, he acknowledged that conservatism was not immune to ideological leanings. In his later years, as he assessed the state of Western practices, he criticised both left and right radicals (Minogue, 1987c; 2008a; 2012c).

Minogue observed the same tendency in Scruton's philosophical account of conservatism, which combines a fear of loss with conservative pessimism and nostalgic yearning for the past. This sentimental longing for rooted communities of pre-modern times is also evident in the

³⁸ For more on this debate see; Nash (2008).

³⁹ Minogue didn't directly engage with Viereck's work, yet he likely sympathised with Viereck's (2005) critique of the dogmatic, rationalist, and totalitarian aspects of ideology, as well as his perspective on conservatism as a disposition or temperament. However, Minogue would differ from Viereck's (2005) pragmatic conservatism based on prudence. Firstly, Minogue (2005e) would caution that prudence, while crucial, doesn't encompass the entirety of an individual's moral life, suggesting that in political activity, conservatives might need to act guided by other virtues, such as honor. Secondly, Minogue would probably disagree with the policy positions of Viereck's pragmatic conservatism, including the latter's support for New Deal policies.

reactionary global Right. Many reactionaries view modernity with concern and find little to love in it. As a response to an increasingly unfamiliar world, the reactionary global Right has called for a crusade to restore and reinvigorate Western civilisation by expanding the scope of politics, as modern society and mainstream conservatism have failed to curb the tide of liberal rationalism (Drolet & Williams, 2021b).

It has recently been pointed out that the rise of the reactionary global Right as an international movement, involving political figures like Donald Trump and political parties such as *Rassemblement National*, appears to have gone unnoticed by scholars in the field of International Relations (Abrahamsen, et al, 2020; Drolet & Williams, 2018; Paipais, 2022). This lack of attention results from its shadowy growth, which has allowed it to play a leading and decisive political role within modern populist political movements (Drolet & Williams, 2018). The surge of reactionary attitudes among the public and the emergence of reactionary governments present significant challenges to the future of domestic and global politics. Scholars have cautioned that the future looks “uncertain and in many ways threatening” (Abrahamsen, et al, 2020, p. 95).

Although the reactionary global Right is a contemporary phenomenon, its intellectual roots can be traced back to the reaction against the French Revolution, epitomised by Joseph de Maistre's writings (O'Sullivan, 2013). De Maistre (1994) rejected the notion that democratic deliberation or voluntarism could produce a constitution or felicity, arguing instead that they were based on the providence of God. This view reflects the core tenet of reactionism: “at the heart of modern democracy is a spiritual void created by false optimism about the ability of man to abandon religion and pursue happiness through creative political action” (O'Sullivan, 2013, p. 294). Therefore, it is unsurprising that the reactionary global Right's discourse and mission centre around a theopolitical agenda to restore Christianity to a preeminent position in the West (Brubaker, 2017).

However, Noel O'Sullivan highlights a crucial distinction that underscores the distinctiveness and challenges posed by this movement. O'Sullivan (2013) distinguishes the radical school of right-wing politics, which traces its origins to the critics of the Weimar Republic in Germany, from the reactionary school. Unlike the reactionaries, the radical Right seeks to mobilise the masses through populist rhetoric to gain and consolidate political power. O'Sullivan (2013, p. 297) characterises this type of politics as;

rallying the masses behind leaders who reject both the liberal commitment to parliamentary institutions and the socialist emphasis on class conflict in favour of an ideology which fuses nationalism and socialism in a synthesis intended to integrate the whole population.

O'Sullivan's distinction between the reactionary and radical schools of right-wing politics is a useful framework to understand the goals and tactics of the reactionary global Right. Since it is within the contemporary reactionary global Right that these two legacies of right-wing politics coalesce to form a movement that academics note is increasing in influence, electoral support, and success (Bergmann et al., 2020; Caiani & Graziano, 2019; Lukes, 2003; Mudde, 2012). The reactionary aspect is evident in the movement's vision of a futuristic utopia based on pre-modern values of social harmony and Christian dominance (Lilla, 2016b). The radical aspect is reflected in the movement's use of populist rhetoric and strategies to gain political power. Therefore, the reactionary global Right is a combination of both approaches, and it aims to establish hegemony over Western society and its practices (Drolet & Williams, 2018).

The roots of the reactionary global Right can be traced back to the French *Nouvelle Droite*, established in the late sixties, which later inspired similar movements in other parts of Europe, such as the German *Neue Rechte* (Drolet & Williams, 2018; Maly, 2019). The *Nouvelle Droite* and its political counterparts are guided by the central idea of 'metapolitics', which serves as the

identity, motivation, and school that directs and influences the reactionary global Right (Casadio, 2014). This metapolitics aims to put an end to the cultural domination of Liberalism and gain cultural power as a prerequisite for political hegemony (Casadio, 2014). The reactionary global Right has appropriated Gramsci's ideas, not for their Marxist implications, but as the foundation for a counterhegemonic strategy and movement in the cultural struggle (Abrahamsen, et al, 2020). 'The Gramscians of the Right' aim to take control of civil society institutions, such as the media and universities, to ensure sustained influence, political power, and the preservation of Western civilisation and its practices (Drolet, 2020). It is therefore not surprising that members of the reactionary global Right speak highly of Gramsci and his theory of hegemony since it provides them with the intellectual tools and rhetoric for displacing the modern Liberal world (Ajello, 2019; La Croix, 2018).

The reactionary global Right was slow to rise and remained on the political fringes due to the dominance of the Liberal New Right in the eighties. The fusionist school of conservatism and neoliberalism, guided by 'authoritarian populism' as described by Stuart Hall (2019), achieved political power, side-lining the traditional old Right and Jacobins of the Right (Drolet & Williams, 2019; Hall & Rengger, 2005). However, the collapse of the political hegemony of the Liberal New Right in the nineties and the rise of Third Way politics based on Liberal managerialism created favourable conditions for the reactionary global Right to reposition itself in the mainstream of political life.

