

THE BEGINNINGS OF CURTIS YARVIN

This introduction to this series should be read first. It has the index to all posts in this series.

Marcy points out that there is no policy in the Trump administration, only destruction, revenge, and palace intrigue. That's a great start for Curtis Yarvin and the evil shits surrounding Trump, especially the destruction part. This post introduces Curtis Yarvin's justification for that nihilistic approach.

The first post at The Substack Gray Mirror

Yarvin explains that the Grey Mirror substack is a sandbox for drafting a book. The book is intended to serve as a public policy manual for the leader of a new regime which will replace the current regime in the United States.



Policy is the art of the possible. Today's possible is relative to an amorphous network of influential stakeholders. Any new idea must first be measured for relevance by its proximity to this meta-institution. The mirror's abstract prince had no one to please but himself and God. His policy could and must be absolute.

I think the first three sentences are meant as criticism of democracy on the grounds that it spreads power among too many people, making it easy to block or affect policy. The meaning of the last two is clear: the new regime will be a one-man rule, and I do mean man. There will be a new regime eventually because all regimes fail. And it will be under the control of a single man, because "if you want a completely different government, submitting to one person is the only way to get it."

His prince has to start from scratch to build

his regime. Most of the existing institutions can't be remodeled to fit with the new regime. That leads to his idiosyncratic use of the term nihilist. His plan is nihilist because "... it's a plan for building ex nihilo, from nothing."

The new leader will emerge from the chaos of the deterioration of the existing regime.

From Rome to France to Rwanda, a monarch who emerges unchallenged from one side of a civic conflict does not enforce the civic dominance of his own side, but the civic unity of both sides. If he did otherwise he would be an idiot – which is statistically unlikely. Freezing the civic conflict, cold or hot, tends to be the biggest, quickest win of the whole transition.

There is no explanation for this statement. He goes on to say that the leader is accountable, but he doesn't tell us how, except that a monarchy is a republic, and has a constitution.

Discussion

1. I've rearranged the order in which Yarvin lays out his ideas.
2. I flatly disagree with his statements about Rome, France and Rwanda producing leaders who enforce civil unity of both sides. Rome fell under the sway of emperors and as they degenerated, Rome slowly collapsed. Is he thinking of Napoleon in France? Has he never heard of the restoration of the aristos, or the Commune, or any of the history of the nation in the 19th Century? And Rwanda? Really?

The First Post in Yarvin's Blog Unqualified Reservations

The first post in Yarvin's blog is titled *A Formalist Manifesto*, dated 4/24/2007. It's long, so I'll cover it in two posts. In this post, I take up his objections to existing ideologies and his complaints about democracy. In the next I'll discuss the content of his newly created

ideology, formalism.

Current ideologies suck

He doesn't like progressivism because he thinks its adherents, "... the vast majority of writers and thinkers and smart people in general..." are so steeped in it that they can't see its problems. He doesn't like conservatism because "... not all conservatives are cretins, but most cretins are conservatives." The re-inventors of conservatism (the earlier version was destroyed by the "Roosevelt dictatorship") have to appeal to the cretins, so conservatism is dumb.

He thinks moderates, centrists, independents, and non-political people are responsible for the death and destruction of the 20th Century, and presumably the early 2000s. They act like there's a fixed "center" but it's constantly changing. There's nothing for them to hold onto, no controlling set of beliefs. It doesn't even count as an ideology.

He thinks highly of libertarianism, but thinks it's never been successfully implemented, because it's impractical.

Yarvin's problem with democracy

Yarvin says that the most serious problem people face is how to interact without violence against persons or property.

One conclusion of formalism is that democracy is—as most writers before the 19th century agreed—an ineffective and destructive system of government. The concept of democracy without politics makes no sense at all, and as we've seen, politics and war are a continuum. Democratic politics is best understood as a sort of symbolic violence, like deciding who wins the battle by how many troops they brought.

I think what he's getting at here is that certain political disagreements can't be resolved by compromise or live and let live

policies. Murder is an example. There can't be any compromise to the no-murder rule. He seems to think that most issues are like that, as if the regulatory preference for LED lighting over incandescent bulbs leads to violence.

Discussion

1. So far we've seen two objections to democracy. First, the dispersion of power demanded by democracy leads to unspecified bad things, because it slows or prevents technological improvements. That doesn't happen under one-man rule. Second democracy inexorably leads to violence. Yarvin doesn't offer much support for these claims in the two essays I've read. Maybe there's more ahead.

2. Yarvin's criticism of progressivism, that its adherents can't see its problems, seems wrong. I think some of Yarvin's criticisms of our government have merit, and have been raised by progressives repeatedly.

3. Yarvin ignores our experience with one-man rule, going far back into history. People who have experienced democracy don't want one-man rule. Like the American Revolutionaries, people want to have a say in their governments.

4. Almost all people want to live in a world free from violence. Violence is fairly low by historical standards in most functioning democracies. Even though we don't have perfect security, our circumstances allow most of us to seek higher-order goals. So far, at least, Yarvin hasn't engaged any of the complexities of humans of today, just as he hasn't addressed any of the arguments of the proponents of democracy.

5. Here's a story. My freshman year at Notre Dame, we were required to take a class in writing. My teacher was Mr. Yeltsin, who seemed to think it beneath him to teach writing to guys studying science and engineering. Mr. Yeltsin always wore a black suit, white shirt, black skinny tie, very much not the fashion in those days.

I was very proud of my first essay, about which I remember nothing except that when it came back, Mr. Yeltsin had written one word diagonally at the top: Jejeune. I had to look it up.

I wish Curtis Yarvin had taken writing from Mr. Yeltsin.