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Competitiveness, Civilizationism, and the Anglosphere: Kenneth Minogue’s Place in Conservative Thought

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This article contributes to an understanding of postimperial civilizational thinking within British conservatism by engaging with the work of Kenneth Minogue, an understudied but important thinker. Minogue played a key role in reframing an older discourse, centred on empire, in the register of free-market economics and global “competitiveness.” During the 1970s and 1980s, he was a significant figure on the New Right, critiquing university radicalism, feminism, and multiculturalism. During the 1990s his thought took a civilizational turn, and he condemned the liberal projects of political elites for undermining the West’s traditional competitive ethos. The bureaucracy of the European Union and the economic rise of East Asian “state societies” were particular concerns for Minogue and led him to champion the concept of the Anglosphere as a distinct civilization.

Introduction

At a meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society (MPS) held in the Galapagos Islands in June 2013, the group’s recent president, Australian academic Kenneth Minogue, was reflecting on evolution. In the years since Charles Darwin’s famed voyage to the islands, many had employed his ideas when explaining competition between states, societies, and individuals. Exponents of “social Darwinism” had argued that the success of particular groups could be understood in the same terms as that of certain species.¹ This was wrong, Minogue insisted, because Darwin’s natural selection was “a blind process in which random mutations constantly generate new versions of a species.” For Minogue, legitimate social evolution was grounded not upon radical or random change, but on respect for tradition and shared values. “My concern,” he told attendees, “is by contrast with the emergence of our free civilization, which has no blind random processes in it ... specifically, the only society or civilization that has ever evolved into freedom: our own.”²

¹Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London, 1859); Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London, 1871). See Gregory Claeys, “Social Darwinism,” in Claeys, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Nineteenth Century Thought* (Cambridge, 2019), 163–83.

²Kenneth Minogue, address to a meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society, ms39079/1/6/7 (June 2013), Kenneth Minogue Archive (hereafter KMA), University of St Andrews Archive Collections.

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Minogue's address was to be his last. On the return flight from San Cristobal Island to the Ecuadorean mainland he suffered a fatal cardiac arrest. In Minogue's work, we can see the importance, and chart the development, of civilizational thinking within British conservatism. This article provides the first considered treatment of Minogue's wide-ranging scholarship. In doing so it illuminates aspects of New Right thinking in Britain and beyond. As a one-time adviser to Margaret Thatcher and chairman of the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) think tank, as well as of the Eurosceptic Bruges Group, he was a significant figure within that faction, as the first section of this article will demonstrate. From the position of a professorship at the London School of Economics, Minogue remained influential among those of a Thatcherite persuasion even after she was deposed in 1990. Furthermore, he played a key role in the civilizational turn of the 1990s and into the early 2000s, acting as both political insider and public intellectual.

The evolution of Minogue's thought serves as more than simply a barometer of wider trends, although it certainly retains real use in this regard. This is made clear by the pivotal role he played in returning British conservatism to a global frame. In the Thatcher era, he developed his New Right concerns, casting "political correctness" and multiculturalism as a threat to a conservative cultural order. In the years after her fall, he portrayed them as also being injurious to the West's traditional competitive ethos. The second section will detail this development. Significantly, he was among the first to identify East Asian economic performance as a civilizational threat to Western preeminence.

This civilizational turn would find its mature expression in his development and promotion of the "Anglosphere," as explored in the third section.³ Minogue's involvement with the development of the concept demonstrates that it was as much born of unease with a rising Asia as it was the result of frustration at Britain's place within the European Union.⁴ Yet despite Minogue's alarm at civilizational displacement, Asian economic success also served as the foil for insisting that the Anglosphere should rid itself of liberal pieties and social-democratic welfare provision as a prerequisite for recovering its former competitive spirit.

While authors have noted the legacies of empire bound up within the Anglosphere project, Minogue's work allows us to see it as a means of updating a specifically conservative civilizationism for an era of neoliberal global political economy, one in which securing national competitiveness ranked among the highest duties of government.⁵

³There has been a growth in the literature on the concept of the Anglosphere, especially in the wake of the vote in Britain to leave the European Union in 2016. See Andrew Mycock and Ben Wellings, eds., *The Anglosphere: Continuity, Dissonance and Location* (Oxford, 2019); Duncan Bell and Srdjan Vucetic, "Brexit, CANZUK, and the Legacy of Empire," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 21/2 (2019), 367–82; Michael Kenny and Nick Pearce, *Shadows of Empire: The Anglosphere in British Politics* (Cambridge, 2018); Ben Wellings and Helen Baxendale, "Euroscepticism and the Anglosphere: Traditions and Dilemmas in Contemporary English Nationalism," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 52/1 (2015), 123–39; Srdjan Vucetic, *The Anglosphere: A Genealogy of a Racialized Identity in International Relations* (Stanford, 2011).

⁴Its anti-EU nature has been the emphasis of most studies to date. See, for example, Bell and Vucetic, "Brexit, CANZUK, and the Legacy of Empire."

⁵Many of the groups in which Minogue participated have been identified as neoliberal. The Mont Pelerin Society itself is regarded as the ur-neoliberal body. This article defines neoliberalism as the effort to subject

Minogue made the case for a project that bears a striking similarity to the scheme for imperial federation proposed over a century before.⁶ Yet while that earlier campaign had been associated with Joseph Chamberlain and his plans for throwing up protective tariffs around imperial trade, in an innovative move Minogue hoped to achieve the same ends by stressing the importance of competitiveness in global markets. Yet, despite the centrality of competitiveness to his civilizational rhetoric, in reading Minogue we encounter a version of the Anglosphere distinct from that presented by orthodox market liberals. Although many of its leading public proponents stress its liberality and inclusiveness, Minogue's work reveals that it was also conceived of as an explicitly ethnicist project.⁷

Minogue and the New Right

Minogue's cultural conservatism was shaped by an academic experience that began almost as soon as he arrived in the UK in 1951. The following year he enrolled as a night student at the London School of Economics and quickly impressed his teachers, being awarded the Harold Laski scholarship. He graduated in 1955 with first-class honors in economics. Following a brief period teaching at the University of Exeter, in 1956 Minogue was made a lecturer at the LSE and remained there for the rest of his career. It was his experience at the LSE that led him to develop a critique of political correctness and an aversion to an intellectual "elite of the enlightened" which "continues to orchestrate endeavours that aim to make us better."⁸

By the 1960s, conservatism on both sides of the Atlantic had taken a culturalist turn. The 1970s saw the emergence of a New Right which welded cultural issues to a radical economic agenda that sought to dispense with the Keynesian orthodoxy of the postwar years.⁹ In many ways, Minogue was an archetypical New Right figure, a

increasing areas of social life to the discipline of the market and insulate them from democratic oversight and intervention. The literature on neoliberalism is immense. For an introduction see Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe, eds., *The Road from Mont Pelerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective* (Cambridge MA, 2009); William Davies, *The Limits of Neoliberalism: Authority, Sovereignty and the Logic of Competition* (London, 2014); Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism* (Cambridge, MA, 2018); Thomas Biebricher, *The Political Theory of Neoliberalism* (Stanford, 2021). Minogue's conservatism could viably be described as neoliberal. The connections between conservatism and neoliberalism have been explored in Ben Jackson, "Currents of Neo-liberalism: British Political Ideologies and the New Right, c.1955–1979," *English Historical Review* 131 (2016), 823–50; and in the US context in Melinda Cooper, *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism* (Princeton, 2019). The focus of this article, however, is not the neoliberal nature of Minogue's thought but his conservative civilizationism.

