Political Ideologies and the Democratic Ideal 9th edition Ball Test Bank

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INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL/ TEST BANK

FOR

BALL | DAGGER | O'NEILL

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES AND THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL

NINTH EDITION



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Instructor's Manual/Test Bank to accompany *Political Ideologies and the Democratic Ideal, Ninth Edition,* by Ball/ Dagger/O'Neill.

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1. *Ideology and Ideologies*

READING ASSIGNMENT

Ball, Dagger, and O'Neill *Political Ideologies and the Democratic Ideal* (Text), Chapter 1
Optional: Ball, Dagger, and O'Neill (editors), *Ideals and Ideologies: A Reader* (Reader), Part I

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Describe what the term *ideology* originally meant
2. Define the term *ideology,* as it will be used in this course
3. Identify the four functions of a *political ideology*
4. Specify the connection between *ideology* and *human nature*
5. Discern the link between different ideologies and their respective understandings of *freedom*
6. Understand the connection between *ideology* and *revolutionary political changes*

NOTES

Ours has been called "the age of ideology." It might more accurately be termed the age of ideologies — plural, not singular—because we live in a world of contrasting and competing ideologies. The high degree of ideological conflict, combined with the ever-increasing sophistication and destructive potential of technology, makes a potent and potentially explosive combination. This combination helps to explain the ferocity of political conflicts—civil wars, wars of national liberation, and revolutions—in the twentieth century. If we are to understand this world and to survive in it, we need to appreciate not only the awesome power of technology but also the power of political ideas and ideologies.

As the word *ideology* implies, the term originally referred to the systematic study of the origins or sources of our ideas. This eighteenth-century notion of ideology did not survive into the nineteenth century. An ideology came to mean a set of ideas that was somehow suspect, and quite probably false. The term *ideology* still retains this meaning for many of us. As we will use the term in this course, however, *ideology* has no pejorative or unfavorable connotations.

By *ideology* we refer to a systematically interrelated set of ideas with four characteristics: explanatory, evaluative, orientative, and programmatic. An ideology, that is, (1) purports to *explain* political phenomena; (2) offers a basis for *evaluating* actions, practices, and policies; (3) *orients* its adherents to the sociopolitical world, giving them a sense of identity and purpose; and (4) provides a *program* of political action.

Virtually everyone has a political ideology of some sort; otherwise he or she would remain relatively disoriented, would be unable to account for puzzling political and social phenomena, lack a basis for moral and political evaluation, and be unsure of what he or she should be doing, and with (or to) whom he or she should be doing it.

Different ideologies, of course, fulfill the four functions in quite different ways. Each supplies its adherents with quite different explanations, standards of evaluation, social orientations, and programs of political action.

In addition to these four functions, modern ideologies have two further features. First, every ideology has at its core a view of human nature—a conception of what human beings are, what moves or motivates them, what they are capable of achieving, and how they are (or ought to be) related to others. Second, and

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perhaps more surprising, every ideology harbors a particular view of freedom (or liberty). *Freedom*, for a fascist, means something quite different from what it does for a feminist, a liberal, or a Marxist. But how can this be?

The answer is that *freedom*, like *democracy* (see Lesson 2), is an *essentially contested* concept—that is, a concept whose meaning is forever in dispute. Just as we do not all agree on what counts as *art* (do Andy Warhol's paintings of Campbell's soup cans count?) or *music* (are John Cage's strident atonal compositions music or noise?) or *dance* (does the "slam dancing" of punk rockers count as dancing?), so do we disagree about definitions of *democracy* and *freedom.*

We will discuss the disputes that rage around democracy in the following lesson. Here we want to look more closely at liberty and freedom. We can understand the different ways in which different ideologies construct the concept of freedom by looking at the three features of any view of freedom.

Freedom is a three-sided or *triadic* relation. It involves: (1) an *agent*—someone who is said to be free (or unfree, as the case may be); (2) a *goal*—something at which the agent aims or hopes to achieve; and (3) an *obstacle* (or *obstacles*)—the actual or potential barriers that stand in an agent's way. To say that, "*A* is free" therefore means that an agent (A) is free from an obstacle or barrier (B) and is therefore free to achieve his or her aims or goals (C).

Ideologies differ in the ways in which they identify the agent, the obstacle(s), and the aim(s) or goal(s) sought by the agent. For example, a liberal—as we will see in Chapter 3—identifies the agent as an individual; the obstacle as other individuals with whom he or she is in economic or other competition; and the goal as success in his or her competitive endeavor.

By contrast, a Marxist, as we shall see in Chapters 5 and 6, conceives of the agent not as an individual but as a class—the working class—and the obstacle as another class, the capitalists and the economic system over which they preside (namely, capitalism); and Marxists view the aim as the emancipation of workers in a cooperative, classless communist society.

And a Nazi, as we will see in Chapter 7, views the agent as a racial or ethnic group (a *Volk);* the aim as racial purity; and the obstacle(s) as the presence, the influence, and even the ideas of Jews and other supposedly "inferior" races or ethnic groups.

Other ideologies, of course, conceive of freedom in still other ways. For the moment, all students need to remember is that freedom is an essentially contested concept to which different ideologies give different meanings. As the next lesson explains, the same is true of democracy.

Before we consider the different ways in which competing ideologies construct the concept of democracy, we need to take note of a further feature of ideologies in the modern world. Despite their differences and their mutual antagonisms, modern ideologies are alike in being *revolutionary*. Each seeks to remake the world in its own image. Each tries to turn the world upside down. And this is because each views the political world in a different way. Each ideology offers its own explanation and evaluation of otherwise puzzling political and economic events. Each orients its adherents in a distinctive way. And each offers its own political program, its own vision of the good society.

