

exist, then they have the same inherent properties and hence the same worth, rights, duties and so on. The worth of persons is inherent to them, not conferred by God—or by society or by “self-esteem” either. (Maybe just as well, given the young people of today are giving away literal belief in God.)

Having said that, God, if he exists, could still have some relevance. The saying of the book of Genesis that “humankind is made in the image of God” is one of the most dramatic claims ever made for the high worth of persons. Jesus says, “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.” Those are unusual claims in ancient texts. I imagine God thinking that humans were being so slow working out the worth of persons, simple as it is, that he’ll have to reveal it.

Two thousand years later, it still needs saying. In today’s *Australian*, Senator Jacinta Price writes, “Every Australian is entitled to equal dignity and respect, regardless of our background and upbringing, and regardless of how many generations our forebears have been here.” She is right that people in remote communities don’t have the same protections against extreme violence as we do.

There could be some problem about whether you can have an objective worth of persons in an atheist materialist universe. I may write a book about that, but it isn’t this book.

Other questions—What about cats? What about rainforests? Do they have any degree of worth? If people have worth, do they have equal worth? ... Good questions, but time does not permit ... You’ll have to read the book.

BEN CROCKER

A Book for Australia

Conservatism: A Rediscovery

by Yoram Hazony

Swift Press, 2022, 480 pages, \$49.99

Princeton-raised, Israel-residing political philosopher Yoram Hazony is the figurehead of the nascent Euro-American National Conservatism movement. Increasingly, his ideas are entering mainstream political debate. The 2022 National Conservatism conference in Miami opened with a speech from the now highly favoured Republican

presidential hopeful, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. Coalescing around him are a growing number of thinkers, young and old, intent on rejuvenating a movement which they acknowledge has largely failed to conserve that which it holds most dear.

I have attended two of Hazony’s conferences in the United States, and found them invigorating—earnest and open forums of debate, attracting public intellectuals and private citizens alike, all sincerely interested in building a better future for the nation.

Much of Hazony’s thinking has found its way into his latest book, *Conservatism: A Rediscovery*. Though I am sure he did not expressly intend it, I believe Hazony has written a book about Australia.

The book is about Anglo-American conservatism—that is, the instantiation, perpetuation, collapse and prospective *renewal* of an authentic conservatism in the British and American bodies politic. This does not mean Hazony excludes the rest of the world from his project. However, the scope of his inquiry is necessarily focused on the reception of conservative thought in the two world-powerful English-speaking nations. In Hazony’s telling, their historic narrative unfolds from the pre-Burkeans, through the American Federalists, and onwards to contemporary resonance in the political conservatism of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.

Hazony, more than any other contemporary writer, has understood that in telling this story, there is an urgent concomitant task to be undertaken. That task is the disentanglement of Anglo-American conservatism from Enlightenment liberalism.

That is why I say that Hazony has written a book about Australia. Because it is Australia, more than any other polity in the English-speaking world, that has confused, and still does earnestly confuse, the central tenets of these two related but philosophically distinct schools of political thought.

It would be a disturbing read for any sitting conservative in the Australian parliament. Indeed, delving into Hazony’s 400 pages would require not just a confrontation with the last ten years of Liberal-National governance, but also with the quietly missed opportunities of the Howard years, and with the very foundation of modern Australian conservatism in the formation of the Liberal Party under Robert Menzies.

Hazony argues that, amongst other forces, the trauma of the two world wars drove Anglo-American conservatives to a *rapprochement* with Enlightenment liberalism. This optimistic marriage set off a chain reaction leading to the rapid

delegitimation of God, the nation-state, and the inherited wisdom of custom and historic experience. As Hazony lays out in meticulous detail, this marriage has spawned a problem-child ideological contamination in the West, albeit one that conferred some temporary benefits upon a traumatised world. To be sure, delegitimation efforts against religion, custom and historic experience have been taking place on an industrial scale since pre-Revolutionary France. Hazony however shows how, in the twentieth century, purportedly conservative movements in fact *accelerated* that delegitimation.

In the American experience, the marriage between liberalism and conservatism is perhaps best represented in the Cold War “fusionism” of William F. Buckley, Frank Meyer and *National Review*. Hazony acknowledges the effectiveness of fusionism in combating Soviet communism in both spirit and practice. He has little criticism for Buckley himself, or his project at *National Review*. However, in his chapter “Liberal Hegemony and Cold War Conservatism”, Hazony brings us to a compelling observation on the fusionist project:

Having been “fused” into a politically liberal movement, conservatives found that they were incapable of mounting an effective challenge to—or even an effective dissent against—the hegemony of liberalism that was established in America and other democratic countries in the mid-1960s.

Cold War conservatism, Hazony posits, became a service vehicle for the dominance of liberal thought.

In digesting Hazony’s work, elder Australian conservatives might consider that they themselves did not fight the Cold War. Not, at least, in a way as meaningful as the Anglo-American mother culture did. This means that although the Menzian amalgamation of liberals and conservatives under a “broad church” may have been electorally necessary, it is a more difficult task for Australian conservatives to look back and trace the far-reaching consequences of that unification. In turn, it has been more difficult for Australian conservatives to understand where a useful alliance with liberalism ended, and a disastrous assimilation began.

Hazony succeeds brilliantly at sounding the alarm on where this assimilation of conservative energies into liberal aims has led. He succeeds

also at illustrating how a subsequently debilitated Western culture lies as unguarded prey for the destructive impulses of cultural Marxism.