To understand the rise of right-wing Jacobins, we must examine the cultural themes that guide their movement's cultural struggle. One such theme is their aversion to scepticism and their hostility towards neoliberal ideas in mainstream conservative discourse (Williams, 2022). Although critiques of the fusion of conservatism and neoliberalism are not exclusive to the

reactionary global Right, the Jacobins of the Right supersede traditional conservative critiques by taking a wider negative view of the modern liberal world and arguing that liberal institutions are irredeemable (Drolet & Williams, 2019; Hall & Rengger, 2005). Consequently, the reactionary global Right seeks to exclude all conservative traditions that are broadly sympathetic to liberal values and institutions, effectively making liberal conservatism an endangered species.⁴⁰ According to right-wing Jacobins, these traditions are excluded because they were unable to stop, or are complicit in, the dominance of liberal modernity over Western civilisation.

The reactionary global Right's second guiding theme is opposition to pluralistic liberal values (Rydgren, 2007). They view liberal modernity as seeking to dismantle the traditional practices, bonds, and communities of the West, which they consider the most significant impediment to the liberal project (De Orellana & Michelsen, 2019; Williams, 2022). They regard ideas such as multiculturalism, human rights, and globalisation as tools for eroding these impediments and creating new global identities (Drolet & Williams, 2019).

The global Right's criticism of liberal rationalist ideas is not new. For instance, Minogue (1999o) criticised globalisation, which he believed eroded nation-states and national identity. However, what distinguishes the Jacobins of the reactionary global Right from conservatives like Minogue is their refusal to compromise with liberal ideas such as globalisation and free markets. In fact, it is within the intellectual circles of the reactionary global Right that we find the most persuasive criticisms of free markets and support for a more prominent role for government (Ahmari, 2019; De Benoist, 1996).

⁴⁰ See for example; Deneen (2019).

The reactionary global Right distinguishes itself from other conservative traditions through the ideas that underpin their hegemonic project. Nationalism is one such idea, which they envision not in its romantic 19th-century form but as an alternative world where individuals and politics are subjected to nation-states and shared national and civilisational practices (Brubaker. 2017; Drolet & Williams, 2021a). The Jacobins of the Right view nationalism as a prerequisite for supplanting the modern liberal order. However, not all conservatives accept nationalism. Conservative thinkers such as Minogue have been among the strongest critics of nationalism, viewing it as a threat to individualism and incompatible with conservative politics.⁴¹

The reactionary global Right, with its embrace of ideas like nationalism, is outside the political conservatism tradition. As Noel O'Sullivan (1976, p. 12) notes conservatism is “a philosophy of imperfection, committed to the idea of limits and directed towards the defence of a limited style of politics”. The Jacobins of the Right depart from this tradition by using government power to politicise every aspect of modern society they disagree with. This breaks with the conservative tradition of limited and sceptical politics. In effect, the reactionary global Right has become an ideology, which the British conservative tradition had always opposed.

The hegemonic strategy of the reactionary global Right presents a significant challenge that cannot be “easily dismissed or ignored, uncomfortable as that fact may be” (Williams, 2022, p. 133). Although their themes echo timeless conservative critiques, the challenge for political conservatism is to prevent co-optation by these forces. To this end, Minogue's thought provides valuable conservative insights to address these challenges.

⁴¹ See Chapter I.

Minogue's first insight is that the reactionary global Right misunderstands the problems facing Western civilisation by mistakenly blaming individualism for the troubles of modernity (Maly, 2020; Pirro, 2022). The reactionary Right misreads the problem first, by not distinguishing between liberal and conservative individualism. The former detaches individualism from the authoritative conditions central to it, where the latter sees individualism as conditional on authority and the established way of life in Western civilisation. Secondly, the issue afflicting contemporary times is not modernity itself but the loss of authority, which has resulted in the rise of impulsive conduct by individuals.

As a consequence of this misreading, the reactionary global Right prescribes the wrong solution by adopting a Schmittian friend/enemy distinction as the guide for their politics (Betz, 2018). This approach is characterised by agonistic resentment, which identifies any challenge to theological, social, and political forms of authority as an existential threat (McManus, 2020). This type of politics is reflected in the rise of conspiracism within the movement that points to internal and external enemies everywhere. Hence, this type of politics is a zero-sum game seeking the total defeat of the 'enemies' and ideological hegemony over society.

This politics can be analysed by examining conservatism through Minogue's (1984) scheme for classifying doctrines: political and ideological. The reactionary global right moves away from the confines of politics by becoming right-wing Gramscians. They critique the left for indoctrinating civil society by dominating it and seek to mobilise the masses for radical social and political transformation (Veugelers & Menard, 2018). This approach identifies the 'enemies' who do not conform and the 'friends' who operate according to the hegemonic plan for society. The problem with ideological politics lies in the attempt to enforce a reactionary societal structure, which can result in ongoing challenges when imposed on a society that lacks familiarity with such

a system. In a reactionary utopia, individuals may desire liberation from the constraints of a Jacobin-like vision.

As a result, the reactionary global Right fails to provide meaningful contributions to right-wing politics, as their rationalist vision of societal transformation is unlikely to generate acceptance but rather elicit resistance. Examining the Conservative party's politics dominated by right-wing populism, shows how the reactionary global Right offers little. Right-wing populists have gained attention due to recent successes such as Brexit and Boris Johnson's victory in the 2019 general election (Alexandre-Collier, 2022; Dick & Gifford, 2021; Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018). However, despite bringing about Brexit, issues such as immigration that seemed to fuel the Leave vote, remain unresolved and complex (Igwe, 2022). In fact, surveys show voters increasingly regretting the referendum results due to the Conservative party's handling of the issue (Collins, Cox, & Torrisi, 2021).

