

“It changed the way I look at the world.” —Russ Roberts, *EconTalk*

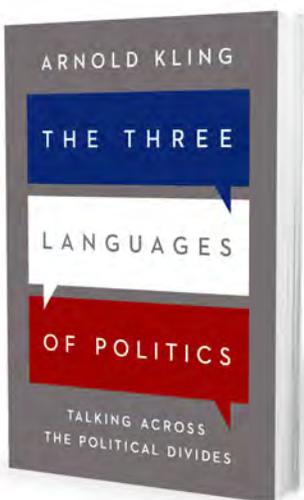
When it comes to politics, are Americans simply talking past each other? Arnold Kling’s *The Three Languages of Politics: Talking across the Political Divides*, first released in 2013 and now published in a new and expanded edition from Libertarianism.org, explores how American political groups have become “like tribes speaking different languages.” Whether at the family dinner table or on cable TV, our political arguments are less about convincing our opponents than they are about signaling that we belong to the morally superior tribe.

Kling divides politically aware Americans into three basic tribes—progressives, conservatives, and libertarians. Each tribe, he argues, considers itself morally superior to the rest. The trouble is, when people think in these terms, they are unlikely to engage in sincere debates and try to work together. Kling’s book helps you recognize when people—including, quite possibly, you and your “tribe”—are making these types of divisive and unconstructive arguments. This type of language, rather than communicating ideas, trains us to believe that people who agree with us are good people, while those who disagree are unreasonable, or even immoral.

Kling explains how each of the three main tribal languages frames a wide variety of issues. The progressive frames things according to “the oppressor” and “the oppressed,” while the conservative frames things as “civilization” versus “barbarism.” Libertarians, meanwhile, frame things according to “liberty” versus “coercion.” He argues that we must train ourselves to see beyond our preferred moral frames and incorporate new perspectives and ways of thinking into our communication. This not only helps us be more charitable to opponents—it can actually strengthen our arguments, as well.

Kling emphasizes that he is not advocating some kind of wishy-washy centrism, or compromise on our principles—his argument is about changing the *communication* of ideas, not the ideas themselves. To that end, *The Three Languages of Politics* is a timely, concise guide to understanding why communication between different political groups fails, and how to improve it. ■

PURCHASE THE THREE LANGUAGES OF POLITICS AT CATO.ORG/STORE AND ONLINE RETAILERS.



Cato News Notes

NEIL GORSUCH AND CATO

Justice Neil Gorsuch, recently confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court, was no stranger to Cato during his formative years. Just after graduating from Harvard Law, he and classmate Michael Guzman wrote a scholarly Policy Analysis for Cato titled “Will the Gentlemen Please Yield?—A Defense of the Constitutionality of State-Imposed Term Limits.” And after he finished his clerkships on the Court, but before he headed off to Oxford to study natural law, he returned to Cato for a lengthy discussion of the subject with Cato’s vice president for legal affairs, Roger Pilon. Justice Gorsuch brings to the Court, Pilon said, a perspective on the Constitution and its underlying theory that for too long has been missing.

ROSE SMUGGLED ONTO CAMPUS

In July of last year, the University of Cape Town (UCT) decided to disinvite Cato senior fellow Flemming Rose from its campus, where he was set to deliver a lecture on—of all things—academic freedom. As the former editor of Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, Rose famously commissioned cartoons of the prophet Mohammed that spurred international outrage and protests. Since then, Rose has been a tireless advocate of free speech throughout the world. In the UCT faculty’s letter announcing the decision, they admitted that they had come to the conclusion that academic freedom on their campus does indeed have “limitations.” Rose denounced their decision as “an intellectual disgrace.” But Rose is not easily daunted—he managed to sneak onto campus after all this May, where he delivered a well-attended and peaceful lecture. His remarks at the nearby South African Institute of Race Relations, which invited him to speak after UCT disinvited him, received positive editorials in several South African newspapers.

FUTURE OF THE FREE SOCIETY

A Cato 40th Anniversary Online Forum

In honor of Cato’s 40th anniversary, the Institute has organized a special online forum on the future of the free society. Cato reached out to a diverse array of leading intellectuals and asked them to submit essays addressing the most pressing challenges to freedom in coming years, as well as reasons they have for optimism, important but underappreciated ideas pertinent to freedom, and the most important thing they have learned about free societies. The resulting collection includes essays from former Deputy Prime Minister of Poland Leszek Balcerowicz, George Mason’s Tyler Cowen, Deirdre McCloskey of the University of Illinois-Chicago, Cato executive vice president David Boaz, and Conor Friedersdorf of *The Atlantic*. The forum is available at Cato.org/Cato40.