⁶The similarity of the Anglosphere discourse, in particular its latest iteration as a union between Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the UK, has been noted by Bell and Vucetic, "Brexit, CANZUK and the legacy of Empire," 374.

⁷The place of the USA in the Anglosphere is secondary and somewhat ambiguous in Minogue's work. Its ethnic and cultural heterogeneity is the likely source of this. Britain and the former "white dominions" are therefore the focus in this article.

⁸Kenneth Minogue, *The Servile Mind: How Democracy Erodes the Moral Life* (New York, 2010), 142.

⁹There is extensive literature on the New Right, with studies produced as the movement emerged and developed. One of the earliest uses of the term was by Tom Nairn, which identified Enoch Powell's importance to the movement in Tom Nairn, "Enoch Powell: The New Right," *New Left Review* 61 (1970), 4–11. Other significant studies include Andrew Gamble, *The Conservative Nation* (London, 1974); Gamble, *The*

“fusionist” who combined cultural conservatism with the relatively novel belief that radical free-market economics provided the best means of preserving old ways and hierarchies.¹⁰

In the UK, Margaret Thatcher became the New Right politician par excellence.¹¹ Minogue was a personal friend of Thatcher and had known her since her days as a member of the Conservative Philosophy Group in the 1970s.¹² For both of them, the importance of the New Right was that it enabled a response to liberal elites. “Among the many aspects of that curious composite called the ‘New Right,’ the one to which least attention has so far been given,” wrote Minogue, “is the repudiation of collective guilt” about Britain’s past, in particular its imperial history.¹³ Regarding her messages to the electorate, he noted 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 ... the real principles guiding her political posture are in fact moral rather than social.”¹⁴ Her genius, for Minogue, had been her ability to employ economic policy to push back against the ascendancy of radical ideas across the board.

Over the course of Thatcher’s premiership, Minogue found himself progressively ensconced in the institutions of the New Right. His networked position within the movement is attested by his appointment to the position of chairman of the Centre for Policy Studies in 1987. The think tank was founded by Thatcher’s mentor Keith Joseph, a man whose economic thinking had in turn been deeply influenced by that of Enoch Powell.¹⁵ While he remained in his position at the LSE, the appointment would signal Minogue’s move into the world of free-market and conservative think

Free Economy and the Strong State: The Politics of Thatcherism (London, 1988); Stuart Hall, Charles Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (London, 1978); Stuart Hall, “The Great Moving Right Show,” *Marxism Today*, Jan. 1979, 14–20; Barry Norman, *The New Right* (London, 1987). For a more recent evaluation of the movement and the language of the New Right see Jackson, “Currents of Neo-liberalism”; and Ben Williams, “The New Right and Its Legacies for British Conservatism,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 29/1 (2024), 121–44.

¹⁰In this, we can see Minogue’s work as part of a British version of the fusionist strategy employed in the United States by Frank Meyer, which synthesized elements of liberal economics with social conservatism. See Frank S. Meyer, *In Defense of Freedom and Other Essays* (Indianapolis, 1996).

¹¹Thatcher and Minogue shared a similar sentiment: “economics are the method: the object is to change the heart and soul.” See Margaret Thatcher, interview with Ronald Butt, *Sunday Times*, 3 May 1981.

¹²Other notable attendees included Bill and Shirley Letwin, Colin Welch, Elie Kedourie, Maurice Cowling, Maurice Cranston, Perry Worsthorne, T. E. Utey, Noel Malcolm, Roger Scruton, J. B. Kelly, and Frank Johnson.

¹³He continued approvingly that “Mrs. Thatcher rejected something she called bourgeois guilt.” Kenneth Minogue, “The Emergence of the New Right,” in Robert Skidelsky, ed., *Thatcherism* (London, 1988), 125–6.

¹⁴Kenneth Minogue and Michael Biddiss, *Thatcherism: Personality and Politics* (London, 1987), xv. In 1986 he presented *The New Enlightenment*, a six-part television series on the free market and classical liberal political thought.

¹⁵The two other founders were Thatcher and political journalist Alfred Sherman. Powell’s influence was not restricted to the immigration issue. He had been among the first to advocate a restriction of the money supply, cuts to state spending, and a return to the so-called “sound economics” of the prewar Depression era. For him, this was all fundamental to restoring something more intangible, a quality that Robbie Shilliam has termed the “ordered independence” of the English. See Robbie Shilliam, “Enoch Powell: Britain’s First Neoliberal Politician,” *New Political Economy* 26/2 (2021), 239–49.

tanks. For example, in 1991 he also became chairman of the Eurosceptic Bruges Group.¹⁶ Fellowships and visiting lectures at a range of other institutions such as the Institute of Economic Affairs and the Social Affairs Unit in the UK, the Liberty Fund and the Hudson Institute in the USA, and the Centre for Independent Studies in New Zealand would follow, culminating in his presidency of the MPS.

Minogue presented his opposition to political correctness and multiculturalism as a form of Oakeshottian conservatism. Michael Oakeshott was his colleague and mentor at the LSE and was opposed to what he termed rationalism in politics, which he regarded as the desire to reduce social practices to abstractions so that they may be worked upon and improved.¹⁷ One of his most enduring contributions to political thought was his distinction between civil and enterprise associations.¹⁸ The *civitas*, the state, was an association in which each citizen stands in relation to another based on law. Upholding these laws and keeping the ship of state afloat on “a boundless and bottomless sea” where “there is neither harbour for shelter nor floor for anchorage, neither starting-place nor appointed destination,” is, for Oakeshott, the sole proper business of state.¹⁹ He contrasted this with the “enterprise association,” which is formed to achieve a particular goal. His concern was that the modern state, especially after 1945, had taken on this goal-oriented character informed by the rationalistic mind-set.

While Minogue expressed the same sentiments, his stance was more confrontational and, by the 1990s, would manifest itself in outright polemic. His first major work was a critique of liberalism: this, it must be noted, was liberalism understood in culturalist rather than economic terms. In the book he expanded on Oakeshott’s themes, casting liberalism as a form of ideology, and the liberal as rationalist in chief, a latter-day St George always looking for some dragon of social injustice to slay.²⁰ He contrasted this drive with an Oakeshottian conservatism.²¹ Over the coming decades an increasing number of “ideologues,” from campus radicals to multiculturalists, found themselves in Minogue’s crosshairs.

¹⁶He replaced Ralph Harris, who had cofounded Britain’s first neoliberal think tank, the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA), alongside battery chicken farming pioneer Anthony Fisher, who had been encouraged to do so by Friedrich Hayek. Quinn Slobodian and Dieter Plehwe have examined anti-European Union thought among neoliberals. See Quinn Slobodian and Dieter Plehwe, “Neoliberals against Europe,” in William Callison and Zachary Manfredi, eds., *Mutant Neoliberalism: Market Rule and Political Rupture* (New York, 2020), 89–111. The Bruges Group took its name from Thatcher’s speech to the College of Europe made at Bruges in 1988, in which she set out a Eurosceptic position in response to a move for greater social protections initiated under the Commission presidency of Jacques Delors. See Andrew Roe-Crines and Tim Heppell, “Legitimising Euroscepticism? The Construction, Delivery and Significance of the Bruges Speech,” *Contemporary British History* 34/2 (2020), 204–27.

¹⁷Minogue would remain a friend and correspondent of Oakeshott until the latter’s death. He was also working on a biography of Oakeshott. See KMA ms39079/1/8/7 for the preparatory work.

¹⁸Michael Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct* (Oxford, 1975).

