

Roger Scruton, *Conservatism: An Introduction to the Great Tradition* (St. Martin's Press, 2018).

If Lockean liberalism is the conservatism of the English-speaking peoples, what was there in British conservatism that was not present in the bourgeois thought of Hamilton and Madison? If there was nothing, then the acts of the Loyalists are deprived of all moral substance. Many of the American Tories were Anglicans and knew well that in opposing the revolution they were opposing Locke. They appealed to the older political philosophy of Richard Hooker. They were not, as liberal Canadian historians have often described them, a mixture of selfish and unfortunate men who chose the wrong side. If there was nothing valuable in the founders of English-speaking Canada, what makes it valuable for Canadians to continue as a nation today?

George Grant, *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*

It was the rise of Puritanism in late Elizabethan England, the advancing tide of Calvinist theology and ethics in the last two decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, not the Renaissance of the early and middle decades of the century, that marked the real rupture with the medieval culture.

C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*

Roger Scruton is one of the most published, articulate and probing conservatives in the last few decades. The telling points he raises cannot be ignored and many of the arrows he shoots hits the bull's eye

well and wisely. There is always a need for thoughtful conservatives to counter variations of trendy liberalism (of various and varied colours, shapes and sizes) and Scruton speaks his speech well on such a stage. The role that Scruton played in the founding and editing of *The Salisbury Review* (1982-2001) and his two books on conservatism, *The Meaning of Conservatism* (1980) and *How to Be a Conservative* (2014) position him well to speak about such a tradition. It was, therefore, with much delight and anticipation that I received Scruton's most recent compact missive, *Conservatism: An Introduction to the Great Tradition* (2018), to review—needless to say, there is much to ponder in such a fast moving overview of conservatism.

*Conservatism: An Introduction to the Great Tradition* is certainly not Scruton's first attempt to summarize, in a compact and thoughtful manner, the history, principles and content of the stages and seasons of the conservative vision of the good life. In fact, each of Scruton's multiple publications, in either an implicit or explicit manner, delve into the conservative way (and what we have lost by ignoring, caricaturing or distorting such a time worthy heritage). The all too sad litany of forgetfulness of the past as a result of a progressive notion of human history has clear cut the forest of centuries of wisdom and time tried insight—such a reality is, rightly so, called memoricide. We legitimately lament the clear cutting of our forests but a much deeper lament should accompany the clear cutting of the past (and the implications of such a short sighted approach to culture and civilization). But, let us turn to *Conservatism* to get a fix and feel for what Scruton thinks we need to conserve and who are the saints and worthies of such an ethos and heritage.

*Conservatism* is divided into the Preface (which sets the stage for the historic drama of sorts), chapter 1. “Pre-History”, 2. “The Birth of Philosophical Conservatism”, 3) “Conservatism in Germany and France”, 4) “Cultural Conservatism”, 5) “The Impact of Socialism”, 6) “Conservatism Now” and a handy primer of a reading list and bibliography of sorts. The “Pre-History” chapter is, in fact, more modern history (mostly 17<sup>th</sup> century and forward) and the Anglo-American connection (more Anglo than American) that makes for a must read to connect essential dots between what might be called 2<sup>nd</sup> generation liberalism (Locke, Smith, Hume, Burke and tribe) and the emergence of 3<sup>rd</sup> generation liberalism (or what we call welfare or social liberalism and not to be equated with socialism or variations of communism). The scampering across the landscape of Germany and France, ever mining for conservative leanings, widens the reach and stretch of Scruton’s sense of the broader conservative epic tale of the “Great Tradition.”

What, though, is this “Great Tradition” that Scruton so ably and nimbly describes from within the historic English, American, French and German contexts and are there other ways of interpreting such a Tradition without bowing the knee to a trendy and politically correct liberalism in the culture wars? I must admit, by way of a brief comment, that Scruton is more like the proverbial fox than hedgehog in this fast moving overview of conservatism, then and now. But, this should not be seen as a fault. There are fox like books that cover much terrain and do not dig deep, and much can be learned from them (such is this missive). There are, also, hedgehog books in which much depth is the name of the intellectual probes but a certain breadth is missing.

*Conservatism* traverses much historic and contemporary landscape and

this is the beauty and bounty of the book—those looking for depth will be disappointed in such a general overview, but the obvious purpose of the primer is to point to such places where the deep wells and mother lodes can be found---such are the pointers in the bibliography. So, *Conservatism* is a fox like approach to the conservative way and should be read as such and, as a corrective to the illness of memoricide and amnesia, it is good medicine to take and inwardly digest (to mix a metaphor).