Minogue's scholarship on populist movements sheds light on the impact of a populist-driven Brexit on right-wing politics. According to Minogue (1969b), populism is a movement that presents itself as a vehicle for a particular cause. Minogue notes that populist movements are characterised by a lack of clear doctrines and instead rely heavily on rhetoric. As a result, Minogue argues, populist movements are often led by politically inexperienced leaders who are prone to embracing unrealistic ideals. Moreover, once the societal and political changes sought by the populists are achieved, populist movements tend to be limited and transient in electoral politics (Minogue, 1969b).

Boris Johnson's populist appeal played a significant role in building the party's successful electoral coalition. However, this electorate has started to abandon the party for a couple of reasons. Firstly, there is a widespread disillusionment stemming from the perceived

mismanagement of Brexit (Helm et al., 2022). Secondly, many new supporters who were drawn to populist movements tend to revert to a state of apathy once their cause is fulfilled (Taggart, 2000). Undoubtedly, the Brexit process brought working-class voters into the electoral process and in favour of the Conservative party (Birch, 2016; Curtice, 2020). However, after the completion of Brexit and the removal of the populist leader Boris Johnson, the previously established electoral coalition began to fracture as Leave voters deserted the Conservative Party (Curtice, 2023). As a result, the fate of Brexit and the Conservative Party serves as a test case illustrating that while populist movements can achieve short-term electoral success, they struggle to establish and sustain the necessary conditions for long-term dominance.

Minogue's central insight is that his conservative realism does not, as it might suggest, stand in opposition to the modern individualist and liberal world; instead, it serves as a specific defence of it. Minogue's conservative support for this modern world takes on heightened significance as it presents a third alternative to the two conventional responses to the challenges confronting the modern world: a positive progressive liberalism and liberal realism. Recent scholarship, as exemplified by scholars such as Samuel Moyn (2023) and Joshua Cherniss (2021), has delved into the debates surrounding the dilemmas of modern liberal politics. This exploration involves an examination of the legacy of political realism, Cold War liberalism, and the sceptical movement in the post-war era, with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of our current situation and insights for the future.

Samuel Moyn (2023) argues that post-war Cold War liberalism, or political realism, was a failed creed. Indeed, Moyn (2023, p. 1) takes no prisoners already in his introduction: “Cold War liberalism was a catastrophe—for liberalism”. Moyn’s central argument revolves around the idea that during the Cold War and in the context of their fight against totalitarianism, liberals adopted

a form of realism that rejected historical progress, idealism and optimism for a better future inherent in earlier 19th century forms of liberalism. Furthermore, Moyn contends that Cold War liberals paved the way for the emergence of neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism. The former advocated a foreign policy that emphasised the virtues of the Western way of life and even endorsed its global expansion, sometimes through military means. The latter showed sympathy for neoliberal concepts of the free market (Guilhot, 2017). Therefore, Moyn argues that if the liberal world is to survive, we cannot find insights for its future in Cold War liberalism. In fact, it is this tradition that has led the liberal world into its current predicament. Moyn (2023, p. 176) concludes that for the liberal world to be saved, liberalism must:

reincorporate some of the nineteenth-century impulses purged and left behind in the Cold War years, in particular its commitment to the emancipation of our powers, the creation of the new as the highest life, and the acquisition of both in a story that connects our past and our future.

Critics of Cold War Liberalism have highlighted the anti-liberal and anti-democratic tendencies within Cold War liberalism (Mirowski & Plehwe, 2015). Guilhot (2017) asserts that this movement evolved into a realist counter-Enlightenment, with the aim of defending the free world against the ideals of collectivism and rationalism. The paradox, as Guilhot contends, lies in the fact that this movement's defence of freedom took on an anti-liberal and anti-democratic character. He points out that their defence of freedom against totalitarianism often began with a critique of the origins of democracy. For Guilhot (2017, p. 26), the movement articulated a distinct post-war realist perspective that allowed for "dictatorial measures in the defense of freedom". Consequently, he concludes, this movement's use of illiberal means did not save the liberal world; instead, it bears partial responsibility for its crisis.

Critics of the political realism that dominated Cold War politics are also highly sceptical of attempts to resurrect this tradition as an alternative to the current predicament (Guilhot, 2017). Nonetheless, scholars like Ira Katznelson (2020) argue that the ideas of this movement remain valuable in today's context. Katznelson (2020, p. 2) identifies in this movement a revival of the tradition of “political studies Enlightenment”. He sees it as an endeavour by post-war realists to safeguard liberalism by seeking “to renew and protect the Enlightenment’s heritage by appropriating and transforming social science, history, and the study of public policy” (Katznelson, 2020, p. XIII). Their goal was to rekindle historical political traditions “that could repel anti-liberal predators and help guarantee battered but cherished values” (Katznelson, 2020, p. 3). They achieved this by constructing a liberalism that embraced the sceptical, realist, humanist, and limiting aspects of the Enlightenment tradition. As a result, within this tradition, Katznelson believes that proponents of the modern world can reclaim significant ideals for a future that acknowledges the shortcomings of liberalism while embracing its benefits.

Michael Williams (2013) concurs with Katznelson's assessment, contending that post-war liberals were, in fact, liberal realists committed to safeguarding the liberal world. Williams (2013, pp. 648-649) writes:

The ‘liberal realism’ of the IR enlightenment has been largely overlooked, the liberalism that defines large parts of the field today is precisely the form of liberal rationalism that the IR enlightenment opposed — not in order to destroy liberalism as an intellectual and political project, but to save it.