¹⁹Andy Hamilton, “Conservatism,” in Edward N. Zalta, ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 edn), at <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/conservatism>.

²⁰Kenneth Minogue, *The Liberal Mind* (Indianapolis, 2000). Later, he produced an extended critique of ideology that, while critical of the French Revolution for giving birth to ideological thinking, traced modern forms of ideology to the sociology of Marx and Engels and its method of identifying exploiters and the exploited. See Kenneth Minogue, *Alien Powers: The Pure Theory of Ideology* (Abingdon, 1985).

²¹Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (Indianapolis, 1991), 127.

The real bastion of liberalism was, for Minogue, the university. Furthermore, it was there that it had evolved into a new political radicalism that sought to entirely overturn the old order. In 1968 students across Britain occupied buildings and clashed with authority. Like elsewhere across Europe and the United States, in Britain these protests were triggered by the ongoing war in Vietnam. Yet this wave of demonstrations and “sit-ins” also made clear a broader radical agenda with various versions of Marxism, feminism, and other causes featuring amid student rhetoric.²² Those at the LSE were in the vanguard.²³ Minogue remained insistent that universities should aspire to remoteness, and should certainly not allow their governance to become subject to the demands of politically motivated students.²⁴ What disturbed him was the desire of student protesters, always the minority, he maintained, to impose a particular moral code, informed by a romantic sentimentality towards “oppressed peoples,” the “victims” of empire, upon their peers.²⁵ He was also scathing of the student politician for whom “only a continuing stream of accusation of racism actually guarantees his *raison d’être*.”²⁶

The new wave of feminism that had spread beyond campuses was also condemned by Minogue.²⁷ He dismissed it, along with Marxism and liberalism, as another form of “ideology.”²⁸ “Like Marxism, feminism is,” Minogue wrote, “parasitic on the development of modernity,” seeking to upend the cultural pillars that have enabled social and economic development.²⁹ “In the course of the 1960s a new tribe was established,” Minogue reflected, one that “sought to overthrow the Western citadel from within” and had in fact “had notably greater success” than Marxism. “It was a tribe,” he continued, “constructed out of women who had taken some sort of degree.” What radical feminism “essentially did,” he argued, “was to deny complementarity between the sexes.” Most fundamentally of all, he opined, it “attacked the very conception of the feminine as something that had been imposed upon women by superior force.”³⁰ In this manner, like Marxism, it relied upon an exploitation of the impatience of “less able women who want to make a fast leap into a future of free and easy equality ... it is an assertion of false victimhood to claim special privileges.”³¹

²²Kenneth Polk, “Student Protests in the US and the UK,” *Higher Education Review* 1/1 (1968), 63–8; Nick Thomas, “Challenging Myths of the 1960s: The Case of Student Protest in Britain,” *Twentieth Century British History* 13/3 (2002), 277–97.

²³Harry Kidd, *The Trouble at L.S.E.* (London, 1969).

²⁴Kenneth Minogue, *The Concept of a University* (London, 1973).

²⁵Evan Smith, *No Platform: A History of Anti-fascism, Universities and the Limits of Free Speech* (Abingdon, 2020).

²⁶Kenneth Minogue, “The Egalitarian Conceit: False and True Equalities,” paper for the CPS (October 1989), KMA 39079/2/5.

²⁷Sue Thornham, “Second Wave Feminism,” in S. Gamble, ed., *Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism* (London, 2001), 25–35.

²⁸Kenneth Minogue, “Choice, Consciousness and Ideological Language,” *Metamedicine* 3 (1982), 351–66.

²⁹Kenneth Minogue, “The Goddess That Failed: Like Other Ideologies, Feminism Asks Not What Is Right, but What’s in It for Me,” *National Review*, Nov. 1991, 46–9, at 46.

³⁰Kenneth Minogue, “How Civilizations Fall,” *New Criterion*, April 2001, 1–9, at 3.

³¹Minogue, “The Goddess That Failed,” 46.

Minogue would remain closely engaged with the issue of the role of universities in public life for decades to come, and it is one that well illustrates his growing frustration with political correctness. Making the case for free speech during a period in which the “no-platforming” of right-wing speakers was becoming increasingly common practice he argued that the term “racism,” in particular, had become so capacious as also to be meaningless. The result of political correctness was “an immense charge of righteousness” which “threatens to destroy the civility upon which universities depend,” he insisted.³² Increasingly, he believed that these attitudes had escaped the university and were threatening rational discussion in society at large, as those educated within the universities moved into positions of power and prominence in public life.

For many on the right of conservative politics, a hallmark of belonging to the university-educated liberal intelligentsia was a relaxed approach to immigration. In his infamous 1968 “Rivers of Blood” speech, Enoch Powell made the claim that elites in Westminster and Whitehall were ignoring their constituents’ wishes by allowing nonwhite migration from the New Commonwealth.³³ It envisaged a time when, in Britain, “the black man will have the whip hand over the white man.”³⁴ In an attempt to quell the controversy that the speech provoked, Edward Heath, the party leader, expelled Powell from the shadow cabinet. Yet when Thatcher became leader in 1978, she adopted Powell’s more strident tone, insisting that government should seek a clear end to immigration. On coming to power, the Conservatives introduced the Nationality Act of 1981, which stipulated that even where children were born in the UK, at least one parent must have British citizenship before the child could also be considered British. Beyond this, however, despite the strength of previous rhetoric, no further legislative measures were pursued.

Despite his approval of the Thatcher project, Minogue remained concerned by an apparent lack of political will to limit immigration. With her ejection from office, he felt freed to make increasingly critical statements of government policy. “A larger and ever more significant group of outsiders has appeared upon the scene,” he complained. Increasing numbers were moving to Europe and, courted by the left, these “immigrants who have left poverty and even torture behind by moving to Western communities may soon lose any sense that they have been fortunate and organise into collective minorities,” he warned.³⁵ Minogue thus took issue with sections of the right who supported immigration based on its contribution to national economic performance. His fellow travelers at the Institute of Economic Affairs stand out as particular targets. “Libertarian economists,” he warned, “often thought there was no problem at all” regarding immigration because “rising manpower facilitates growth.” The truth, however, was more complex, he insisted, because what accompanied immigration was the elevation of multiculturalism to its place as the “orthodoxy of state policy.”³⁶ Raw numbers might suggest

³²Kenneth Minogue, “The Egalitarian Conceit,” n.d., ms39079/2/5.

³³Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge, 2013).

³⁴Shirin Hirsch, *In the Shadow of Enoch Powell: Race, Locality and Resistance* (Manchester, 2018), 21.

³⁵Kenneth Minogue, “The Moral Significance of a Democratic Constitution” (Sept. 1994), KMA ms39079/1/14.

³⁶Kenneth Minogue, “Introduction: Multiculturalism, A Dictatorship of Virtue,” in Patrick West, *The Poverty of Multiculturalism* (London, 2005), vii–xvii, at xi.

the economic benefits of migration, yet, as we shall see in the following section, what he believed this disguised was a dilution of competitive spirit.

Minogue argued that the introduction of legal protections for minorities enervated society as a whole:

the anti-discrimination movement created new signs of presumed disadvantage. The most powerful idea was that of “representation.” Ethnic members of society ought to be “represented” across the spectrum of occupations in proportion to their demographic profile. This was clearly a lobbying device because no one was interested in the ethnic proportions in industries such as rubbish collection or furniture removals.³⁷

He maintained that such antidiscrimination legislation had served to undermine the principle of legal equality and the operation of the free market.³⁸ One of the primary means by which this had come about, he believed, was “limiting the power of employers to hire freely and sack at their own judgment.”³⁹

Minogue warned that although it had become fashionable in certain quarters to proclaim “the death of socialism,” it was being rearticulated as the new creed of political correctness and antiracism that had been incubated in the universities.⁴⁰ However, although the political left had abandoned hope in a revolution led by the working class, “there has been a tendency for new proletarians to be discovered and for intellectuals to lead—women, racial minorities etc.”⁴¹ Luckily for the “pseudo intellectuals” of the left, the number of people in Britain and the English-speaking world belonging to racial minorities was rising.