The question that never fails to interest me when books are written and published on conservatism, liberalism, social democracy, democratic socialism, socialism, communism, populism, nationalism, fascism and Nazism to name but a few ideologies is what do people mean by such terms and the use of such language? Since this is a book about conservatism, what is meant by the term, what is being conserved and why? And, are there others ways of interpreting the pathways of the conservative ethos and history? But, let us heed and hear how Scruton does the deed, then we can reflect on whether the tale can be told in other ways while holding high the “Great Tradition” of conservatism.

I mentioned above that Scruton points to Locke, Smith, Burke, Hume and clan as seed planters of conservatism. The language of liberty for such thinkers factors significant in such a tradition and such a notion of liberty can collide with the state. This does not mean that such thinkers were atomistic individuals with little or no sense of community, history, ethos, customs, traditions and a common law—Burke’s “small platoon” and other such metaphors point the way to a grass roots and bottom up way of approaching and living a meaningful life. There is, of course, something quite admirable about such a way of being and anarchists on

the left and libertarians on the right share some of these worthy tendencies. Scruton went the extra mile to highlight how Jefferson in the USA and those who penned *The Federalist Papers* were suspicious of a too centralized government, hence a commitment to decentralize levels of authority and power. Such a notion of freedom when further extended can and often does lead to *laissez-faire* economics, lighter taxes, competitive market and a minimal state. Needless to say, there are serious tensions that exist when trying to preserve stable and historic communities in an age and ethos in which human and natural resources are but commodities to be bartered, trucked and traded on the ledger of profit and loss. There is no doubt Scruton is acutely aware of this troubling and trying dilemma as he astutely observes: “belief in a free economy and free trade inevitably clashes with local attachments and community protection” (p.4). The language of liberty and freedom, as conservatives understand it, must be defined by something deeper than merely free un-historic or a-historic individuals entering contractual relationships that are disconnected from the legal and communal prejudices (not to be equated with being prejudiced) of the past. There is, in short, public customs, social membership, law, institutions, family, religion and many other associations that shape and clarify what freedom and liberty mean in a more mature way and manner. There is no doubt Scruton, rightly so, is committed to the notion of liberty and freedom but is wary of how such language has become distorted and emptied of any meaningful content. There is an obvious juggling act at work and some impressive balls are kept in thoughtful harmony. There is, though, again and again, a certain suspicion of the state that Scruton brings to the fore in a negative way- this either-or tendency can be rather troubling. Is it necessary to pit

society against the state, bottom up politics contra top down politics? This sort of dualism is not really worthy of a good conservative much less a historic Tory. Needless to say, both society and the state have much to contribute and both have their limitations. But, let us move on.

Scruton does linger long, though, in his chapter on “The Birth of Philosophical Conservatism” on Smith’s Sinai like revelation of the “invisible hand”, the Austrian school of Hayek and clan (civil society not the state is the finest and best way forward) and Burke’s support of the American Revolution contra the French Revolution (Burke being a Rockingham Whig). The troika of Smith, Burke and Hayek tend to dominate and set the agenda as the *pater familias* of the conservative way in this birthing chapter of conservatives, such conservatives, as mentioned above, 2<sup>nd</sup> generation liberals, 1<sup>st</sup> generation liberalism being the protestant versions within the reformation (as C. S. Lewis noted in the quote that opened this review). Scruton is right, of course, when he pits and juxtaposes the cultural, economic and religious conservatism against the, increasingly so, aggressive and hard secular liberalism of Rousseau (more a nuanced and tamed civil religion), the French Revolution and Thomas Paine. There is an obvious sense in which the anti-religious and command economy tradition of the French Revolution anticipates Marx and the Russian Revolution, and when Smith, Locke, Burke, Hume, Johnson and Hayek are compared to such an extreme left of centre ideology, they are very much conserving an older tradition. But, we might add, is there something older to ponder in the “Great Tradition” than an enshrining of 17<sup>th</sup> century 2<sup>nd</sup> generation liberalism?