Ideologies are predicated on the notion that ideas are important, that they do, or can, make a big political difference. People die, often quite willingly, in wars and revolutions, not merely because they expect to enjoy some material or economic advantage—far from it—but because they believe strongly and fervently in the transforming power of ideas.

Political ideas and ideals have had, and continue to have, a profound impact in reshaping the political landscape in which we live. It therefore behooves us, not only as students and scholars, but also as citizens, to understand the nature of the ideologies that have made a deep and lasting impression upon our world.

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WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

If you ask students to keep a journal, you might begin by asking them to react to and reflect briefly upon the first chapter and (if you are also using the Ball, Dagger, and O'Neill Reader) the accompanying essay by Terrell Carver on the history of *ideology*.

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2. *The Democratic Ideal*

READING ASSIGNMENT

Text, Chapter 2
Optional: Reader, Part II

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Recognize the differences among democracy as an *ideal,* "the democratic ideal," and the different conceptions of democracy held by competing ideologies
2. Describe what *democracy* originally meant
3. Recognize the main features of the *republican* tradition as it evolved from Aristotle and Polybius to the American founding
4. Outline the rise, decline, and revival of the democratic ideal from ancient Greece to the present
5. Describe the ways in which the meaning of *democracy* has changed over the course of Western history
6. Identify the reasons for which non-Western, nonliberal regimes—such as the "people's democracies" of China and the Soviet Union—have claimed to be democratic
7. Know what is meant by the claim that *democracy* is an essentially contested concept

NOTES

Our word *democracy* comes from two Greek words: *demos*, meaning "people" or "common people," and *kratein*, "to rule." Thus, *demoskratia* originally meant "rule by, and in the interest of, the common people." And since the common people constituted a numerical majority, democracy came to be associated with the idea of *majority rule*. Early Greek democracy was thus a system of class rule, that is, of rule by one class, the *demos*, in its own interest and, as often as not, in opposition to the interests of other classes, including the *aristoi* ("the best"—the source of our word *aristocracy*, "rule by those few who are best qualified to govern").

Democracy in the Golden Age of Greece—the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E.—seems by our modern standards to have been "undemocratic" in several respects. For one thing, the right to vote and hold public office was denied to women, resident aliens (*metics*), and slaves. For another, there were no legally guaranteed rights of freedom of speech, press, and assembly. Any citizen who publicly expressed unpopular views could, by a majority vote in the Athenian Assembly, be banished from the city and forced into exile, or even executed. Such was the fate of Socrates, the philosophical gadfly executed in 399 B.C.E. for daring to question certain popularly held religious and political views—including views about the value of democracy. Questions about truth, he claimed, cannot be decided by majority vote.

Socrates' pupil Plato agreed. His best-known work, *The Republic*, criticizes democracy and paints a memorable picture of an ideal state ruled by a wise "philosopher-king." Plato's pupil Aristotle took a somewhat more favorable view of democracy, although he too believed it to be a factious, unstable, and short-lived system of government. The best system, he argued, would be a system of "rule by the many," or *polity*, which aims at promoting the public good, not the individual or class interests of one faction or another. This idea of a *mixed constitution* or *republic* (from the Latin *res publica*, meaning "the public thing" or "the public business") was picked up and developed by later Greek and Roman thinkers,

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including Polybius. He attributed the longevity of the Roman Republic to its mixture of different classes and interests; out of their competition and compromises came a closer approximation to the public good.

Two important events stifled the further development of the idea that the best system of government was one in which the people ruled. The first was the demise of the Roman Republic. With the triumph of the tyrannical Caesars, Rome ceased to be a popularly governed republic, becoming instead a despotical and militarily expansionist empire. The second was the rise of Christianity, with its contention that worldly matters—including political matters—are much less important than otherworldly ones, especially salvation.

Democratic and republican ideals went into a long eclipse that ceased only during the Italian Renaissance (or *rebirth*—the rebirth of classical learning and political ideas and ideals). The Renaissance writer who did more than anyone else to revive and defend the idea of *republican* government was Niccolò Machiavelli. In his *Discourses* (1531) he criticizes princely rule, advocating instead a system of popular rule by a virtuous and vigilant citizenry bent on protecting its liberty, which Machiavelli equates with the idea of self-government. The greatest danger to republican or self-government comes from *corruption*—the tendency to turn away from attending to the public business and turn inward toward private or individual interest, especially economic self-interest. Liberty or self-government, Machiavelli insisted, was not for the lazy, the selfish, or the corrupt, but was fit only for citizens steeped in self-discipline, love of country, civic virtue, and respect for the law. Only under "a government of laws, not men," could citizens remain free.

These ideas proved to be particularly influential in seventeenth-century England. As developed by James Harrington and others, the idea that popular self-government could be both stable and just became central to "the Atlantic republican tradition" which was later to inspire the American revolutionaries and Founding Fathers.

But seventeenth-century England also saw the return of *democracy*, at least as an inspirational ideal. During the English Civil War of the 1640s, some thinkers—Levellers like John Lilburne and Diggers, such as Gerrard Winstanley—called for the creation of *democracy*, that is, rule by and for the benefit of the common people. At about the same time, in the new English colony of America, dissident puritans like Roger Williams were preaching that all people being equal in God's eyes entailed their being equally entitled to govern themselves in a "democratical" way.

Still, democracy remained a dissident—and, to some, a dangerous—form of government, usually equated with mob rule. Only in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries did democracy finally become respectable. In the United States, the democratic ideal was altered by the republican tradition, with its emphasis on balanced government, the rule of law, and the protection of civil rights.