Williams (2013) posits that liberal realism had two primary objectives. Firstly, it aimed to challenge liberal rationalists who, under the guise of shallow pluralism, were oblivious “to the issues of the IR enlightenment in precisely the ways that [liberal realists] feared it would” (Williams, 2013, p. 657). Secondly, it sought to contest the scientific and rationalist dominance of

liberal thought concerning human conduct and political activity. In pursuing these two objectives, liberal realists did not intend to repudiate the progress achieved by humanity through the Enlightenment's ideas. On the contrary, they affirmed a positive relationship with the modern world while acknowledging its shortcomings. Consequently, Williams (2013) identifies in liberal realists a distinctive and noteworthy response to the dilemmas of the modern world, one that deserves careful consideration.

Minogue's conservative realism provides a third alternative, one capable of addressing the dilemmas of the modern world without falling into the pitfalls of either liberal or reactionary ideologies. The alternative advocated by Moyn has two key drawbacks. Firstly, by seeking to prescribe an emancipatory role for a progressive liberalism, it makes the doctrine susceptible to ideological tendencies. Secondly, the tone of Moyn's arguments suggests that he may be too complacent of the threat posed by the reactionary global Right to the modern world when he claims that Trumpism was halted by Joe Biden's victory or that Brexit was not the catastrophic event liberal opponents feared. Although, to be fair, Moyn (2023, p. 174) does stress that he does not wish to trivialise the genuine challenges that liberalism faces but that "[e]xaggerating risks leads to overreaction, even as other threats are minimized or missed, and longstanding problems fester that exacerbate the challenges prompting overreaction in the first place". And yet, Minogue's conservatism guards against exactly this mutually reinforcing tug-of-war effect between reaction and liberal optimism.

On the other hand, the liberal realist alternative has important limitations, as acknowledged by those who see value in it (Williams, 2022). Rengger (2017) observes that there may be situations where the liberal realist faces a choice between its commitment to liberalism and scepticism, which can signal trouble. Firstly, there might be cases in which liberal realists end up setting aside their

scepticism in favour of liberal ideas that require ideological backing. Secondly, Rengger points to John Gray as an example of someone whose scepticism overwhelms the liberal realist commitment to liberalism. Rengger (2017, p. 75) notes about Gray that he “appears increasingly less and less concerned with anything that could reasonably be called liberal”. Another observation regarding the limitations of this alternative that Rengger draws comes from Oakeshott's critique of Morgenthau's book *Scientific Man versus Power Politics* (1946). Oakeshott's critique is encapsulated by Rengger (2017, p. 166) when he writes,

Morgenthau's 'tragic' view runs the risk of becoming a mirror image of the views about progress that it opposes, for the rosy future of the scientific progressives is mirrored in Morgenthau by the nostalgia for a better-ordered past. While Morgenthau is right to challenge the assumptions they make, the assumptions that he makes are equally open to challenge, at least from someone who thinks, as Oakeshott did, that the danger of Morgenthau's tragic vision (and, we might add, those more recent attempts to revive it) is that it still makes 'the world' the standard.

The argument being put forth by Oakeshott and Rengger is that liberal realists must steer clear of the pitfalls of embracing 'teleocratic' ideas for their defence. Furthermore, as noted by Williams (2022), it is not only liberals who risk echoing the rationalists, but also the reactionary global Right. Williams (2022, p. 150) writes, “Attempts to salvage liberal politics from the proponents of darkness must avoid adopting a critique of liberalism and modernity that ends up sharing the categories, if not the conclusions, of the radical Right”.

The limitations of Moyn's progressive liberalism and Williams' liberal realism as alternatives to the dilemmas of the modern world highlight the need for a possible third alternative. Rengger (2017) finds this alternative in the form of sceptical conservatism, characterised by civil association, conversation, and civility, grounded in the thought of Michael Oakeshott. However, as Michael Williams (2022) pessimistically notes, there are challenges for this Oakeshottian-

inspired conservatism to gain significant popular and political support. Modern conservative thought and politics have increasingly moved away from the values and commitments to modernity, sceptical politics, pluralism, and individualism that Oakeshott espoused. Furthermore, the influence and impact of Oakeshott's thinking have been questioned by conservatives such as Gertrude Himmelfarb (1975) and Anthony Quinton (2001). The latter also questions whether Oakeshott's conservatism of scepticism and limited politics can be feasible for conservatives in the modern world (Quinton, 1978).

This is where Minogue's conservative realism and life can address the concerns expressed by these thinkers, particularly Williams' pessimism. Firstly, unlike Oakeshott, Minogue was not a detached figure in the realm of political activity. As noted in this thesis, Minogue actively participated in political debates, defending conservative principles that he drew from Oakeshott. Therefore, to garner support and inspire passions, active participation in conservatism is not only desirable but also a prerequisite. Secondly, Minogue (1999d; 2017) was fully aware of the limitations of scepticism, as he noted that it could lead to impulsive human conduct. Minogue's conservatism displays the ability to balance a commitment to conservatism and scepticism, which he drew from figures such as Oakeshott, Hume, and Hobbes.

Thirdly, unlike Oakeshott, Minogue's conservatism has the capacity to address the concerns of the reactionary Right, extending its scope beyond liberal rationalism to encompass social and cultural themes. In his later works, Minogue's concern for the institutions of authority central to Western freedom led him to place greater emphasis on society and culture in both his popular and scholarly writings. This shift was not only because he perceived these aspects to be under threat, but also because institutions like universities had been influenced by ideologues, becoming generators of anti-modern thought.