I found, as I have most of Scruton’s hasty fox-like chapters, his section on German and French conservatism of some interest. Hegel is featured

as the conservative contra Kant, Hegel being truer to the dialectic of historic communities, blending the tensions of the individual and community in a way Kant does not. It would have been of some value to ponder, within the German Enlightenment, the perennial insights of Goethe, Lessing and Schelling, although Scruton, to his credit, lands lightly on Herder later in the book. The merging and blending in this chapter of Smith's "invisible hand", Burke's "prejudice" and Hegel's "cunning of reason" serve and suit well the unfolding argument of Scruton. The turn to three French conservatives of different hues reveal the layered nature of conservatism: Chateaubriand, Maistre and Tocqueville illuminate different directions conservatism went in the French experience of the revolutionary era. The more reactionary conservatism of de Maistre must be seen and understood within the context of the excessively anti-religious and violent French revolution--- one extreme often begets another (such is the pendulum theory of politics). The more liberal conservative approach of de Tocqueville and his affinities with aspects of the American journey make him a bridge building conservative. Chateaubriand, as Scruton rightly notes, was a superb apologist for the restoration of the Christian vision and the brittle and reactionary distortions of the French Revolution. Needless to say, it is impossible to be a minimal conservative and ignore the essential role of religion. The brutal assault on the Roman Catholic Church in the French Revolution distinguishes such an ideology as the worst form of secular liberalism and, legitimately so, Chateaubriand and de Maistre opposed such a single vision and one dimensional way of interpreting public life and the forward march of history.

I found the chapter on "Cultural Conservatism" of much interest for the simple reason that many cultural conservatives raise serious and

sustained questions about England as the workshop of the world, the market economy, capitalism and the dimming of a higher and fuller vision of what it means to be human. Coleridge had little patience for the “catechism of commerce” and Blake was appalled by the “dark satanic mills” of industry. Many of the cultural conservatives are often at odds with the economic and religious conservatives of the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries (and their ideological commitments which often had Calvinist and puritan leanings, Locke and Hobbes emerging from such historic contexts). What is worth the conserving, we might ask, in some older ideals, principles and content that predate the Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the outworking of it in the 17<sup>th</sup> century? There is, in fact, an older vision worthy of conserving that we find, in different ways, in Coleridge (and the High Romantics such as Wordsworth and Southey), Ruskin, Arnold, Eliot, Leavis and the Southern Agrarians in the USA. The cultural conservatives do, in many important and significant ways, collide with those who seek to conserve the market and some of the damaging implications of it for culture, society and civilization.

I should mention, before I venture yet further, that many of the magisterial reformers of the 16<sup>th</sup> century had a high view of either the city state or nation state. Thomas More was Lord Chancellor of England, Erasmus wrote many a tract to the monarchs of his time, Hooker held high the role of the state and Luther/Calvin recognized a needful tension existed between church and government---such was the vision of the magisterial reformers. Those who tend to demean the state and elevate society are more indebted to the Anabaptist-Mennonite way than the magisterial reformers of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. But, let us turn to those Scruton gives the nod to as cultural conservatives.

I mentioned above that Coleridge had many a suspicion of the captains of industry and the impact of their “catechism of commerce” on society. Scruton’s insights on Coleridge, his doubts about the market, the role of the “clerisy” and his commitment to the established church are well known (although many literary types tend to ignore Coleridge’s religious commitments). I have been fortunate to spend time at Coleridge’s residences at Nether Stowey, Keswick and Highgate—he, like the other Lake District Poets, certainly had their commitments to the small platoon of parish life, but they were not anti-statist. In fact, Disraeli (a disciple of sorts of Coleridge), in his political attempt to overcome the disparity of the two nations, viewed the state as an essential medium of doing so. This is a form of conservatism that does not unduly dismiss the state as an agent of justice. The fact that Coleridge viewed commerce, in many ways, as a “tearing, rending and shattering” of historic communities and parish life does need to be noted. Robert Nisbet, in his beauty of a book, *Conservatism*, states, “Southey, in his *Letters from England*, published in 1807, reads like a late nineteenth-century socialist in his indictment of the ills brought upon England by the factory system and the hideously congested towns and cities resulting from this system”. There can be no doubt the Lake District poets and political philosophers were conservative in a way the Manchester school of economics was not. So, who was the real conservative?