For all Hazony’s capacity to paint the darkness of the times we live in, *Conservatism: A Rediscovery* is an invigorating, joyful read. It is the type of book in which one finds strong evidentiary support for the better inclinations of long-held moral, social and political instincts. Invigorating, too, is the veneration in which he clearly holds the American Federalists—the men who more than any others proved the modern, post-Enlightenment viability of historically inherited conservative ideals.

Hazony’s most powerful insights, I believe, concern the manner in which one should live a “conservative life”, particularly as it pertains to living in a *traditional* versus a *nuclear* family. For Australians, long used to being a geographically and ancestrally “isolated” nation, the absence of genuine traditional family practice

is an assumed way of life—albeit one we seldom realise we perpetuate. Readers of Hazony’s book will recognise that much of what he highlights as a paucity of family experience is what most Australians consider to be a happy and healthy “norm”. The consequences of incomplete family hierarchical structures, as Hazony sympathetically illustrates, have been disastrous for the conservation of traditional values, and particularly harmful to women. There is a direct line, in Hazony’s reading, from the West’s abandonment of a *traditional* family structure, to women’s broad-scale adoption of Marxist-feminist critiques of family life.

There are critics who contest Hazony’s framing of both the American founding and of liberalism more generally. One I hear most often is that he downplays the role of Enlightenment liberalism as a generative force in the philosophical construction of the new world. I am willing to give Hazony more leeway here. In a world so unmoored from tradition that leaders will publicly countenance the tearing down of monuments to Churchill, Rhodes, Washington and Jefferson (and Cook and Phillip), I feel Hazony is simply giving fair due to a rich seam of intellectual, social and spiritual tradition that has for generations been shoved violently aside in favour of the revolutionary historical reading-*de-jour*.

Ultimately, Hazony’s philosophical gravitation not to the larger world of electoral politics,

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but rather, to the more foundational polity of the home and family, is greatly refreshing to find in a book titled *Conservatism*. For Hazony has understood that the reams of paper spent on espousing conservative solutions to national and international problems are all for nought if the essential truth of *what it means to be conservative* is lost. Theorising on “spontaneous order” or making speeches about “little platoons” often leaves prominent conservative thinkers seeing things “in a vague and confused way, like children whose thoughts have not yet attained the clarity that comes of experience”. That is why, perhaps, his book ends with a strident challenge not to politicians, taste-makers, philosophers or captains of industry, but to the individual: to the polity, perhaps, of man in his own soul.

Hazony’s reading itself is not revolutionary, but his analytical cunning in reaching beyond the boundaries of modern conservatism’s now all-but-abandoned Maginot Line certainly is. Australian conservatives would do well to read him, lest they lose the capacity to re-fortify their lines for battles ahead.

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GARY FURNELL

How to be Free and Affluent

The Fortunate: Ten Great Writers Highlight How We Created Free and Affluent Societies

by Peter Francis Fenwick

Connor Court, 2022, 190 pages, \$29.95

I must confess to a degree of ignorance about economic theories and the subject’s peculiar parlance. I’m not a total *naïf* in everyday economics—managing my own superannuation scheme and very small business—but at the macro, theoretical level I have a lot to learn. I need a teacher able to explain matters in a way that conveys the somewhat arcane concepts in an understandable, engaging way.

The Fortunate, Peter Fenwick’s latest book, is an excellent match for people like me. I read it with satisfaction, savouring the writing, absorbing the knowledge and thankful for the introduction to ten shrewd writers.

The chosen ten great writers are drawn from

different Western nations over the past three centuries. Two writers lived in the nineteenth century, but most thought and wrote during the twentieth. Some are still living and working, including the Australian scholar Peter Murphy, whose essays appear in *Quadrant*.

This is from Fenwick’s introduction:

What follows is a collection of essays by some of my favourite writers. Here, you will find Frederic Bastiat wittily demolishing protectionism; Leonard E. Read describing the miracle of the price mechanism; F.A. Hayek analysing sound economic decision-making; Ludwig von Mises explaining how life changes when “the customer becomes king”; Martin Luther King Jr dreaming of a United States in which its founding principles will apply equally regardless of race; Jonathan Haidt, Meg Wheatley and Peter Murphy warning us about disturbing trends in our society; Matt Ridley reviewing 100 years of Communism; and Deirdre McCloskey explaining how the Great Enrichment came about due to a change in rhetoric about liberty and human dignity.

We are the fortunate. We have inherited an extraordinarily rich and free civilisation that grew wealthy because a few crucial factors came together in the last two hundred years. In particular: basic liberties like private property and free enterprise; rule of law and mutual trust among society members; meaningful elections and governments that were relatively small and sufficiently unobtrusive so people could conduct business with ease and confidence. These factors unleashed the energy and creativity of legions of entrepreneurs who generated wealth for themselves and for many people connected—even remotely—with their enterprises. It wasn’t a trickle-down type of wealth sharing; it was more like flood irrigation, with bounty spreading in an indiscriminate, unexpected but enlivening way.

Millions of ordinary people worked—consciously or unconsciously—in accord with the principles that allow wealth to accumulate and flow. They passed the wealth on to us along with the other benefits that came with it: longer life, better health, travel, varied possessions, leisure time and so on. All the things we tend to take for granted.

We are further fortunate because we don’t have to build ports, whole industries, rail and road networks or airports. We don’t need to establish sewerage, water or power systems. Nor do we need to develop virgin land or construct cities with all their amazing facilities. We need to renovate and