Yet there are other regimes and systems of government that claim to be *democratic* but which do not offer such safeguards for individual rights. The so-called (and now defunct) people's democracies of Eastern Europe, for example, censored the press and sometimes imprisoned outspoken critics for expressing their views. And yet they claimed to be democratic—indeed, to be more genuinely democratic than the United States. Surely, one might think, this cannot be so. In order to see how this might be, we need to remember the earlier meaning of *democracy*. In its original Greek sense, *democracy* meant rule by and for the benefit of the numerically largest social class. In modern industrial society this class is the working class or, to use Marx's term, the *proletariat*. Because the proletarian or people's democracies rule in the interest of the working class, this, they claim, entitles them to be called *democracies*. This assertion continues to be heard from the communist regimes of China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba.

Thus, in the modern world, the word *democracy* is an essentially contested concept—that is, a term with a meaning in dispute. Different people, adhering to different ideologies, define *democracy* in quite different ways. For some, the concept is closely connected with a particular social class; for others it is not. For some, democracy means not only majority rule but, in addition, the protection of minority rights; for others, it means nothing of the sort.

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And this, in turn, gives rise to a concluding consideration: democracy is not itself an ideology but an *ideal*—an aim or aspiration—that different ideologies define in different and sometimes radically divergent ways.

Just what those ideologies are, and how they define *democracy* and allied notions such as *liberty* (or *freedom*), will be discussed in later chapters.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

You might wish to ask students to react briefly in their journals to what they read in the text (and, if you use it, the Reader) for this lesson. How, if at all, do these readings alter or enlarge their previous understanding of democracy?

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3. *Liberalism*

READING ASSIGNMENT

Text, Chapter 3
Optional: Reader, Part III

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Identify the several varieties of liberalism and the historical circumstances in which they emerged
2. Describe the conceptions of *liberty* (or *freedom*) at the core of each variety or variant of liberalism
3. Show how each variant of liberalism performs the four functions of ideology described in Chapter 1
4. Describe the differences between welfare-state liberalism and socialism
5. Identify the main defining features of the liberal conception of democracy, that is, *liberal democracy*

NOTES

WHAT IS LIBERALISM?

You might begin by asking students this question: When you hear that someone is a liberal, or that a particular proposal or policy is liberal, what do you think this means? You might also ask them to write out their answers according to the following format. Ask them to mention general principles rather than specific policies regarding, say, gun control or capital punishment.

A liberal person (policy, politician, and so forth) is:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Chances are their answers will include one or more of the following. A liberal is: inclined to be in favor of reducing the role of government in our daily lives; tolerant, perhaps even permissive, toward unusual or deviant persons or actions; more concerned with protecting the rights of unpopular minorities than those of the majority; and so on. These principles are in turn translated into policies such as: higher taxes, with more monies spent on social-welfare programs than on defense; opposition to laws restricting freedom of expression and action, including such actions as having abortions or smoking marijuana; and protecting the rights of defendants in criminal cases and restricting the power of the police to gather evidence and extract confessions.

But are these answers correct? Historically speaking, they are—and they aren't. Each of the above is a feature of one or another part of the long liberal tradition. As we will see, *classical liberals* like John Stuart Mill and modern *libertarians* tend to *oppose* governmental intrusion into the *private* sphere, while modern *welfare* or *welfare-state* liberals are more inclined to favor state intervention. In order to see how the liberal tradition can contain such apparently contradictory views, we need to look at its long history.

THE EVOLUTION OF LIBERALISM

Deriving from the Latin word *liber*, meaning "free," liberalism has from the beginning championed the freedom of the individual from unjustified or unnecessary restrictions or restraints. In the Middle Ages,

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these included restraints on religious worship and economic activity. The rise of liberalism was thus associated with several important developments. The first was the waning of the Middle Ages and, with it, the demise of feudalism. A second development was the increasing importance of trade and commerce and the appearance of the merchant capitalist as a key figure who sought to break down older feudal and religiously based barriers to trade. A third was the Protestant Reformation, with its questioning of papal and priestly power. And the fourth was the emergence of individualism. Along with these developments emerged new ideas—that the individual is sovereign and endowed with a set of natural rights, including the right to life and liberty, and that the state should serve the individual and not the other way around. It was in the name of these and other liberal ideas and ideals that the great revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were fought in England, in the American colonies, and in France. From the beginning, then, liberalism has been embroiled in political conflict and ideological controversy.

One of the main worries expressed by critics of this emerging ideology was simply this: How can order possibly be maintained in a society whose members were freed from traditional religious and economic restraints? Would not such "masterless men" ride roughshod over each other? If the older restraints no longer sufficed, what was to be substituted in their place? These were among the questions that early liberal thinkers asked and attempted to answer. In the seventeenth century, Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* (1651) argued that a condition of perfect liberty—what he called the "state of nature"—would be one of grave danger and insecurity in which life would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Some way must therefore be found, he said, to bring solitary individuals into civil relations of cooperation and harmony. And, in keeping with the practices of the new commercial society, Hobbes suggested that an agreement—a compact or *social contract*—was needed to bring and bind people together.

Hobbes's successor, John Locke, agreed that some sort of social contract was the only means by which individual liberty and social order could be reconciled. The contract would specify the rights of individuals and limit the government's right to restrict the actions and activities of its citizens.

Despite their differences, Hobbes and Locke agreed that civil society rests on the consent of rational, self-interested individuals concerned with protecting their lives and their property. Hobbes and Locke are, in this sense, defenders of the doctrine that we now call *individualism*. Individualism—the idea that the individual is the sovereign ruler of his or her own person—is at the core of liberalism and the liberal idea of freedom. Liberals have historically viewed the idea of liberty or freedom through individualist lenses.