Writing of multiculturalism as “a dictatorship of virtue,” for the think tank Civitas, of which he was a trustee, Minogue referred to the state as an “octopus” taking ever greater responsibility for pursuing equality, while sucking up “over half of all the wealth produced by the economy,” continuing that “on the other hand” it “redistributes this wealth through tentacles that reach down into the farthest corners of society—to schools, hospitals, charities, industrial enterprises, sports clubs, museums and films, media organisations and indeed right down to the domestic hearth.” In all of this, it was guided by the watchwords of “inclusivity,” “representation,” and “equal opportunities,” funneling spending to groups he considered culturally suspect.⁴²

³⁷Minogue, *The Servile Mind*, 244.

³⁸Also significant in this regard was the introduction of the category of “hate crime” under the government of Tony Blair. See Minogue, *The Servile Mind*, xii; Kenneth Minogue, “Hayek, Slippery Slopes and Freedom in the Twentieth Century” (Nov. 1999), KMA ms39079/1/18. This was an address to a conference of the Liberty Fund, University of Chicago. The event commemorated the centenary of Hayek’s birth and was cohosted by the university’s Committee of Social Thought, of which Hayek had been a member.

³⁹Minogue, *The Servile Mind*, 257. In this regard, he likely had in mind the recent UK Equalities Act of 2010. This Act brought together various pieces of antidiscrimination legislation, namely the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

⁴⁰Kenneth Minogue “The Death of Socialism” (31 Aug. 1987), KMA ms39079/1/3/16. This was an address given at New Zealand Centre for Independent Studies.

⁴¹Minogue, “The Death of Socialism.”

⁴²Minogue, “Introduction: Multiculturalism,” ix–xii.

The Bruges Group and the CPS allowed Minogue to establish avenues of influence that would endure beyond his death. For example, he coauthored a pamphlet with Niall Ferguson entitled “The Erosion of Democracy” which criticized the rise of bureaucracy, being driven by a culture of political correctness of which multiculturalism was becoming a central plank.⁴³ The Washington, DC representative of the Bruges Group, John O’Sullivan, was a personal friend of Minogue and another former adviser to Thatcher. Like Minogue, he was a significant figure within the network of neoliberal think tanks and remains an actor in the world of conservative publishing. Their relationship would endure for decades, with O’Sullivan commissioning numerous pieces by Minogue during his editorship of the Australian conservative magazine *Quadrant*.⁴⁴

Minogue’s influence on a younger generation can also be seen in the glowing obituary penned by prominent conservative author, and then associate director of the Henry Jackson Institute, Douglas Murray. In it, Murray describes Minogue as “one of the most brilliant conservative political thinkers of his generation.” Murray has written extensively on the dangers of immigration and the threat of multiculturalism to Europe, and also of the damaging effects of feminism. Currently one of the most prominent voices on the conservative right, Murray has directly invoked Minogue’s metaphor of the liberal Saint George in support of his conservative defence of traditional civilization.⁴⁵

Minogue’s civilizationism

A study of Minogue illuminates how a 1970s and 1980s cultural conservatism developed into a civilizational rhetoric from the 1990s onwards. Specifically, he would bring together two emerging themes: a revived civilizationism, flourishing in a post-Cold War context where international power competition appeared less settled, and a new competitiveness discourse which, while emanating from business schools and standing in opposition to mainstream economics, found favor in policy-making circles as a form of *raison d’état*.⁴⁶ A key influence on the direction taken by Minogue was the work of the MPS founder, Friedrich Hayek. While he objected to Hayek’s attachment to the label “liberal,” he nevertheless admired

⁴³The pamphlet in question is Niall Ferguson, Kenneth Minogue, and David Regan, *The Erosion of Democracy* (Centre for Policy Studies occasional paper, 1994). Bruges Group member Norman Stone had also been Ferguson’s doctoral adviser at Oxford. Ferguson has since become a leading advocate of the distinctiveness of the Anglophone world, something that will be discussed in below. See Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London, 2003); Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (London 2004).

⁴⁴Additionally, O’Sullivan served as editor of US conservative publications such as the *National Interest* and *National Review* and the Canadian *National Post*. He also served as associate editor of *The Times* and assistant editor of the *Daily Telegraph*.

⁴⁵Douglas Murray, “The Dangerous Dishonesty of the Modern Left,” at www.menziesrc.org/news-feed/the-dangerous-dishonesty-of-the-modern-left.

⁴⁶Lukas Linsi, “The Discourse of Competitiveness and the Disembedding of the National Economy,” *Review of International Political Economy* 27/4 (2020), 855–79. The notion of a new fluidity in international affairs never caught the popular imagination to the same extent as the idea of the fall of the USSR signaling “the end of history.” For the classic statement of the new national competitiveness thinking see Michael E. Porter, *The Competitive Advantages of Nations* (London, 1999).

what he perceived as his basic conservatism. This is particularly apparent in the first two volumes of his three-volume work *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, and is something Minogue had appreciated in an early review.⁴⁷ A more sustained treatment can be found in his private papers, in which he considered both Hayek's *New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and the History of Ideas*, published in 1978, and his 1960 work *The Constitution of Liberty*.⁴⁸

In sympathy with Hayek, Minogue noted that "like many another liberty loving continental" he "has been drawn to espouse and clarify what has widely been seen as the historical destiny and national vocations of Anglo Saxons" in his distinction between a "true" British liberalism and a "false," primarily French, version.⁴⁹ Over the 1960s and 1970s, Hayek placed a firm emphasis on the importance of evolved customs and institutions to the effective functioning of the market, and he particularly stressed the special role played by English institutions such as the common law, and the behavioral disposition of the Anglo-Saxons in enabling the growth of modern capitalism, or the Great Society, as he termed it. Minogue adopted the same position.⁵⁰

By 1987, Minogue's civilizational tenor was clear, albeit Eurocentric rather than Anglophile at this stage. "Individualist behaviour lies at the base of our civilization," he insisted, continuing that "it is only in Europe that a civilization arose in which material wants were satisfied by a market process of exchange."⁵¹ Having stated as much, he warmed to his theme, continuing, "at the base of our practices lie a cluster of evolutions which we have developed and inherited over many centuries. From the Greeks onwards, western civilization has displayed a continuing interest in the individuality of people."⁵² Somewhat tenuously, he claimed that it was this regard for individualism that allowed capitalism to come into being. Likewise, Minogue's 1995 book *Politics: A Short Introduction* was no simple attempt to elucidate the functioning of representative institutions, nor was it an overview of canonical texts. Instead, his analysis was grounded in a concern for "our civilization" and how it might be preserved. In its opening we are told how, "in one form or another, non-European civilizations have almost invariably been ruled despotically. The Western imagination, however, has generally been repelled by despots."⁵³ The distinction he drew was orientalist, in the manner identified by

⁴⁷Kenneth Minogue, "Rules Which Make Civilization Possible," review of F.A. Hayek's *Law, Legislation and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice*, *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, Dec. 1976, KMA ms39079/2/3.