Fourthly, Minogue avoids the criticism levelled against liberal realists, suggesting that they had much in common with neoliberals (Guilhot, 2017). According to Slobodian (2018), a key idea of neoliberalism was to insulate the market from the influence of political deliberation. While Minogue's support for free-market policies and his resistance to excessive government intervention in the market demonstrates his sympathies towards neoliberalism, he differentiates himself from neoliberalism by critiquing Hayek's ideas as ideological. Minogue (1986g, p. 22) writes, "[what] distinguishes Hayek from a conservative is his propensity to turn the advantages of a free market exchange economy into a scientific truth beyond the scope of politics". Minogue believes that the problem with the Hayekians was that they overshadowed their scepticism by their enthusiasm for a teleocratic market order.

Minogue's critique of the teleocratic tendency in Hayek's thought is pivotal, challenging progressive liberal narratives that overlook the historical variations of conservatism. Leading liberal critiques of conservatism often interpret the differences among conservatives as tactical improvisations on a common theme. Corey Robin (2011, p. 36) exemplifies this perspective when he writes:

Some conservatives criticize the free market, others defend it; some oppose the state, others embrace it; some believe in God, others are atheists. Some are localists, others nationalists, and still others internationalists. Some, like Burke, are all three at the same time. But these are historical improvisations—tactical and substantive—on a theme. Only by juxtaposing these voices—across time and space—can we make out the theme amid the improvisation.

Acknowledging the nuances of conservatism doesn't preclude the possibility of progressive liberals adopting sweeping critiques of conservatism. Indeed, as Mark Lilla (2012) noted in a critical review of Robin's *Reactionary Mind*, the problem with these blanket critiques, is that, firstly, they fail to make conceptual distinctions between conservatism, reactionism, and

the New Right. Furthermore, such critiques blanket critiques fail to account for the peculiarities of the traditions of conservatism. Conservatives may share political commitments in many areas; however, their intellectual reasons or underpinnings for doing so may vary. Minogue, despite sharing political commitments with movements like Hayekian liberalism, doesn't neatly fit into a wholesale rejection of conservatism as reactionary. His critique of Hayek reveals a thinker critical of both the Left and the Right, advocating for a conservative politics guided by realism and scepticism about political activity.

Minogue's conservative realism bridges the weaknesses of an Oakeshottian-inspired alternative through active participation and receptivity to the concerns of the reactionary global Right. Minogue presents a distinct conservative defence of the modern world, driven by the conservative individualist disposition. This particular perspective on modernity insists that the dilemmas of the modern world arise from the abandonment of conservative individualism in favour of the libertarianism of liberal individualism and the perfectionism of liberal rationalism. While Minogue's conservative realism may not, by itself, be sufficient to garner popular and political support, it offers insights that can create the conditions for such support, thereby rescuing conservatism from reactionary influences. Minogue's perspective goes beyond the reactionaries by recognising that conservatism must simultaneously respect and cherish the past while also engaging with modernity.

Minogue argues that conservatism is a response to attempts to change the world through politics, aligning himself with the conservative political framework. This tradition lacks a unifying ideal, instead it strives for cautious change that preserves society's institutions and way of life. According to this tradition, politics is not a science but rather an art or skill that helps to maintain a steady course amidst deliberations of political problems. Therefore, influenced by Burke and

Oakeshott, conservative responses to innovation are prudent and sceptical, fostered by the practices of the community.

Minogue views conservatism as a disposition that manifests itself in specific ways across all aspects of human conduct. It does not prescribe fixed conduct, actions, or societal models. Instead, conservatism provides a doctrine that facilitates individual reflection on conduct and protects the familiar individualist way of life fundamental to the West. Therefore, conservatism is not concerned with achieving an ideal, but rather with preserving the familiar and managing natural changes that come with time. This perspective entails a civil and respectful discourse about our world, in contrast to the ideological rhetoric of oppression and despair that characterises the reactionary global Right.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has explored Kenneth Minogue's conservative realism, a type of liberal conservatism that is increasingly endangered in today's context of a rising global Right. Reactionaries perceive liberalism as the root cause of the alienation and unfamiliarity characteristic of the modern West, leaving little room for liberal conservatives. Consequently, Minogue's optimistic perspective on the benefits of modernity is a vanishing dialect in conservative discourse.

Kenneth Minogue developed the term 'conservative realism' in the nineties as a response to shifts in both his personal life and in the West more generally. The passing of influential conservative realists like Michael Oakeshott, Shirley Letwin, and Elie Kedourie created a significant gap in conservative thought. Furthermore, during the nineties, New Right politics began to decline, and Third Way thinking emerged in the West. The intellectual consensus that had propelled Thatcherism to power started to fragment, with traditionalist conservatives questioning

the ethical and conservative validity of Thatcher's legacy. As a result, Minogue coined 'conservative realism' as a way of reasserting the core ideas of the LSE Right conservatism, safeguarding the moral integrity of the Thatcher years and revitalising conservative realist politics, and thought for the future.

Minogue's conservative realism prioritises the familiarity of the Western way of life over the uncertainty of ideological innovations, rooted in a prudent and sceptical approach to what can realistically be achieved through politics. It is defined by three central tenets. Firstly, Minogue inherited his scepticism towards ideologies from Oakeshott and Anderson, leading to a lifelong opposition to political dogmas. Secondly, politics is seen as a means of persuading individuals about the most appropriate rules for the civil association. Finally, the morality of individualism is regarded as the established and inherited way of life that must be preserved in Western civilisation.