Thus, when Locke wrote that every person possesses a right to "life, liberty and property," liberty was placed second only to life itself. And when Jefferson, in the Declaration of Independence, asserted that everyone has a right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," he too asserted the primacy of liberty. So, in order to understand liberalism, we need to look at its understanding of *liberty* (or *freedom*).

Recall now our discussion in Lesson 1 of freedom as a triadic relation involving (A) an agent, (B) a barrier or obstacle, and (C) an aim or goal. To see just how liberals have historically conceived of liberty (or freedom), we need to see how they identify the three elements of the triad.

(A) *The Agent*. For the liberal, the agent is the individual, not the class, caste, rank, or order to which he or she belongs. Each individual is, so to speak, an isolated self-governing sovereign.

(B) *Barriers or Obstacles*. Freedom, for the liberal, is the absence of restrictions. To be free, therefore, is to be unencumbered by obstacles or barriers. Specifically, the obstacles standing in the way of individuals include restrictions or limitations such as laws, rules, regulations, and restrictive customs and traditions that arbitrarily inhibit, impede, limit, or otherwise hinder the actions, movements, and choices of individuals, particularly in the private or personal sphere of thought and conduct. Liberals have tended to draw a fairly sharp distinction between public and private spheres. In the sphere of private belief, especially religious beliefs, one's liberty should be

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absolute, according to Locke and other advocates of liberal toleration. The state has neither the right nor the authority to tell its citizens what to believe or how to worship.

(C) *Goals or Aims*. The goals at which individuals aim are, of course, many and varied. Some people seek religious freedom; others, the freedom to travel or emigrate; and others, the freedom to vote and to run for public office. Liberals have at one time or another defended the rights of individuals to pursue these and many other goals. But, historically, liberals have placed a premium on pursuing and promoting one's self-interest, as one understands it. Once free of feudal ties and other restrictions, most individuals, it was thought, would "naturally" try to promote their own well-being. As Locke put it, human beings have a natural right to "life, liberty, and property."

Two social institutions were supposed to protect and promote these rights. First, the free market would allow individuals to pursue their own interests in competition with others pursuing *their* interests. Although earlier, preliberal moral codes had condemned such self-interested behavior as sinful or unjust, early liberals like Bernard Mandeville and Adam Smith believed such "selfish" behavior to be both rational and socially beneficial. "Private vices," said Mandeville, have a way of becoming "public benefits" in the long run. But perhaps the most famous case for self-interest was made by the Scottish philosopher and economist Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Human beings, he said, have a natural "propensity to truck, barter, and exchange."

Like Mandeville, Smith argued that although each individual in seeking to make a profit intends to benefit only him or her, the larger (and altogether unintended) result is that everyone benefits. It is, Smith says in a famous phrase, as though an "invisible hand" were turning individual vices into public benefits and selfish individuals into public benefactors.

In addition to the invisible hand of the market was the second, and more visible, hand of the state. It is necessary that the scope and power of the state be minimal or severely limited because it restricts the freedom of its citizens. That accounts for the old liberal adage "that state governs best which governs least." Thus, the state does have a role to play, although its role is in most cases limited to making and enforcing the laws that are needed to promote public and private dealings (for example, laws that enforce the terms of contracts between individuals). The state is supposed to intervene to protect individual rights and to act in those few instances in which the free market does not or cannot operate.

The history of liberalism in the late-nineteenth century and twentieth century was the story of disagreements about how much the unassisted "free market" is able to achieve and how well it can provide socially necessary services. The two sides of liberalism—the economic and the ethical—have long coexisted in uneasy tension.

In the early nineteenth century, the Utilitarian liberals led by Jeremy Bentham tried to reconcile this tension by devising a market-based moral theory. Utilitarianism holds that each of us shops around, seeking to maximize our pleasures and minimize our pains. Human beings are by nature hedonists; we are, that is, pleasure-seekers and pain-avoiders. Human nature impels us to search for pleasure or happiness and to avoid pain or unhappiness. Each person has a natural or innate interest in promoting his or her own pleasure or happiness. Hence, says Bentham, there is no overriding "public interest," apart from "the greatest happiness of the greatest number."

Bentham and his disciple James Mill were free-market liberals. But Mill's more-famous son, John Stuart Mill, extended this notion beyond the economic sphere. John Stuart Mill maintained that the free market of goods and services was less important than the free market of ideas and opinions. The state, he said, should not legitimately interfere with the expression and dissemination of ideas, however unpopular or unorthodox they may be. Mill's *On Liberty* (1859) is a sustained defense of individual freedom and an impassioned argument against *paternalism*; that is, the idea that the state or any other institution or person can legitimately censor or silence unpopular individuals or minorities for their own or someone else's

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good. Too often, says Mill, the majority, or the state that speaks in its name, has been mistaken or misguided. Far too much of human history is a sad chronicle of the censoring and silencing of people with unorthodox or unpopular views. Socrates, Jesus, Galileo, and countless others have been silenced, to the detriment of human progress and happiness. To be sure, new truths and novel views are uncomfortable or unwelcome. But that, says Mill, is not sufficient reason for not listening to and considering such unorthodox views.

Mill maintains, then, that the state has no business restricting the expression of ideas and opinions. But what of *actions*? Surely the state has a legitimate role to play in restricting or regulating certain kinds of actions or behaviors. But which ones can it legitimately limit or restrict? Mill answers by drawing a distinction between purely private or "self-regarding" actions and public or "other-regarding" acts. An act is self-regarding, says Mill, if it affects only the person performing it. An act is other-regarding if it also affects someone else. The state, he concludes, has no right whatever to interfere with self-regarding acts and a legitimate, though severely limited, right to intervene in other-regarding acts. Only if an other-regarding act actually *harms* someone other than the person performing it can the state step in to regulate, restrict, or outlaw it.