⁴⁸Kenneth Minogue, "Further Notes on Hayek" (June 1985), KMA ms39079/1/3/10.

⁴⁹Minogue also reflected that of these "continentals," Hayek might "prove the most remarkable and influential of them all." See *ibid.*

⁵⁰Yet Hayek's work had, he felt, also inspired an unqualified dedication to free markets that came dangerously close to displacing more traditional conservative concerns for stability and coherence.

⁵¹Somewhat remarkably, given the close association of the transatlantic slave trade with the development of the capitalism he was celebrating, he also remarked that such "an economy is thus a way in which Europeans at last managed to abolish the immemorial institution of slavery." In stating this, Minogue is portraying slavery as a transhistorical phenomenon and thereby minimizing the specific crime of the transatlantic slave trade. In am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this comment. See Minogue, "The Death of Socialism."

⁵²Minogue, "The Death of Socialism."

⁵³Kenneth Minogue, *Politics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 1995), 2.

Edward Said, counterposing the West with a conflated “China, India and the Middle East.”⁵⁴ For the sake of freedom and prosperity, therefore, he insisted, Western pre-eminence must be maintained.

In certain respects, Minogue was developing a discourse popularized by Samuel Huntington’s 1993 article in *Foreign Affairs*, “The Clash of Civilizations?”, in which the author made the claim that “the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic.” Instead, he wrote, “the great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural,” and culture was ascribed to civilizational inheritance.⁵⁵ A civilizational-esque lens was also becoming apparent in the MPS. While many in policy-making circles in Western capitals were looking forward to an era of enhanced globalization, certain members feared that a new regionalism was coming into being. This provided one of the main themes at the group’s 1990 general meeting, entitled “Europe in an Open World Order,” where Columbia professor of economics and political science Jagdish Bagwhati warned of a “recent revival or regionalism,” a “sequel” to the “first regionalism of the 1960s,” which resulted in the push for a new international economic order. This was unfortunate and should be resisted.⁵⁶ At the 1992 general meeting in Vancouver entitled “Relations among Nations at the End of the Century,” Stanford’s Charles Hill, writing the year after the first Gulf War, worried that “the Arab Islamic World does not appear to be moving in the direction of full participation in the global economy,” while Gregory Chow of Princeton reflected on the difficulties, but potentially great rewards, of “The Integration of China and Other Asian Countries into the World Economy.”⁵⁷

For Minogue, much of this confirmed the cultural unfitnes of large parts of the globe for equal leadership of the institutions of global governance that underpinned world trade. Such societies may conform to the rules laid down by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and China may even be admitted to its successor, the World Trade Organization. Yet the danger of allowing such entry to the Western club was that, rather than adopt Western norms, these states would break the rules of global political economy, spurred by fantasy and envy. Due to new media, “millions of people” thus “become increasingly aware” of an apparently “materially delightful lifestyle available to other people—foreigners, whites, the rich etc.”⁵⁸ But the truth was that the entire world’s population, argued Minogue, could not possibly share in this to the same extent. The reasons were threefold and based on civilizational thinking. First, “it has taken us in the West centuries to work it out and develop the capital on which it depends. It cannot be replicated as fast as

⁵⁴Ibid., 27; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978).

⁵⁵Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations,” *Foreign Affairs* 72/3 (1993), 22–49, at 22.

⁵⁶Jagdish Bagwhati, “Regional Blocs versus Multilateralism in the World Economy,” at the 1990 Mont Pelerin Society General Meeting, “Europe in an Open World Order,” Mont Pelerin Society Archives, Liberaal Archief, Ghent, Belgium.

⁵⁷Charles Hill, “The Hotel and the Mosque”; and Gregory Chow, “The Integration of China,” both at the 1992 Mont Pelerin Society General Meeting, in “Relations among Nations at the End of the Century,” Mont Pelerin Society Archives, Liberaal Archief, Ghent, Belgium.

⁵⁸Kenneth Minogue, address to Hobbes, Science and Liberalism conference of the Liberty Fund (June 1998), KMA ms39079/1/4/26. He argued that Thomas Hobbes had originally identified such propensities.

human aspiration.”⁵⁹ Second, “the resources for everybody sharing it do not exist on the current technology.”⁶⁰ Minogue elaborated: “I am told that the planet could not produce the feed necessary for everyone to live on a primarily meat diet.”⁶¹

The third reason he identified is the most striking and relevant for this article. Those in non-Western cultures cannot expect similar living standards as Westerners because, he argued, “it requires invisible moral virtues these people do not have,” continuing,

forms of prudence, self-control, regularity of work, and above all a conception of other people as fellow beings to be treated in a regular and helpful way—by contrast with those who can only take seriously those who are kin in some sense. (“Treat a stranger as a thief” is, I am told, an old Japanese saying). Africans most notably lack many of these virtues and have proved in our time incapable of running modern societies. The virtues these countries do have, tribal or ethnic solidarities, for example, are self-defeating in market terms, though not, perhaps, in what I consider war economies. Asia has similar problems ... there are cultural conditions which directly block the attainment of these “goodies.”⁶²

Minogue would frame his civilizationism in relation to the fashionable idea of “competitiveness” in a way that both undermined the vision of international political economy associated with that discourse and coopted its language. In response to those who regarded the global economy as operating on a single plain on which each might compete fairly, and where the correct policy mix could provide a competitive edge, as was being promoted by bands of consultants from leading Western business schools, Minogue countered that there is no such thing as one world economy. “A globalised world” instead has “two types of economy, loosely interacting ... market economies as found in the West,” and the “highly-controlled economies, or rather state societies organised to achieve certain forms of domination through economic performance,” found in the East, he argued. Minogue even described Japan as having been essentially a war economy down to the present moment.⁶³ Writing without any apparent sense of irony, he reflected that the Eastern goal of “market saturation ... has quite a lot in common with saturation bombing.”⁶⁴

In deeply reductive, offensive terms, Minogue presented the European economy as having “always allowed individual calculations far greater scope than other civilizations. It is the preference for seduction over rape, for exchange over domination. It generates markets and tends to turn most things (e.g. love, honour, philanthropy) commercial.”⁶⁵ He contrasted this with the East, “e.g., a caste system, Confucian

⁵⁹Ibid. For an overview of how the concept of “the West” became common in the English-speaking world see Georgios Varouxakis, “When Did Britain Join the Occident? On the Origins of the Idea of ‘the West’ in English,” *History of European Ideas* 46/5 (2020), 563–81.

⁶⁰Minogue, “Hobbes, Science and Liberalism” (June 1998), KMA ms39079/1/4/26.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

ethics, Islamic religion.” Here the impetus is to “politicise ... the dream of instrumentality and control ... at its root it is the drive towards rape for sexual desire, invasion as a way of acquiring land, and conquest for seeking other forms of tribute, alias goodies.”⁶⁶ Moreover, although he had insisted that most of the world could not feasibly achieve Western living standards, he was alarmed at the economic success of East Asian countries. Despite their moral failings, or rather because of them, Minogue worried, materially the East was now succeeding.