Scruton, rightly so, touches on Arnold and the emerging merchant class he calls the “philistines”. The role of education for Matthew Arnold and his father was the raising up of students who were formed and shaped, at their best, to internalize and live forth an ennobling vision of character formation and the role of such virtuous character in personal,

family, religious and public life. The ledger of profit and loss, like notions of liberty and freedom, had to have deeper roots if civic and public life were to produce thoughtful citizens. John Ruskin, like the Lake District Poets, saw all so clearly the dimming and diminishing of beauty and the arts, as only the useful, pragmatic and utilitarian dominated the day. Scruton mentioned T. S. Eliot in his section on cultural conservatives, also, and Eliot had a fondness for the Caroline Divines (who were certainly no Lockean-Hobbsean-Smithian-Burkean liberals). Scruton completed his tour of cultural conservatives with Leavis and the American Agrarians, noting Leavis' lack of religious tendencies (in this sense quite modern) but his inroads into the "Great Tradition", the southern Agrarians in the United States taking a stand against Northern urban secularism and, again, a more mobile market economy.

It is to Scruton's credit that he has highlighted the tensions within conservatism between the market driven approach and those suspicious of such tendencies and conservatives who have a higher view of the state and those wary of it. I cannot help but conclude this section with another passage from Nisbet's *Conservatism*: "Disraeli in almost total agreement with his revered Coleridge, expressed his hatred of 'a sort of spinning jenny, machine kind of nation'. With much reason, at the end of the century, G.B. Shaw commented on how much fiercer many conservative criticisms of capitalism were than were those of Marxian socialists. The reason is apparent. The Marxians at least accepted the technical framework of capitalism for their coming socialism. For conservatives in many instances, that was the loathsome part of it all" (p.65).

The section of “The Impact of Socialism”, legitimately so, goes after the misuses and abuses of Marxism and a command economy in various states. There is another dualism in this suggestive chapter, though, that leads towards a problematic either-or approach to the economy, society, civic life, associations and the state. The free market is idealized as the path forward on the liberty loving path and socialist traditions are portrayed as oppressive and totalitarian (of which there is some obvious truth). But, are there only two options to choose from: market or command economy, society or the state, diverse associations or centralized authority? Surely, mature conservatives are more nuanced and refined in their thinking than such ideological constructs—such was the way of many cultural conservatives (and, I might add, political and religious conservatives). It might have been valuable in such a chapter if Scruton had landed and lingered at the political traditions of Norway (where I lived for a time), Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland (where I also lived when younger)----some valuable discussions from such countries are the delicate interplay and dance of sorts of state and society.

The final chapter in *Conservatism*, “Conservatism Now”, lights down on the conservatism of the London School of Economics as embodied in the life and writings of Michael Oakeshott, Peter Bauer and Kenneth Minogue, Maurice Cowling from Peterhouse receiving an ample hearing and audience. The American conservatives, William Buckley, Russell Kirk and Samuel Huntington are welcomed into the embracing fold as is the French thinker, Pierre Manent and Scruton himself. The final few pages deal with the potential and actual threat of Islam, Islam, Scruton suggesting, having “pre-political loyalty” that transcends both national boundaries and the state. It is quite pertinent to point out that

this is an issue for most major and minor religions as they seek to negotiate the precarious balance between the Ultimate, Pen-Ultimate and Ante-penultimate. More's much heralded statement when confronting Henry VIII points to such a portal between time and eternity: "The King's good servant but God's first". There are, of course, extremist Muslims just as there are extremist Jews and Christians: Secular and right of centre Orthodox Jewish Zionists can be just as violent as jihadist Muslims and the uncritical support by many American conservative evangelicals of President Trump has many an affinity with hawkish Muslims.

I find, when I walk the walk with Scruton, in this timely missive on the Great Tradition, a certain shrinkage of thought, space and time occurs—there is something quite protestant about the "Great Tradition" as articulated by Scruton, a tradition that only seems to emerge, in any serious way, after Cromwell. Surely, the "Great Tradition" has much to do with a deeper appreciation of Classical civilization, the Patristic synthesis of such an ethos from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries CE and the Medieval-Renaissance fleshing out of such a way of being cultured and civilized. There is, in short, a sort of what Lewis called a "chronological snobbery" in Scruton's read of history (not as crude, though, as many cause de jour liberals), something most protestant and lacking a catholic ambience, palette and way of thinking and being. Scruton is right, of course, in seeing secular forms of liberalism as problematic, some aspects of socialism as worrisome, trendy politically correct ideology as narrow and violent forms of jihadism as not acceptable. But, if the protestant synthesis of the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries is the foundation stones of the "Great Tradition" there is a decided lack of greatness to it. There is, in fact, something older and

deeper to be conserved than simply freezing a read of a moment in the Western Tradition and calling it the “Great Tradition”.

There are, by way of conclusion, a few questions worth the raising as I end this review.