But what about *economic* actions and transactions? Are they purely self-regarding, or are they other-regarding? If the latter, to what extent can the state legitimately restrict or regulate the economic actions and activities of its citizens? Consider, for example, the case of inheritance. Suppose my parents leave me a million dollars, and yours leave you nothing but debts. Obviously, I am freer to pursue my aims than you are to pursue yours, especially if your aim is to be a millionaire. Liberal equality (so-called equality of opportunity) would hardly characterize our relationship. What, then, should be the proper role of the state? Should it maximize my parents' freedom to dispose of their wealth as they see fit? Or should it seek to promote equality of opportunity by providing a "level playing field" that is not tipped toward my or anyone else's advantage—by, for example, levying a stiff inheritance tax on large fortunes?

In attempting to answer such questions, liberals divided into two competing camps. On the one side were those who favored letting individuals decide how best to make and dispose of their wealth. They favored unrestricted economic competition and *laissez-faire*. These "Manchester liberals" believed that life was a struggle for survival and that the market was best suited to decide the outcome. This view was soon supplemented by the "social Darwinists," who claimed to apply Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and natural selection to the study of human society. Like the liberals of the Manchester school, they believed that the role of the state should be limited to seeing that contracts were kept and private property protected. For the Manchester Liberals and Social Darwinists, then, *freedom* was the freedom to compete and to keep the fruits of one's victory over other, unsuccessful, competitors.

Another school of liberalism, the *reform* or *welfare-state* liberals, held very different views. If liberal ideals such as equality of opportunity were to have any meaning, the playing field must be made more level than it has heretofore been. Some kinds of freedom—especially economic freedom—can be restricted in favor of other freedoms and in order to promote other important values and ideals. In short, T. H. Green and other reform-minded liberals believed that the Utilitarians, the Manchester Liberals, and the Social Darwinists had got it all wrong. For one thing, their view of "human nature" was mistaken. Human beings, said Green, are not selfish, pleasure-seeking animals but are rational and reflective creatures capable of being motivated by noble and generous ideas and ideals—such as justice and fairness. The prospect of anyone being treated unjustly is a source of pain to any morally sensitive and reflective human being. And, Green added, each of us, far from being a pleasure-seeking animal or automaton, harbors a vision of an ideal or better self. This *higher self* is, in short, a conception or picture of the kind of person we would like to be. With this more-expansive notion of the self came a more-expansive notion of self-interest—and a different view of freedom and of the role of the state in promoting and sustaining freedom.

For Green and later welfare or welfare-state liberals, like Leonard Hobhouse in England and John Dewey in the United States, freedom is *not* simply the liberty to do anything one pleases, provided that it does not

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interfere with other people's freedom to do as *they* please. Instead, they insisted, freedom is the opportunity for our ideal or *higher self* to be realized, that is, made real. Freedom, in other words, is the freedom of our ideal or higher self to promote its ideals and goals in a community consisting of other similarly situated higher selves. True liberty or freedom, then, requires that our ideal or higher self be free of the temptations to which our lower self too often succumbs, including the temptation to take advantage of, or to care nothing about, those less fortunate than ourselves.

From this *reform* or *welfare* liberal perspective, then, the laws that smooth social relations and restrict all-out competition are *aids* to *true liberty*, not restrictions on our rights or our freedom. These laws restrict our *lower selves* even as they encourage our *higher selves* to realize our nobler, more just, and generous ideals.

As we will see, a similar sentiment has been invoked by socialists in support of their schemes for social reform. But we need to distinguish clearly reform or welfare-state liberalism from socialism. Socialism seeks not to reform capitalism but to replace it with a system of publicly owned enterprises. Welfare-state liberalism, by contrast, presupposes and takes for granted the existence of a capitalist system. From the perspective of the welfare-state liberal, the role of the state includes that of regulating competition and alleviating the social ills and individual injuries wrought by a competitive capitalist society.

In fact, the grandfather of the modern welfare state was neither a socialist nor a liberal. Otto Von Bismarck, the Prussian militarist and ardently antisocialist "Iron Chancellor" who united Germany in the latter part of the nineteenth century, believed that the welfare state was the best way of opposing socialism. Through a state-sponsored system of taxing employers and employees to support ill, injured, and unemployed workers, the German state could increase its power and prestige while at the same time stealing the thunder from the socialists, who had made considerable gains by playing upon the workers' fears of illness, injury, and unemployment. The welfare state supplied a social safety net in an unpredictably up-and-down cyclical capitalist economy.

In the United States, the rough-and-ready liberalism of the Manchester school was advocated by proponents of "rugged individualism" such as Herbert Hoover. (It was, in fact, Hoover who coined the phrase "rugged individualism.") But no matter how rugged they were, isolated individuals were hardly a match for the Great Depression of the 1930s. Workers lost their jobs, farmers lost their farms, and financiers lost their fortunes. No one seemed safe from the ravages of a competitive capitalist system gone haywire.

During the Great Depression, welfare-state liberalism came into its own. President Franklin D. Roosevelt pushed through programs that would have been unthinkable only a few years earlier. Although some critics cried "socialism," F.D.R. was no socialist. He was simply a reform-minded welfare-state liberal who had tried, as he thought, to save capitalism from its own excesses.

The Depression ended with the coming of World War II. But the welfare state and its supporting ideology, liberalism, continued to flourish well into the 1960s, during the presidencies of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. In the 1970s (and even more in the 1980s, during the administration of President Ronald Reagan) the ideology of welfare-state liberalism was criticized by those who called themselves *conservatives*.

But, as we'll see in the next lesson, American conservatives like Ronald Reagan have borrowed heavily from the essentially economic liberalism of the older nineteenth-century variety—that is, from Manchester Liberalism.