It was in relation to this that Minogue identified what he believed was a grave error in Hayek’s thinking, namely his foundational utilitarianism.⁶⁷ By defending the competitive system on the grounds of efficiency, that it was simply a better way of organizing our material affairs, he had left open the back door to tyranny. Indeed, by the end of his life, Hayek was even championing the free market on the basis that it could support more human life on Earth than any other economic system.⁶⁸ While the central-planning systems of Soviet communism had failed, Minogue was concerned that those Asian “state societies” “where individuals are being left alone not because (as in liberalism) this is believed to be essential to their character as free beings, but because they make better instruments that way,” were now outperforming the West.⁶⁹ On a Hayekian basis, then, it would be time to give up the Western way of conducting business. By emphasizing the productive capacity of the market, rather than its moral function, “Hayek can give no account,” insisted Minogue, “of why we should treat individual human endeavour as morally superior to collective endeavours.”⁷⁰

In answer to this, Minogue came to stress the importance to Western culture not simply of competition but also, using the same terms as the fashionable business school discourse, of “competitiveness.” However, he would rework this in such a way that it could not be understood as teachable or applicable in any global context. Instead, he viewed it as a form of civilizational inheritance. The East may embrace competition, but it was not truly possessed of the competitive ethos in the sense that it also respected the conditions for enduring and mutually beneficial economic relationships. In making this case he drew upon the work of Dutch historian Johan Huizinga and his concept of *homo ludens* (man the player).⁷¹ He contrasted what he characterized as Huizinga’s “western” mind-set, which “contains interesting

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Minogue, “Hayek, Slippery Slopes and Freedom in the Twentieth Century” (1999), KMA ms39079/1/18.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹One can find both support for and some difficulty with Minogue’s use of Huizinga in the latter’s text. It is true that Huizinga recognizes play-like elements in the economy, especially since the development of commercial statistics that allows managers and enterprises to pit themselves against each other, thus “when trade begins to create fields of activity within which each must try to surpass and outwit his neighbour ... business becomes play.” At the same time, Minogue’s conscription of “play” to his political programme falls foul of Huizinga’s warnings that “certain play-forms may be used consciously or unconsciously to cover up some social or political design. In this case we are not dealing with the eternal play-element that has been the theme of this book, but with false play ... This quality I have ventured to call by the name of puerilism.” If Minogue simply advocated a ludic economy for its own sake, he could not be regarded as falling into puerilism. That he advocates it to promote a conservative political vision leaves him in danger of doing so. Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study in the Play Element in Culture* (London, 1949), 200–5.

ludic elements” and is “like all things western, rather playful, curious, experimental,” with an apparently more martial “eastern” one. Primary, then, was a cultural inheritance which shaped a psychological disposition. This spirit mattered more than the result of any competition in itself and was the ultimate expression of the blending of classical, Christian, and Enlightenment ideals. “Western morality operates in terms of two dimensions,” Minogue believed, “a prudential dimension concerned with success, and a moral dimension concerned with playing the game in an acceptable way.”⁷² It was this second element that was missing in other civilizations which had, as Huntington noted, become economically modern without the Western values needed to maintain modernity’s benefits.

Minogue reflected, in the notes for his paper “Hayek and the Conditions of Freedom,” that “the morality of honour” present among the ancients had filtered down into bourgeois society from the aristocrats.⁷³ It was these bourgeois who had created a global economy which was on some fundamental level ludic.⁷⁴ Yet the ability of Western societies to play the game and win had been blunted by radicalism, feminism, and multiculturalism, along with all the bureaucracy necessary to institute and maintain a rights culture. Now, Eastern nations had entered the game and were not playing by the rules. Radical measures were thus required to sharpen the old competitive faculties. Only an undoing of radical ideologies might revive Western competitiveness and meet the civilizational challenge of the East.⁷⁵

Minogue and the Anglosphere

Minogue’s discussion of victimhood, feminism, and liberal elites all took place in the context of anti-European Union sentiment. It was this bloc, many conservative voices insisted, that served as the capstone of the rights agenda, of interfering officialdom that entrenched political correctness.⁷⁶ While perhaps an irony, it is, therefore, no contradiction that at the same time as extolling the West’s traditional ethics, Minogue remained a leader of the anti-EU movement. Instead of viewing the bloc as a means of providing and maintaining the best conditions for competition, as did many also associated with the MPS, he took the position that its bureaucracy and liberal biases had sapped Britain’s traditional buccaneer spirit.⁷⁷ We

⁷²Minogue, “Hayek, Slippery Slopes and Freedom in the Twentieth Century.”

⁷³Kenneth Minogue, “Hayek and the Conditions of Freedom” (April 2013), KMA ms39079/1/18.

⁷⁴“In England” he commented, “sport has long been part of education and its point has been explicitly seen as moral development.” Minogue, *The Servile Mind*, 450.

⁷⁵Minogue’s attempt to use Huizinga to distinguish a ludic West from a martial East is highly suspect. Huizinga, for example, wrote, “the agonistic principle plays a part in the development of Chinese civilization far more significant even than the *agon* in the Hellenic world, and in which the essentially ludic character shows up much more clearly there than in Greece.” Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 55.

⁷⁶Kenneth Minogue, *Are the British a Servile People: Idealism and the EU* (London, 2008).

⁷⁷For a view that examines the centrality of competition to the EU, see Werner Bonefeld, “Authoritarian Liberalism: From Schmitt via Ordoliberalism to the Euro,” *Critical Sociology* 43/4–5 (2017), 747–61. Minogue’s position, like that of many subsequent Brexiteers, was entirely at odds with that of the Conservative leader who took Britain into the European Economic Community, Edward Heath. Heath was convinced that membership would enhance British competitiveness and productivity. See Edward Heath, *Old World, New Horizons: Britain, Europe and the Atlantic Alliance* (Cambridge, MA, 1970).

might reasonably surmise that it was at least in part his Australian-ness that led him to imagine that the anglophone world might provide another model.⁷⁸ In the year 2000, he debuted a new concept, one which would in time exercise significant influence on the civilizational right: the Anglosphere.⁷⁹

Conservative civilizational thinking, it should be noted, long pre-dated Minogue. A previous iteration had been centred on empire and an idea of the British “race.”⁸⁰ Earlier in the century, this had been associated most obviously with Joseph Chamberlain and his supporters.⁸¹ They had championed imperial federation and tariff reform to protect imperial businesses from external competition while promoting trade within the empire. The ultimate, albeit pyrrhic, victory of this wing was confirmed by the adoption of imperial preference in 1932 in response to the onset of the Depression.⁸² By the time Minogue intervened in conservative politics the days of empire were, of course, at an end, and with them the viability of framing any civilizational project around intra-imperial trade sheltered behind protective tariffs. Instead, Minogue made the case for essentially the same geopolitical vision as Chamberlain, not on the grounds of protection, but on the basis of a new competitiveness.

The Anglosphere, as Minogue imagined it, would be unencumbered by the legalistic restrictions of a grouping like the EU and would have no room for politically correct elites and the institutions of the social-democratic state they populated.⁸³

⁷⁸There has been research on the importance of kith and kin networks and the links between English and Australian conservatism. See Camilla Schofield, Daniel Geary, and Jennifer Sutton, *Global White Nationalism: From Apartheid to Trump* (Manchester, 2020). Powell had also spent time as a professor of classics at the University of Sydney.

⁷⁹In this lecture, which discussed the cultural indebtedness of Australia to Britain, he drew upon the work of Enoch Powell himself. See Kenneth Minogue, occasional address to the Samuel Griffith Society, “Civil Identity and the Anglosphere in Australia,” at www.samuelgriffith.org/papers-by-author. Minogue was particularly critical of efforts that might undermine the traditional British identity of the Antipodes, in particular the Waitangi Tribunals in New Zealand which allow redress of Crown actions which breach the promises made in the Treaty of Waitangi. He was also dismissive of “revisionist” histories. See Kenneth Minogue, “Whingeing on about Aussies and Pommies,” review of Manning Clark’s *History of Australia*, *The Times*, March 1994, n.p.