However, Minogue's conservative realism is an endangered species because of his affinity with an increasingly unpopular liberalism in right-wing circles. While Minogue was critical of liberalism, he did not anticipate the impact of its ideological tendencies on the practices of the West. Consequently, he was a latecomer to social and cultural themes, and the secular nature of his conservatism contrasts with the theo-political inclinations of modern conservatives. All this may account for the relative lack of attention paid to his life and works.

Minogue's critique of Scruton's account of conservatism as prone to ideology is a valuable insight into conservatism, especially in the context of the rise of the reactionary global Right, which has embraced ideological ideas and rhetoric in its pursuit of societal hegemony. However, for Minogue, this faction has misread the challenges faced by Western civilisation and misplaced blame on the individualist way of life, leading them to betray the tradition of conservatism by advocating radicalism and reactionism as the response to modernity. Minogue's work helps to

clarify that the nature of conservatism is not a moral crusade for the restoration of pre-modern values for a backward-looking futuristic utopia (Lilla, 2016a). Rather, it is a disposition to appreciate the familiarity of the Western way of life and to approach change and innovation with a realistic and sceptical mindset.

Conclusion

Minogue and the future of conservatism

The title of the last chapter suggests that Minogue's conservatism represents a threatened species. I base my argument on Minogue's life and conservative realism being unappealing to the ascendant reactionary global Right. Therefore, the reader could be mystified by the fact that my conclusion addresses Minogue and the future of conservatism. However, I believe that within the context of the growing reactionary global Right, Minogue's conservative realism represents a suitable practical and theoretical alternative, but also a way forward for conservatives grappling with an ever-increasingly unfamiliar modern world.

A typical response to reactionaries who systematically question the underlying foundations of modernity is to outright dismiss their arguments without engaging with their misgivings (Williams, 2022). Indeed, this is the same tactic that some conservative liberals, such as David French, have adopted, and this could be a reason for the reactionaries' growing appeal in conservative and political circles. However, this approach may be imprudent, as it leaves the conservative movement open to capture from these reactionary forces.

Minogue and the reactionary global Right

Minogue offers conservative insights to counteract the reactionary agenda, as shown in the first part of this thesis, which outlines his intellectual journey. He is concerned about the increasing unfamiliarity of the modern world, but he does not blame liberalism for all the problems of modernity like the reactionary Right does. Instead, he attributes them to ideological tendencies that have harmed the practices and way of life of the West.

In the first chapter, the focus is on Minogue's upbringing in Australia and his introduction to John Anderson's scepticism and advocacy for academic freedom. However, Minogue's life was defined by his move to Britain in the early fifties, his studies, and his academic affiliation with the LSE. At the LSE, Minogue encountered Michael Oakeshott, who became the most significant intellectual influence in his life. While it is true that Minogue was influenced by Oakeshott's ideas, his life experiences and particular concerns set him apart and distinguish him as a unique thinker. In his early writings, such as *The Liberal Mind* and *Nationalism*, we appreciate Minogue's approach in his view that these ideologies promoted a political vision focused on addressing society's imperfections through state action.

In the third chapter, however, we see Minogue's focus shifts to the destructive effects of modern liberalism on Western civilisation's practices. This shift is evident in Minogue's book *Alien Powers*, where his critique of ideology shifts from perfectionist tendencies to its impact on social institutions of authority. Moreover, after Thatcherism, Minogue's defence of the conservative and moral credentials of the Thatcher years also included a greater emphasis on social and cultural themes. He demonstrated this emphasis not only in his writings but also by actively siding with traditionalist groups on topics such as Euroscepticism, multiculturalism, national sovereignty, and identity. Minogue's concern with social and cultural themes culminated in his final book, *The Servile Mind*. In a gloomy tone, he laments the state of Western civilisation in which the authoritative conditions central to human conduct have been swept away. Consequently, for Minogue, modernity, and the way of life that it has spurred are not the problem. Instead, the issue is the project of ideological liberation that has turned human desires tempered by moral practices into mere human impulses.

Nevertheless, for many conservatives, raising the alarm by engaging with their main misgivings about modernity is not enough. Modern conservative movements demand positive strategies or tactics to restore the familiar in an unfamiliar world. Here, Minogue's conservative realism runs into the problem of silence since it cannot provide an action plan to follow. Yet, this lack of a plan is a theoretical advantage, as conservatism is a response to 'plans' gone awry (Minogue, 1986g). In rejecting rationalist plans to perfect the world, conservatives preserve the essence of the politics of scepticism that allowed, for example, Burke to question the utopian radicalism of the French revolution. Moreover, the rejection of such plans is in line with the conservative belief that in politics we should always be vigilant of human folly.

However, from a practical perspective, the lack of a 'plan' of action may not garner the sympathy of adherents of conservatism. Indeed, the social effectiveness of Minogue's (2004b) conservative realism comes into question when he admits that there are situations when conservatism has no alternative other than silence. But again, Minogue's life provides a practical contribution to how conservatives should approach the ever-increasing unfamiliarity of the modern world.

We see some of these ideas in the second chapter that explores Minogue's role as a public intellectual, which differs from Oakeshott's approach. Unlike Oakeshott, Minogue actively engaged in conservative causes and became involved in the public sphere due to his opposition to student protests at the LSE. His public profile during the LSE Troubles, was augmented by his role in the New Right coalition during the seventies, a role that allowed him to participate in important intellectual circles that defined the coalition's doctrine and become one of its most fervent public defenders. Minogue's role within the New Right coalition made him a natural supporter of the Thatcher administration. Minogue's support for Thatcherism was grounded in his close intellectual

and personal connection to Thatcher, and his belief that it restored the moral fabric of British society.