There is one group, however, that criticizes Reagan and other contemporary *conservatives* for not being true to the economic principles of Manchester Liberalism and the ethical principles of John Stuart Mill. This is the loose alliance whose members sometimes call themselves *true liberals* but, most often, simply *libertarians*.

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Modern libertarians like Murray Rothbard, Milton Friedman, and Robert Nozick want to get the government out of the boardroom *and* the bedroom—that is, out of the economy and out of the moral domain. The state, they say, has no business "interfering" in *any* economic transaction, including the selling of sex or drugs or any other commodity or service. Almost any decision, including the decision to take drugs or to sell sexual services or to buy them from others, is a private moral decision made on the basis of self-interest and therefore best left to individuals operating in the environment of the free market. The state, say the libertarians, should be minimal in its scope and morally neutral in its operations. Therefore, it should not try to regulate the economy or to *reform* its citizens.

If nothing else, libertarianism and the other varieties of liberalism we've looked at in this lesson suggest that the liberal tradition is complex and varied. No doubt it is this complexity, variety, and variability that accounts for much of the modern confusion over what *liberalism* is and what *liberals* believe. And yet, as we will see in the next lesson, much the same can be said about what *conservatism* is and what *conservatives* believe and advocate.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

Ask students to record in their journals their reactions to and reflections on their readings for this lesson. Then return to the listing of *liberal* characteristics at the beginning of this lesson. Are these, in their view, still accurate and adequate? Why or why not? Ask them to record their answer(s) in their journal.

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4. *Conservatism*

READING ASSIGNMENT

Text, Chapter 4
Optional: Reader, Part IV

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Identify the several varieties of conservatism
2. Describe the similarities and differences between these variants
3. Identify and explain the main features of Edmund Burke's political thought
4. Explain why conservatism in the United States so often resembles *early* or *classical liberalism*
5. Describe how each variant of conservatism fulfills the four functions of an ideology, as described in Chapter 1
6. Explain classical conservatism's ambivalent attitude toward democracy
7. Describe classical conservatism's critique of *classical liberalism*
8. Explain contemporary conservatives' critique of welfare or welfare-state liberalism
9. Compare and contrast the classical and modern conservatives' conceptions of human nature
10. Compare and contrast the classical and modern conservatives' conceptions of freedom or liberty
11. Compare and contrast classical and modern conservatism's understandings of democracy

NOTES

WHAT IS CONSERVATISM?

Begin by asking students this question: When you think of conservatives and conservatism, what comes immediately to mind? Do you think first of particular persons (of former President Ronald Reagan, say, or former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, or former President George W. Bush) or of policies and positions advocated by these or other contemporary conservatives? Examples of the latter might include such policies as increased military spending, decreased expenditures for social-welfare measures, limited government "interference" in the economy, and the like. But when you try to focus not on particular persons or policies but on conservatism as an *ideology*, what then comes to mind? Before continuing, list at least four features or tenets of *conservatism* as you understand it. A conservative believes:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Ask students to keep their answers in mind as they do the assigned reading. After completing their reading, ask them to return to their answers. Ask if they would still answer as they did. What, if anything, would they change and why? Ask them to record these reactions in their journal.

If your students find conservatism confusing in several respects, they are not alone. Not all who call themselves conservatives agree about what is central to the ideology of conservatism. Some conservatives claim that conservatism is not an ideology at all but an anti-ideological orientation or set of dispositions. But, as we will see, conservatism does fulfill the four functions of an ideology. And so we need not hesitate to view it as an ideology.

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THE HISTORY OF CONSERVATISM

Historians of political ideas and ideologies sometimes draw a distinction between two kinds of conservatism: an older conservatism stemming from Edmund Burke, which we might call *classical conservatism*, and a newer variant, which we might call *modern* or *contemporary conservatism*. In this lesson we will be looking at both kinds of conservatism, classical and modern, and at other offshoots and variations as well.

Let's begin by trying to understand some of the similarities and the differences between classical and modern conservatism. Their most obvious similarity is that they share the same label. And this shared label suggests that both are concerned with *conserving* something. But when we ask *what* they claim to conserve, *how* they propose to conserve it, and *by whom* they think it should be conserved, we see that the two kinds of conservatism give very different answers.

To see how and why they differ, we need to look at the history of classical conservatism. Although there have been many statesmen and political thinkers whom we might call conservatives, one in particular stands out as spokesperson, standard-bearer, and champion of the classical conservative tradition. Edmund Burke was an outspoken critic of liberalism for several reasons, including (1) its view of human nature and government and (2) its view of freedom. As we noted in the previous lesson, the classical liberal view of human nature is that human beings are *naturally* rational, competitive, narrowly self-interested, calculating creatures devoted to maximizing their own advantage in relation to other people.

Civil society is therefore simply an aggregation of self-interested individuals who are kept in check by a system of law. And that system of law is in turn enforced by a minimal state. Moreover, that minimal state is created by its members, who make a *social contract* into which they enter freely for the purpose of protecting their life, liberty, and property.

This, at least, is the early liberal view of human nature. But it is assuredly not Burke's view. Burke believed the liberal view of human nature and government to be not only mistaken in theory, but also politically pernicious when put into practice.

But why did Burke believe this? For one thing, human beings are not self-interested calculators but creatures of habit, custom, and tradition. And, for another, political society is not simply a heap of isolated individuals but a living and changing organism greater than the sum of its individual parts. Individuals may come and go, but the society of which they are members endures. In short, the argument by liberal social-contract theorists that civil society is (or could conceivably be) brought into existence by consenting, contracting individuals is in Burke's view a politically pernicious fiction.