⁸⁰Andrew Gamble has highlighted how empire functioned as one of the pillars of the Conservative hegemony which existed in Britain for most of the twentieth century. See Andrew Gamble, “The Crisis of Conservatism,” *New Left Review*, Nov.–Dec. 1995, 3–25.

⁸¹Chamberlain was a leading Conservative politician of his day and among other things served as Secretary of State for the Colonies and president of the Board of Trade. Powell wrote about him at length. See John Enoch Powell, *Joseph Chamberlain* (London, 1977); Travis Crosby, *Joseph Chamberlain: A Most Radical Imperialist* (London, 2011).

⁸²One of the ways the Conservatives positioned themselves as the party of empire involved a driving out of the advocates of free trade within the party by the Chamberlainites. See Alan Sykes, “The Confederacy and the Purge of the Unionist Free Traders, 1906–10,” *Historical Journal* 18/2 (1975), 349–66. Trade with non-empire countries remained greater and the new system did little to revive the British economy.

⁸³Other interlocutors in the Anglosphere discourse have included Conrad Black, a fellow Bruges Group member who advocated Britain turning its back on the EU and joining the North American Free Trade Area. See Conrad Black, *Britain’s Final Choice: Europe or America?* (London, 1998); Andrew Roberts, also a member of the Bruges Group, made plain the importance to the world of a particular form of political economy, “the Anglo-American form of capitalism, of free enterprise, free trade and laissez-faire economics, that has consistently produced more prosperity than any other model.” See Andrew Roberts, *History of the English-Speaking Peoples since 1900* (London, 2006), 21–2. He has subsequently endorsed

Minogue's employment of the concept pre-dates its most comprehensive treatment in the work of the US businessman James C. Bennett.⁸⁴ Furthermore, genuine differences between their visions can be perceived. While Bennett's work reads as an exercise in futurism, Minogue's traditionalist tones remain unmistakable.⁸⁵

Bennett described the Anglosphere as a "network civilization," one best placed to meet the challenge of what he refers to throughout the book as "the singularity," to indicate a moment of abrupt discontinuity. This was associated with the disruptive nature of new technologies such as AI, nanotechnology, and advanced computing which would, he argued, lead to a reordering of global political economy. "Network commonwealths," based on similarity in institutions and practices, would emerge to replace the nation-state.⁸⁶ The Anglosphere, he argued, would come about due to "the deep values in common among English-speaking nations" which "are sufficient common ground to permit closer cooperation and consensus."⁸⁷ Bennett continued,

English-speaking civilization generated the first modern nation-state, the first liberal democratic state, the first large secular republic, and the first industrialized society, and is now generating the first information economy. It will be the heart of the singularity revolution. As the network commonwealth becomes the characteristic political form of the emerging era, it will probably emerge first in the Anglosphere.⁸⁸

This vision of the Anglosphere is also one in which the public sector and all forms of public welfare have been effectively abolished. Bennett welcomed the downfall of what he termed the "economic state," with its power to impose tax and obligation to provide services. Instead, an almost libertarian approach to political economy would be the defining characteristic of the Anglosphere, with privately funded or voluntary welfare and policing replacing state monopolies. This would apparently be more in keeping with its classical liberal history, as opposed to the welfarist conceptions that had been imported from continental Europe.⁸⁹

Bennett left open the institutional form that network commonwealths might take, noting that network civilizations are "porous, imprecise and inter-penetrable." He therefore restricted himself to a "rough anatomy" of the Anglosphere: the innermost territories include the USA, Britain, and the former "white dominions"; in the middle are those where English is one of several languages, but where institutions

the Anglosphere discourse explicitly. See Andrew Roberts, "It's Time to Revive the Anglosphere," *Wall Street Journal*, 8 Aug. 2020, at www.wsj.com/articles/its-time-to-revive-the-anglosphere-11596859260. Bell and Vucetic have correctly identified MPS member and Minogue's one-time co-author Niall Ferguson as an advocate of the Anglosphere discourse.

⁸⁴James C. Bennet, *The Anglosphere Challenge: Why the English-Speaking Nations Will Lead the Way in the Twenty-First Century* (London, 2007).

⁸⁵Robert Saunders, "Brexit and Empire: 'Global Britain' and the Myth of Imperial Nostalgia," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 48/6 (2020), 1140–1174.

⁸⁶Other likely network commonwealths for Bennett include the Hispanosphere, the Lusosphere, and the Sinosphere. Regarding Asia, various additional possibilities are outlined.

⁸⁷Bennett, *Anglosphere Challenge*, 59.

⁸⁸Ibid., 67.

⁸⁹Ibid., 61.

follow the English model, i.e. former imperial colonies; the outer territories are “English-using states of other civilizations,” such as Pakistan and former Arab countries; and a peripheral category applies to areas where the use of English is widespread but it is not an official language and institutions differ. This might include anywhere from Northern Europe to Japan.⁹⁰

Abandoning the Eurocentrism of his earlier writing and shifting to a full-blooded celebration of English-speaking culture, Minogue endorsed the Anglosphere as a space purged of the legacies of the social-democratic state and the culturally liberal sensibility of political correctness that he associated with them. Reviewing Bennett’s book, he wrote of how “the recurring point in understanding the Anglosphere is that English rulers did not try to regulate and control every detail of its creation.” Taken together, these characteristics “have generated something so distinct from Continental Europe that Bennett can, without absurdity, distinguish it as a different civilization.” While a century ago it might have made sense to split “technologically advanced Europe” from non-European societies, “a century later,” continued Minogue, “in a more complex international world, the European continent with its heritage of bureaucratic absolutism and masterful conquerors cannot but seem significantly different to us.”⁹¹ Leaving the European Union and establishing a new Anglosphere would thus enable Britain to shed itself of all the encumbrances that had so enervated its spirit of competitiveness.

Unlike Bennett, who seemed ready to admit almost anyone to the Anglosphere, Minogue held a more restricted view. For him, it should be ethnically homogeneous. “What Bennet means by the Anglosphere is not merely a set of people using the same language,” he wrote, “but, a freedom-loving, high-trust culture.” High-trust means a set of people who can easily cooperate with each other, “untroubled by tribal, clan or caste or family affiliations.”⁹² For this, a certain ethnic cohesion was necessary. The use of the English language was not enough. “Ritual genital mutilation of young girls, something prevalent in parts of East Africa,” signified a decided unfitness for membership. Similarly, he insisted, we do not “have much to learn from the caste societies of the Indian subcontinent,” despite English being commonly used.⁹³ The result is that the most culturally appropriate to the Anglosphere are those states formed by white English settler colonials, where their descendants still constitute a majority of the population. It is for this reason that the ethnically heterogeneous United States is relegated to a marginal position in Minogue’s writing on the Anglosphere.

If attitudes and practices in states with nonwhite majorities were regarded as incompatible with the “high-trust” culture supposedly characteristic of Britain and its former dominions, then migration from them also poses a problem for Minogue’s conception of the Anglosphere. He was by no means alone in his milieu of Anglosphere adherents in taking this position. O’Sullivan was ready to make a positive case for migration within the Anglosphere, precisely because of his aversion to multiculturalism and because he imagined it, improbably, as an ethnically

⁹⁰Ibid., 80–81.

⁹¹Kenneth Minogue, “Poles Apart,” *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 Nov. 2004, 6.

⁹²Ibid., 5.