First, and this might be too much of an academic and too detailed question of sorts, but given the fact Locke is often quoted in a positive way in the book and Hooker mentioned as somewhat dated, how reliable is Locke’s varied quotes from Hooker in his *Second Treatise of Government*? Hooker is not necessarily dated, when read from a certain perspective (I teach Hooker in my upper level political theory courses), but Locke and Hooker (as Grant noted in the initial quote in this review) are tracking a different trail. It would have been valuable if some more substantive analysis by Scruton had been done on the points of convergence but also divergence between Hooker and Locke (and the difference it makes in theology, philosophy, liturgy, ecclesial and public-political life).

Second, there was not much of a serious or sustained discussion of global warming, environmental, ecological issues in *Conservatism*, and the ecology-economy dialogue was lacking. I know Scruton has written on the topic (*Green Philosophy*) but I’d be interested to know how a conservative like Scruton might agree or part paths (and why) with an obvious conservative like Prince Charles, who has, obviously, made green politics an essential part of his classical (Tory?) ethos, way of life and vision. How might *Green Philosophy* and *Harmony* (Prince Charles) walk the same path and where diverge on the trail?—certainly a must

ponder issue of meaningful conservatives as we ever trek into the future.

Third, I would have been most interested, given the fact that religion and Christianity is so central to the Western and Great Tradition to have heard something from Scruton about the Radical Orthodox that was launched by John Milbank in the early 1990s and remains a way of reclaiming and recovering the Great Tradition. Milbank and the Radical Orthodox track and trace the Great Tradition in a much more historic and profound way and manner than Scruton, and it would have been valuable to read Scruton's read on a view of Christianity and Anglicanism that is more catholic and antedates the 16th and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries version of what is being conserved. The Radical Orthodox dig much deeper and more historic in their theological, philosophical, ecclesial and liturgical probes than Scruton, but when such approaches shift to political theory and praxis, there seem to be many affinities—the publication of Phillip Blond's *Red Tory: How Left and Right Have Broken Britain and We Can Fix It* (2010) does have overlap with Scruton. The railings of Blond against both multinational corporations and the managerial and social welfare state seem to have definite convergences with Scruton, although their understanding of the Great Tradition would part paths in some important ways. But, a discussion of Scruton in dialogue with the Radical Orthodox and Blond would be of much worth and note. I might add that Blond's language of Red Tory does pilfer from the historic Canadian context, and this leads to my next point of interest.

Fourth, I mentioned above a couple of times Robert Nisbet's *Conservatism: Dream and Reality*, first published in 1986. Nisbet's primer on the topic is broken down into four sections: 1) Sources of Conservatism, 2) Dogmatics of Conservatism, 3) Consequences of Conservatism and 4) Prospects of Conservatism. It is significant that Nisbet, like Scruton, mostly covers French, English, American and German conservatism. I, as a Canadian, wonder where Canada fits into such a discussion. Canada seems to be quite invisible and yet Canadian conservatism is hardly an echo of either English or American conservatism. The fact that Canada never severed the historic umbilical cord with England and France in the same way the Americans did means Canadians conserve an ethos and tradition older than the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries form of conservatism. It is this older, perhaps, Toryism that makes Canada distinctively different from the conservatism of the United States. It should be noted that two of the most prominent Canadian public intellectuals of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were both Anglican High Tories: Stephen Leacock and George Grant. Leacock dominated the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Grant the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both men dipped their buckets in a way of understanding the commonweal and the commons and the role of the state in protecting such national interests that separates them, in many ways, from a weaker view of the state that has been argued in Scruton's *Conservatism*.

It will be 100 years in 2019 (1919-2019) since Leacock published his judiciously thought through *The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice*. Leacock had done his PHD at University of Chicago on "The Doctrine of Laissez-Faire" and the thesis was completed in 1903. Leacock was very much a distinctive High Tory, and in the thesis, he reflected on the