If political or civil society rests on some sort of "contract," Burke says, it is not the kind of contract that liberals like Locke had in mind. It is less like a legal contract than a sacred covenant that binds people and generations together.

Point for point, this Burkean or classical conservative view of human nature and government differs from the picture painted by early liberal thinkers. But nowhere is the difference between early liberalism and classical conservatism more evident than in their different views of freedom and democracy. As we saw in Lesson 3, to be free, for the classical liberal, is to be free from obstacles that stand in the way of realizing one's own individual desires or interests. For the liberal, this kind of freedom is an unquestionable value, subject only to the constraint that one individual's enjoyment of her freedom does not restrict another's enjoyment of hers.

But Burke's view is very different. For him, freedom is not necessarily a good thing. It *can* be, but it does not *have* to be. To ask whether freedom is a good or a bad thing is like asking whether fire is a good or a bad thing. Clearly, fire is a valued good if and only if it is kept under control and put to good use. But once out of control, fire's destructive powers are awesome and fearful and to be avoided if at all possible. So, too, Burke says, whether freedom is a good or a bad thing depends on the uses to which it is put by an

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individual or a party or by an entire society. Kept under control and put to good use, freedom is without doubt a very valuable thing. But once out of control, the destructive power of people freed from all legal and traditional restraints is horrible to behold.

What then are Burke's and the classical conservative's conceptions of liberty? And what, by implication, becomes of democracy? To take the first question first, there is, Burke insists, against Locke and others, no abstract "right" to liberty possessed by all people. To claim otherwise would be as absurd as claiming that there is an abstract right to fire belonging to everyone, including arsonists. Rights, including one's right to liberty, are always concrete, never abstract or universal. It makes no sense, in Burke's view, to speak of "the rights of man," although it makes perfectly good sense to speak of "the rights of Englishmen" or of some other people or nationality. And, as with rights, so too with liberty. Instead of speaking of liberty (or freedom) as an abstract idea or ideal, Burke speaks of "liberties," by which he means the particular freedoms that people enjoy in particular societies. These liberties will, moreover, differ from one society to another. The liberties enjoyed by the English, for example, need not be identical with those enjoyed by the Spanish, say, or French or Italian people.

What then of democracy? Democracy, in Burke's view, was a system ripe with the possibility of abuse. It gives too much power, he thought, to the least reflective and responsible members of society. A society is best governed, Burke believed, by those who have the greatest stake in its well-being and are the most reflective and thoughtful of its members. If that society should be a democracy, it then behooves the people to elect the wisest and most prudent among them and then leave them free to govern as they think best. An elected representative should be neither a mirror of nor a messenger from his or her constituents. He or she is, instead, a trustee authorized to represent their interests as he or she sees them and as he or she sees fit.

For Burke and for classical conservatives more generally, direct or participatory democracy is both undesirable and impracticable. Any defense of direct democracy is tantamount to a defense of anarchy and mob rule. And to prove this point Burke had, he thought, only to turn his gaze across the English Channel, where the French Revolution was then raging. In *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) Burke maintained that the French Revolution represented almost everything that was wrong with the modern world. Motivated by a mixture of envy and rage fueled by abstract liberal theories about "liberty" and "the rights of man," mobs of masterless men and women embarked on a mad rampage. They had attacked King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette and members of the hated aristocracy. And why? Simply because of who they were and to what class they belonged. The French revolutionaries had turned their France into a nation of spies and informers. As a result, few of the people of France were secure, and none was truly free.

To promote freedom by thus violently removing real or imagined obstacles in their way was, Burke believed, to hold a mistaken and wholly indefensible view of liberty. The only freedom worth having, Burke believed, is the ordered liberty to act in accordance with the laws and abide by the traditions of one's own society. These laws and traditions are not obstacles or constraints but enablements—aids to help people play a useful part in some larger, well-ordered whole. Society is not merely a collection of individuals, each of whom is independent of the others. Rather, society is conceived by classical conservatives like Burke as a web of relationships and reciprocal dependencies. To use one of Burke's favorite images, the individual members of a community or nation are woven together like threads in a larger social fabric. Taken individually, none of the threads is strong or beautiful; but once woven tightly together, the whole can be both strong and beautiful. In such a social fabric none of the individual threads determines the shape or pattern or color of the whole. Only in a frayed fabric (already coming apart at the seams) do the individual threads stand out from the rest. That, thought Burke, is the dismal picture presented by a liberal individualist society. A society consisting of self-seeking individuals, each essentially independent of the others and thus "free" to pursue his or her own self-interest is, for Burke, a deranged, disordered, or sick society—a threadbare society scarcely deserving of the name.

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What classical conservatives like Burke mean by freedom or liberty now comes into clearer view. Recalling the three elements of our triad for analyzing different conceptions of freedom, we can begin by looking at Burke's view of who the agent is. Society, he says, does not consist of isolated individuals but of people involved in relationships of mutuality and interdependence. Each person therefore has his or her particular station or status and a stake in the larger society into which he or she is born, is educated, marries, works, lives, and dies. All these actions, activities, practices, and institutions are part of the social fabric into which we are woven and which we help to weave, reweave, and repair. The goal of free men and women is to maintain the integrity of the social fabric. To do so, however, requires that one surmount such obstacles as false beliefs about liberty, society, and human nature. Liberty, says Burke, is not absolute or without limits, societies are not simple machines to be tinkered with, and human nature is complex.