Minogue's entry into the public intellectual life highlights that conservatives must persuade individuals of the means to keep and restore what has been lost. This persuasion must be connected with living a conservative life in as many aspects of human conduct. Minogue's style of civility and good manners politics, as chronicled in the first part of this thesis, displayed an example of a remarkable conservative life, which earned him the admiration and disdain of all the right people (Scruton, 2013). As a result, Minogue's politics goes beyond that of Oakeshott, as he actively engaged in defending Western civilisation against perceived threats.

Minogue's conservative realism is also significant because he was receptive to the concerns of the global reactionary Right. We see this for example, in Minogue (1986c; 1986g) is chastising Hayek for not applying his scepticism of collectivism to the free market alternative that he espouses. Moreover, Minogue (1986c) further emphasises the importance of inherited practices not only for free markets but also, more importantly, for the Western way of life. Therefore, Minogue understood that conservative concerns extend beyond economic considerations and included preserving inherited Western practices.

Similarly, I showed Minogue's Euroscepticism and critique of globalism through the idea of Olympianism, thus highlighting many of the shared themes with the reactionary global Right.¹ In his critique of Britain's membership in the European Union and Olympianism, Minogue noted the new ideological tendency to perfect the world through international politics, and the imposition of a new 'global' identity to the detriment of national identities. The same applies to the

¹ See chapter III.

universality of human rights in the international agenda. Although he showed some initial sympathy, Minogue (1979b) displayed an uneasiness about its evolution and its effect on individuals. Indeed, the late Minogue (2003a) rejected and warned about universal human rights because of their connection to the Olympian project.

Minogue's case not only does it demonstrate a receptivity to the concerns of the reactionary global Right, but also presents a conservative realist approach that offers a theoretical framework to critique reactionary thought and practice. The framework is outlined in the fourth chapter, where Minogue defends the individualist way of life, a defence shaped by the thought of Thomas Hobbes and Michael Oakeshott. Minogue contends that the individualist disposition emerged during the 15th and 16th centuries and has become the inherited and established way of life in the West. This way of life, influenced by Christian humanist sceptics such as Montaigne, is the defining characteristic of modernity. Additionally, Minogue advocates for a conservative individualism that is distinct from liberal individualism and where authority is a central precondition. Here, individualism is viewed as a moral practice where human conduct is subject to authoritative conditions. Thus, the problem with the modern world is not individualism per se, but rather the weakening of the structure of authority that is essential to this way of life. Consequently, Minogue's framework offers a coherent conservatism that accepts the modern individualist world but also highlights the shortcomings of rightist Jacobinism.

The reactionary view of the unfamiliarity of the West is flawed and therefore, it results in an incorrect solution of envisioning an idealist society to address the imperfections of modernity. Minogue's concept of ideology and politics, discussed in the fifth chapter, highlights the shortcomings of this vision. According to Minogue, influenced by Oakeshott, politics is not about theorising a better or ideal society. Instead, politics is about persuading fellow citizens of the rules

of the civil association. Thus, the realm of the political is procedural, focusing solely on the framework of laws that enable individuals to pursue their felicity and moral identity.

The Jacobins of the Right, on the other hand, go beyond the boundaries of politics by advocating for a reactionary utopia that aims to impose a rationalist plan for the state. Minogue refers to this as an ideology. His concept of ideology rejects the End of Ideology thesis, while also imbuing the term with a negative connotation. Minogue defines ideology as a pseudo-scientific system that seeks to perfect society by liberating the oppressed from the oppressive modern individualist world. Reactionaries, by emulating this model, resemble Enlightenment rationalists by shifting their focus from the feasible realm of politics to the realm of ideology in their pursuit of a utopian future driven by nostalgia. Thus, Minogue's theoretical contribution serves as a tool to identify political and ideological doctrines, enabling conservatives to avoid the ideological approach of the Jacobins of the Right while still addressing the dilemmas of modernity.

Minogue's framework of individualism and ideology/politics comes full circle in the final chapter, which explores his concept of conservative realism. This term is coined by Minogue as a tribute to the conservatism of the LSE Right and reflects the waning of New Right politics and intellectual cohesion that once made the movement successful. Inspired by Oakeshott, conservative realism prefers the existing way of life over innovation, guided by scepticism, limited politics, and conservative individualism. Additionally, Minogue's critique of Roger Scruton provides valuable insights into the nature of conservatism. The ideological tendencies Minogue found in Scruton, mirrors the reactionary tendency to embrace ideology in their pursuit of a reactionary utopia. Nonetheless, Minogue's conservatism lacks support in our current reactionary-dominated context due to its affinity for liberalism, late entry into cultural themes, and secular nature.

Despite the lack of support for Minogue's style of conservatism in the current context, this thesis has demonstrated his valuable contribution in terms of accepting the modern world and being critical of dangerous tendencies within it. This acceptance acknowledges the need to conserve essential elements of liberalism in conservatism. As Samuel Huntington (1957, p. 460) argues, “[t]he true enemy of the conservative is not the liberal but the extreme radical no matter what ideational theory he may espouse”. Similarly, Minogue sees ideologies that break from political boundaries as the true enemies of conservatism, rather than political doctrines that operate within those boundaries.

In summary, Minogue’s conservative realism situates itself against the excesses of liberal and reactionary rationalism and provides theoretical tools for their criticism. Rather than forcing a choice between two utopianisms, Minogue's conservatism seeks to chart a middle path that does not shy away from the same concerns that many reactionaries have, providing a practical and conservative response to a more ideological modern world. The value of his conservative vision lies not only in its insights but also in its potential to offer an alternative path for the conservative movement, one that is not dominated by an overly reactionary mindset.

A Minoguean future of conservative politics?