insights of Smith, the more extreme versions and caricatures of Smith and the Countercurrent to Smith (William Thompson, John Gray and the Humanitarian School of Carlyle, Cobbett, Coleridge and Oastlen). Leacock had a certain affinity for a more centrist read of Smith that needed to be balanced by the countercurrent clan. Leacock taught at McGill University from 1903-1936 in the Department of Political Economy, but with the publishing of *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912) and *Arcadian Adventures of the Idle Rich* (1914) he became one of the leading literary lights in Canada, England and the broader commonwealth. *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* both upholds the beauty of small town Mariposa (small platoon) but also gently mocked and satirized its parochial tendencies. *Arcadian Adventures of the Idle Rich* was Leacock at his Swiftian-Dickensian best—wealth, corporations and the captains of industry spread havoc with small town, rural existence, large cities centres of class disparity and wealth, the measure of worth hinging on who had what. This was Leacock at his Canadian Tory best—*The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice* reflected on both the good and problematic nature of both the market and command economy. Leacock argued state and society needed to work together with the goods they can contribute to the common good of the people—this was no right or left ideological diatribe—this was Canadian Toryism at its balanced and via media best. WWII brought the state more and more into the public domain, funding more forthcoming than in the strain of the depression years. One of Leacock's final books, *While There Is Time: The Case Against Social Catastrophe* (1943) took the position that just as the state had minimally intervened and contributed in the depression years, more so in the war years, the state had a role and responsibility to contribute to a variety of social

programs in the post WW II years---this did not mean Leacock fawned at the shrine of socialism or communism---he was quite critical of both ideologies. But, he was also not an uncritical fan of the market economy versus the state---much too reactionary a position for him. I mention Leacock for the simple reason that Canadian Toryism has been somewhat more nuanced than much Anglo-American conservatism, and such a position is often missing in books by those like Scruton and Nisbet.

I will also briefly mention George Grant. Grant stood very much in the unique Tory tradition that Leacock lived, moved and had his being from. Grant, more than most Canadians, was one of the most prominent guests on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in the decades following WWII. Grant's first book, *Philosophy in the Mass Age* was published in the late 1950s, and in this most readable of a book, he explained how the modern project was brought into being by the merging of the Calvinist puritan approach to theology and economics, the transfer of such an ideology to the founding of the USA and the secularization of such a liberal project. The USA, therefore, for Grant, became the embodiment of the modern liberal project in which will-liberty-power came to dominate the day—his was no romantic attachment to the emerging American empire. The publication of Grant's *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism* (1965) is, probably, one of the best read Canadian political manifestos from a Canadian Tory perspective that begins with Pearson (Liberal) defeating Diefenbaker (Conservative) in the 1963 Federal election, Pearson's genuflecting to Kennedy and Grant's horror at the sight of Canada bowing to and being compliant with American goals and aims. When Grant died in 1988 (it's 30 years since he died this year and 100

years since he was born), he was recognized as one of the most prominent Canadian public intellectuals of a Tory bent, his commitment to the role of the state and society walking arm and arm as an ever a modest proposal. I might add that for Grant, Simone Weil (who Scruton mentions) was his inspirational Diotima.

I have brought this review to an end with a few reflections on Canada for two rather simple and obvious reasons: first, when conservatism is discussed, as mentioned above, England, France, Germany and the Americans (Canada is also in North America) are predictably highlighted and Canada is ignored. Why, I often ask myself, is this the case? Second, historic Canadian Toryism does not fit neatly into the procrustean bed of English, French, German and the forms and types of conservatism found in the United States. Canada can come, therefore, as a way and means of broadening the tent of the rather typical understanding of conservatism. I have mentioned Leacock and Grant as portals into such a fuller and more comprehensive approach to the Great Tradition.

In conclusion, Roger Scruton's *Conservatism: An Invitation to the Great Tradition* should be most welcomed as a fit and fine fox-like ramble across the terrain of a certain type of conservatism. The ideas, names, places and overview make for a fine primer for those keen to know more. I'm not convinced, though, that the Great Tradition that conservatives seek to conserve can be reduced to the emergence of 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> generation liberalism of the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> centuries (and the working out of such a DNA and genetic code) into the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. It is quite possible to raise serious questions about politically correct progressive liberalism, jihadist Islam and socialism-communism from other places than the form of conservatism that Scruton and clan call home. It is not very liberal of a liberal not to critique liberalism, but

most liberals (whether of the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> seasons and phases) seem to lack the ability to do so. I think, in some ways, the gold mine of the Canadian High Tory way has yet much to offer and a meaningful dialogue on the issue has not really yet begun. Scruton's reflections on Oakeshott are a needful way to end this review of book worth many a read:

Oakeshott advocated a politics of 'intimations' —intuitive understandings of how things are and how they might be changed, which arise from such an active engagement in the political order and openness to conversations with others. The aims of political associations, Oakeshott insisted, are not imposed but discovered, and this means that politics is an art of listening and enquiring, rather than barking out orders or reading from a sheet of a priori rules.

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