⁹³Minogue, “A Dictatorship of Virtue,” xii.

homogeneous bloc.⁹⁴ The problematic nature of this imaginary is soon brought out when we consider his reasoning, however. He complained about the “moral diversity” that had accompanied the emergence of “ethnic enclaves” within places like “Miami, southern California and Bradford” following the “invasion” of the advanced world by poor people from the Third World.” To rectify the situation, policy makers should look to curtail migration from the global South while welcoming greater mobility within the Anglosphere. Such individuals would “pose no problems of assimilation, being largely assimilated before they arrive.”⁹⁵ What might become of those nonwhite residents of Miami or Bradford is left an open question.⁹⁶ These sentiments cannot surprise us given the conservative right’s longstanding antipathy towards nonwhite immigration. Such a stance regarding the demographic composition of the Anglosphere was a predictable outcome of Minogue’s suspicion of multiculturalism as being one of the ways in which traditional conservative values had been undermined.⁹⁷

It would be wrong to finish this article without observing that, in addition to cultural arguments against ethnic heterogeneity, Minogue also at times seemed open to more biological understandings of difference. In his first major work, he observed that because “races have fought each other ... the liberal teaches that racialism is evil, that all races are equal and should be free and respected; beliefs about the inferiority of some races can be shown to conflict with scientific investigations.” These “scientific findings are real,” he accepted, but he continued that in fact they only “indicate that ‘potentially’ all races are ‘fundamentally’ the same.”⁹⁸ Equivocating further in his notes he reflected that “this view is nicer than the opposing view that some races are ‘fundamentally’ superior to others. Intellectually speaking, both views are meaningless. But both have a political point.”⁹⁹

At the end of his life, Minogue returned to his misgivings about the politically correct nature of science concerning race. At a 2012 meeting of the Centre for Independent Studies in Sydney, Australia, he introduced the invited speaker, Charles Murray, most famous for his work *The Bell Curve*, which made the case that different population groups exhibit variations in IQ and that African

⁹⁴Despite their differences, O’Sullivan acknowledges the “deep intellectual debt” he owes to Bennett in John O’Sullivan, “How Not to Think about Immigration,” in Leonie Kramer, ed., *The Multicultural Experiment: Immigrants Refugees and National Identity* (Sydney, 2004), 25–54, at 50.

⁹⁵O’Sullivan, “How Not to Think about Immigration,” 50. See also John O’ Sullivan, “Conservatism, Democracy and National Identity,” the Third Keith Joseph Memorial Lecture, London, 1999.

⁹⁶O’Sullivan has found a home for his brand of civilizationism in Hungary, where he has been made president of the Danube Institute, which is funded by the illiberal nationalist government of Victor Orbán.

⁹⁷In promoting his version of the Anglosphere, Minogue remained a regular attendee at events on the subject. One such was a symposium entitled *The Anglosphere and the Future of Liberty* held in Winchester and hosted by the New York-based *New Criterion*, to which he had contributed numerous times, and the right-wing think tank the Social Affairs Unit, with which he had also been involved. Others present included Bennett and O’Sullivan. In 2012 he was made an academic adviser to the Alexander Hamilton Institute for the Study of Western Civilization, having recently participated in a conference entitled *What Is a Civilizational Struggle? The Work of Samuel Huntington*.

⁹⁸Minogue, *Liberal Mind*, 69.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 151.

Americans in particular may be of lower intelligence than their fellow citizens.¹⁰⁰ Minogue began, “I have long admired his grip on social data, his lucidity of expression, and above all, his courage as an exponent of classical liberal thought and practice ... This became very evident in 1994 when he wrote, with Richard Herrnstein, *The Bell Curve*.” While “the question of ability has been banished by the force of political correctness,” Minogue approvingly stated that “in his new book, Murray is at it again, concerned with the place of intelligence in the development of contemporary modernity.”¹⁰¹ Having explored Minogue’s thought and his role within the conservative movement, we can now fully appreciate to whom he was referring when he spoke of “our” civilization in the Galapagos.

Conclusion

This study has sought to place Kenneth Minogue in institutional and intellectual context. It has demonstrated his influence and traced the development of his thought. His cultural conservatism of the 1970s and 1980s had, by the 1990s, taken a civilizational turn. This would find its mature and final form in his twenty-first-century promotion of the Anglosphere.

Minogue endorsed the economic logic of the New Right because, like Thatcher, he believed it would restore conservative values while undermining leftist influence. By the 1990s he had come to insist that political correctness and rights culture were undermining the West’s ludic ethos, and he packaged this in the new language of national economic competitiveness. The concept of the Anglosphere subsequently appeared as a potential means of undermining domestic opponents while reworking and feeding a form of civilizational mythos that has long been at the heart of British conservatism. For Minogue and others around him, it also provided a way of presenting an ethnicist, antiprogressive and anti-immigrant project, in the register of market liberalism. A key innovation was his attempt to present anew the closed, protectionist project of something like imperial federation, as being crucial to free-market competitiveness in the global economy of the 2010s.

Reading Minogue reveals that the Anglosphere concept was more than rhetoric designed to fire the blood of Brexiteers. For some, it was always just as much about confronting the rising power of East Asia. This makes all the more sense when viewed from an Australian perspective. That China specifically does not feature more prominently in Minogue’s work is a matter of historical chronology. There is no such absence in the work of several of his fellow travelers. For Ferguson, the rise of East Asia as a potential civilizational challenger to Anglosphere predominance is a perennial concern.¹⁰² Equally, Douglas Murray has developed a disdain

¹⁰⁰Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (New York, 1994).

¹⁰¹Kenneth Minogue, “Introduction” to a lecture by Charles Murray, *Capitalism and Virtue: Reaffirming Old Truths* (19 Nov. 2013), CIS Occasional Paper 130 (St Leonards, NSW, 2013), 1–2. The book in question was Charles Murray, *Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960–2010* (New York, 2012)

¹⁰²Ferguson has, however, expressed further skepticism about the realizability, though not the desirability, of the Anglosphere. On Ferguson see Jeanne Morefield, *Empires without Imperialism: Anglo-American Decline and the Politics of Deflection* (Oxford, 2014), 133–71. The concern of imperialists with history has been perceptively demonstrated by Priya Satia in *Time’s Monster: How History Makes History* (Cambridge,

for the “martial” East, with China as the focus. Even at the level of practical geopolitics, Anglosphere thinking has come to the fore since Minogue’s death, as demonstrated by the maritime defence treaty between Australia, the UK, and the USA, crafted to help contain China.¹⁰³

While Minogue held that the rise of East Asia underlined the need for greater competitiveness, recently others on the conservative right have been less willing to accept the disciplinary forces of global competition. Some are even willing to dispense with economic liberalism entirely, favoring a new mercantilism. This development within conservative thinking was clearly in evidence at the National Conservatism conference held in London in May 2023. John O’Sullivan featured prominently, chairing a panel on “The Economics of National Belonging,” which included both statist and free-market opinion.¹⁰⁴ While Minogue made his case for the Anglosphere in the language of free markets, it may be that the logic of the Chamberlainites is coming back into vogue. However they are presented, the civilizational concerns remain the same and have been an animating, if understudied, force within Anglophone conservatism throughout its modern history.

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MA, 2020). Duncan Bell’s work on empire has tended to stress the role and legacies of liberal, rather than conservative, imperialism.

¹⁰³Liz Truss, the former British Prime Minister, is known to be a supporter of the Anglosphere project and linked it to designating China a “systemic competitor” when in office. Her visit to Taiwan, during which she denounced China, was not welcomed by her successor.

¹⁰⁴Also in attendance was Douglas Murray, who gave a keynote address in which he claimed nationalism should not be dismissed simply because the Germans “mucked up” twice in the twentieth century.

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