However, the endangerment of traditions of liberal conservatism in the intellectual sphere and their ostracism in the political realm for many decades presents a substantial challenge within the context of the growing reactionary backlash. These challenges are amplified by a constant discourse about the failure of conservatism, and the need for a radical alternative.² Furthermore, the rise of Jacobins on the Left and the Right can be seen as an example of liberal conservatism's

² See for example; Ahmari (2020); Poulos (2018).

inability to confront these challenges (Hall & Rengger, 2005; Williams, 2022). Nonetheless, Minogue's thought and life reveal a practical appeal in his conservative realism that could command popular and sentimental support.

For example, Minogue's appeal can provide insight into the future of conservative politics in Britain post-Brexit. I have argued that Minogue's Euroscepticism would have made him an enthusiastic Brexiteer as he shared many of the concerns expressed by Leave voters.³ Yet, Minogue's position on Europe was not rooted in populist Euroscepticism, and he did not support the Anti-Federalist League or the United Kingdom Independence Party (Sked, 2014). Therefore, had he been alive during the Brexit campaign, he would have likely eschewed populist rhetoric and instead focused on being sceptical of internationalism and on the European project's incompatibility with British historical practice. Minogue's advocacy for Brexit would have been grounded in a conservative realist perspective that emphasises the importance of preserving national sovereignty and practice in the face of an Olympian project.

Minogue's (2007b) conservative realist approach to Europe highlights the possibility of developing a type of statesmanship that avoids the Conservative party's imitation of Right-wing populism and New Labour politics, which he frequently criticised. This statecraft emphasises the importance of reminding the electorate about the limited and sceptical politics that have long been a part of British political life. For Minogue, true conservative politics should focus on preserving the inherited and established individualist way of life, rather than making politics the centre of life.

He may have imagined Brexit as the catalyst for the rediscovery and refining of this conservative realist statecraft, since Minogue considered the European question an obstacle to this

³ See Chapters, II, III.

endeavour. However, it is important to note that conservative realist politics should not necessarily be equated with a return to the Thatcherite policy agenda in the Conservative party. Minogue (1989c) argued that Thatcherite policies were guided by a specific moral response to the moral environment Britain faced in the late seventies and eighties. As such, Minogue's work provides a valuable warning to those within conservative politics today who advocate for Thatcherite policies without proper consideration of the economic, political, and social context that gave rise to Thatcher's moral response.

Nevertheless, Minogue's conservative realism can provide a suitable route for the future of conservative party politics in Britain. We find it, in Minogue's view, that the root of Thatcherism was a moral agenda that embraced the attitude and rhetoric of the British individualist way of life. Adopting this moral legacy that guided Thatcherism will provide the two distinct tenets that could allow for long-term conservative political success; freedom and belonging (Willets, 2021). The former, represented in the British individualist pursuing felicity and identity, a moral outlook that Thatcherism sought to restore by emphasising in rhetoric and policy what Shirley Letwin called the 'vigorous virtues' (Letwin, 1993). The latter exemplified in the British roots and uniqueness of this individualist way of life. The balance between these two tenets characterises the conservative realist politics that allowed, for example, Thatcher to achieve long-term political success (Letwin, 1993; Russell, Johnston, & Pattie, 1992). Hence, achieving this balance is necessary to secure the future of conservative party politics. Moreover, Minogue's emphasis that Thatcherism was a moral project could indicate that what is needed may not necessarily be Thatcherite policies, but rather its moral agenda in our current moral environment.

The future of conservative politics in Britain and the West requires a rediscovery, contextualisation, and refinement of the balance between freedom and belonging, which is the

hallmark of conservative realism. In adopting conservative realist politics, conservatism can avoid the pitfalls of a Jacobin world and achieve electoral and popular support, as Thatcher did. This support could be achieved and sustained through intellectual, social, and public engagement in conservative battle lines, as demonstrated by Minogue throughout his life.

Furthermore, Minogue's conservative realism has significant implications for the future of conservative politics, especially considering the increasingly secular nature of Western civilisation. As Western societies become less religious, a conservatism that relies on religious themes may find it challenging to garner substantial popular support. While the role of religion in conservative thinking has been central, as exemplified in the history of the United States (Kristol, 1996), Minogue's non-religiously based conservatism avoids the pitfalls of religious fundamentalism and the growing dominance of conservative integralism in contemporary conservative discourse (Patterson, 2022). Minogue's contribution is twofold. Firstly, as demonstrated in the final chapter, Minogue's conservative realism shows that one can arrive at conservative conclusions without relying on religious premises or imposing a theo-political vision. Secondly, Minogue's conservative realism is compatible with modern pluralist societies, affirming a diverse polity with distinct individuals pursuing their felicity and moral identity. Consequently, his conservative realism can appeal to both the ever-growing population of non-believers in Western society and those who value the familiarity of religious principles.

In the fifties, Samuel Huntington (1957) argued that American Liberals needed to embrace conservative insights if they wished to preserve liberal values and institutions. Building upon Huntington's thesis in our contemporary context, those who value modernity, and its liberal values and ideas stand to gain much from conservative insights that can provide theoretical and political responses to the reactionary global Right. As such, Minogue's conservative realism is particularly

significant in today's world, where the reactionary global Right presents a futuristic utopia guided by pre-modern ideas of social solidarity as a viable alternative to the perceived 'ills' of modernity. As this thesis has shown, Minogue's brand of conservative realism can provide a compelling case for conservative insights that can effectively counter the reactionary global Right.

Minogue invites us to appreciate that there is much to be grateful to the individualist way of life. Although some problems or imperfections may emerge because of this way of life, it is a small price to pay for the richness of human life. Minogue's life and thought speak to contemporary conservative concerns about an alternative path to an increasingly alien West. Minogue's message is that vigilance, active participation and living a conservative life is a healthier direction than imitating St. George and slaying all the dragons of an imperfect world.

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