With this classical conservative view of the nature of human life comes a corresponding view of politics and the purpose of political life. The purpose of political activity is simply to preserve and conserve the social fabric within which these necessary human activities are carried on from day to day and from one generation to the next. As the British conservative philosopher Michael Oakeshott (1901–1990) puts it, politics is nothing more than the activity of attending to the arrangements of one's society. Politics is not, or should not be, part of any attempt to radically remake one's society from the ground up. Still less should politics be a, or involve any, collective attempt to make imperfect persons and institutions perfect. That task belongs only to God. And even he did not succeed in creating such creatures. Thus, conservative politics, as Anthony Quinton says, is necessarily and inescapably "the politics of imperfection"—and, by implication, the repudiation of what Oakeshott calls the "rationalist" politics of perfection.

By classical conservative lights, the mistake made by political radicals and rationalists from Robespierre to Pol Pot is two-sided. First, they are mistaken in believing that human nature is malleable and even, one day, perfectible. From this first mistaken belief follows a second mistaken belief, namely that humans can and will one day live in a perfect society—an earthly paradise from which greed, envy, and injustice have been banished once and for all. But to bring this about, they believe it both necessary and possible to pull an entire society up by its roots and remake it from the ground up. The results of such large-scale attempts at social engineering are bound to be disastrous. And this, says the classical conservative, is because society is not perfect and can never be made so. Politics is not an exact science but an inexact and imperfect art, the art of "muddling through" one step at a time and without the aid of abstract theories or elaborate rationalist blueprints. There may well be truths in this art, but few, if any, are simple. One of the few simple truths is that there are no simple truths, no easy solutions to social problems, because social problems are always complex. So we had best be wary, Burke says, of anyone who claims that such simple solutions are readily available.

Having sketched several key features of classical conservatism, let's move on to consider the similarities and contrasts between classical and modern conservatism. Both, as we have seen, share the name *conservative*. So both are presumably concerned with conserving something. But conserving what? And how? And by whom?

We have noted that Burkean or classical conservatism is skeptical toward liberal individualism. The irony of modern conservatism is that it speaks the language not of Burke but of the very liberalism and individualism that Burke found so objectionable. What the modern conservative seeks to conserve is not Burke's "social fabric" but the very principles of individualism, competition, and self-interest that Burke believed to be destructive of that very fabric. And this in turn gives a characteristic twist to the language, and therefore the thought, of the modern conservative. Let's look a little more closely at this difference. Burke and his successors in the classical conservative tradition stress the delicacy, intricacy, and complexity of the social fabric; they see individuals as inevitably situated in a web of interdependency and as connected across generations with their ancestors and with their unborn successors. It is therefore

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possible, within this classical conservative framework, to justify the welfare state as a way of smoothing the rough spots caused by a competitive capitalist society.

By contrast, modern or *individualist* conservatives, from Herbert Hoover to Ronald Reagan, are much more inclined to talk about rugged individuals pulling themselves up by their bootstraps. And they are apt to talk about *freedom* as the freedom of individuals to compete with others, especially in the economic arena of the *free market*. For the modern conservative, then, freedom is intimately tied to *free enterprise*, that is, to a competitive, capitalist economic system. This form of conservatism has been especially strong in the United States, where the founding principles of the country included a belief in individual rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Because these essentially liberal rights were part of the American tradition, there was a clear sense in which those people who advocated rugged *individualism* in the United States were taking a conservative position.

Another difference between classical and individualist conservatism is worth noting. As we have seen, classical conservatives emphasize the intricacy of the social fabric and the complexity of its problems. With this comes their deep-seated skepticism regarding supposedly "simple" solutions. Individualist conservatives, by contrast, are much more inclined to claim that our problems are really quite simple (stemming mostly from too much government "interference" in the operations of the free market) and to claim, correspondingly, that the solutions are therefore essentially simple: reduce the size of government; reduce government spending, particularly for social welfare programs; and give the free market a free rein, in economic if not in moral matters. If these themes sound familiar, they should. We have encountered them already in our discussion of *neoclassical* or *laissez-faire* liberalism in Lesson 3. These "modern" conservative prescriptions are precisely the ones ordered by earlier economically minded liberals, and by nineteenth-century Manchester liberals in particular.

If nothing else, this brief and selective historical sketch helps explain how conservatism came to be a house divided. But the story is more complex yet. For besides the division between classical and individualist conservatives, there are differences and divisions between these and other kinds of conservatives as well.

For example, there are so-called *neoconservatives,* such as the late Irving Kristol and his son William, who edits the *Weekly Standard*. Neoconservatives might be described as disenchanted welfare-state liberals. For while acknowledging the merits of capitalism as an economic system capable of generating great wealth, neoconservatives share the classical conservatives' concern over the social disruption and dislocations brought about by a freewheeling market economy. These include labor unrest, unemployment, the social and familial disruption and violence wrought by ups and downs in the business cycle, and the adverse burdens that these impose upon those least able to deal with them, especially the very young and the very old. When those young people grow up, they prey on the old, and so the vicious cycle repeats itself. These and other ills of capitalism led Irving Kristol to suggest that capitalism deserves only two out of a possible total of three cheers.

At the same time, however, neoconservatives insist that the welfare state, although good in inception and intent, has fared badly in practice. It has created an entrenched class of welfare bureaucrats with a vested interest in perpetuating the poverty and dependence of their "clients" and has thus perpetuated the very problem that it initially sought to alleviate. The social-welfare system needs not to be discarded, but rethought in new and creative ways.

But neoconservatism consists not only of a critique of capitalism and of the welfare state alike, but also of "cultural" questions. Neoconservatives like Daniel Bell claim that capitalism harbors numerous "cultural contradictions." And it is through these contradictions that capitalism undermines its own already-thin moral and intellectual foundations.

To take only one example, consider the following. On the one hand, capitalism rests upon people's willingness to defer pleasures and gratifications; in other words, to save and invest in the present with the expectation of receiving a greater return in the future. On the other hand, however, capitalism creates such

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