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# THE VARIETIES OF BURKE IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT

Steven D. Ealy

The first of many references to Edmund Burke in Robert Nisbet's *Prejudices: A Philosophical Dictionary* occurs in his very first entry, "abortion." Here Nisbet offers a brief history both of abortion practices and of philosophical and theological perspectives from the Hebrews and ancient Greeks to "the contemporary preoccupation with abortion."<sup>1</sup> Eventually, Nisbet arrives at *Roe v. Wade* and its aftermath. After surveying the ongoing battles between "militant abortionists" and "aggressive antiabortionists," Nisbet concludes, "Rarely has sheer zeal overtaken a moral question in the measure that is found on both sides of the abortion question. What is badly needed at this juncture is a liberal infusion of expediency in Edmund Burke's noble sense of that word" (*PPD*, 7).<sup>2</sup>

While abortion was not an issue that dominated debate in the House of Com-

mons of his time, Burke's public career was marked by controversies as divisive as abortion is now. Nisbet's invocation of Burke suggests that what we might learn from him has more to do with the eighteenth-century statesman's general understanding of the aims and limits of political power than it does with specific policy proposals or outcomes. Nisbet's adjective "noble" further suggests that Burke's expediency is more than simply politics as usual and points toward prudence as the primary political virtue.<sup>3</sup>

The heart of Burkean expediency, which Nisbet contrasts with "coercive law," is its "respectful recognition of the powerful and necessary role in human existence of privacy, use and wont, tradition, and practicality, not to forget larger and long-range consequences. Burke argued that 'very plausible schemes, with very pleasing commencements, have

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often shameful and lamentable conclusions.' He added, 'Is, then, no improvement to be brought into society? Undoubtedly; but not by compulsion—but by encouragement, by countenance, favor, privileges, which are powerful and lawful instruments. The coercive authority of the state is limited to what is necessary for its citizens'" (*PPD*, 8).

This view of Burke is contestable, of course, and there are some commentators on Burke who may seek substantive policy guidance from him. It should be useful, therefore, to illustrate the range of different interpretations of Burke that are found among American conservatives after World War II, when the contemporary conservative movement was starting to take form. This presentation will not be comprehensive, but I hope to highlight the gist of six influential approaches to Burke.

Russell Kirk wrote so extensively on Burke that there is no way to summarize him adequately here, so I will limit my remarks to *The Conservative Mind*.<sup>4</sup> I have two preliminary comments. First, whether or not Kirk provides the most accurate or authoritative account of Burke, I think he clearly is the heir to Burke's rhetorical throne among postwar American conservatives. Second, I think a more accurate title for *The Conservative Mind* would be "The Burkean Mind," for as Kirk himself readily acknowledged, that volume was "confined to British and American thinkers who have stood by tradition and old establishments... [and] is an analysis of thinkers in the line of Burke" (*CM*, 5). Kirk, convinced that Burke's is the "true school of conservative principle," excluded from consideration many who might identify themselves as conservative. The question of whether the influence of *The Conservative Mind* has unduly narrowed or misdirected efforts to understand the origins

and nature of American conservatism is certainly worth exploring but is beyond the scope of this essay except as it is raised by other authors I discuss.

For Kirk, there is no division between a young liberal Burke and an older conservative Burke, for there is "a steady continuous development" in Burke's ideas from the earliest to the latest of these crises. What did Burke seek to conserve? He "stood resolutely for preservation of the British constitution, with its traditional division of powers,... as the system most friendly to liberty and order to be discerned in all Europe" (*CM*, 15). But Burke was not simply a parochial, defending merely national institutions for merely nationalistic reasons. "August church, good old prescription, cautious reform—," writes Kirk, "these are elements not merely English, but of general application. The intellectual system of Burke, then, is not simply protective of British political institutions" (*CM*, 18). Beyond the British constitution, Burke "stood for preservation of the still larger constitution of civilization" (*CM*, 17).

Kirk enumerates the "chief articles" of this universal constitution: "reverence for the divine origin of social disposition; reliance upon tradition and prejudice for public and private guidance; conviction that men are equal in the sight of God, but equal only so; devotion to personal freedom and private property; opposition to doctrinaire alteration" (*CM*, 15).

Here I must emphasize an aspect of Burke that Kirk clearly recognizes: "No one better apprehended the arguments for reform. But reform, said Burke, needs a delicate touch" (*CM*, 17). Kirk's account of Burkean reform led him to conclude that Burke "was always a liberal, never a democrat." It is important to note that Kirk writes of both small-l "liberals," who may be simultaneously reformers and conservers, and capital-L "Liberals,"

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committed to a decidedly un-Burkean political ideology of radical innovation.

Kirk provides a taste of Burkean liberalism when he turns to the "liberal conservatives" Macaulay, James Fenimore Cooper, and Tocqueville. Kirk writes, "We are in danger of forgetting how strongly attached the old liberals were to *liberty*. Political liberalism . . . was conservatism of a sort: it intended to conserve liberty" (CM, 161). I take the lessons these three learned from Burke to be the heart of Burke's liberalism: "a tenderness for private property and a suspicion of any political power not grounded upon a propertied interest. He reminded them that a 'people' is not simply an aggregation of persons told by the head. Burke's hostility toward Government was nearly so marked as his veneration for the State, and the liberals inherited his ideal of a government which governs so little as it prudently can, which rarely invokes its reserved powers" (CM, 162).

The foregoing raises two questions. First, what is the relationship between liberalism and Liberalism? Is the latter, to use a Voegelinian term, a deformation of the former, the hardening of a living reality into an ideology? Second, is a similar distinction between "conservative" and "Conservative" necessary? Is it possible, to go no farther than our current text, that Kirk's "canons of conservative thought" (CM, 7-8) have for some ossified into "Cannons of Conservatism," heavy artillery designed to blow one's opponents away in an ideological war?<sup>5</sup>

Kirk situates the foundation of Burke's thought in Christianity: "Revelation, reason, and an assurance beyond the senses tell us that the Author of our being exists, and that He is omniscient; and man and the state are creations of God's beneficence. This Christian orthodoxy is the kernel of Burke's philosophy" (CM, 26).

Here are, in bullet-point fashion, a few of

the implications that Kirk draws from his discussion of Burke's orthodox foundation:

"Every state is the creation of Providence, whether or not its religion is Christianity" (CM, 29).

"Burke states that a universal equality among men exists; but it is the equality of Christianity, moral equality, or, more precisely, equality in the ultimate judgment of God" (CM, 31).

"Burke believed that the church must be interwoven with the fabric of the nation" (CM, 31).

"Burke praises two great virtues, the key to private contentment and public peace: they are prudence and humility, the first pre-eminently an attainment of classical philosophy, the second pre-eminently a triumph of Christian discipline" (CM, 32).

"Tradition and prescription are the guiding lights of the civil social man; and therefore Burke elevates to the dignity of social principles those conventions and customs which, before the eighteenth century, most men accepted with an unreflecting confidence" (CM, 32-33).

Kirk sums up Burke's natural right/natural law teaching as follows: "The true natural rights of men, then, are equal justice, security of labor and property, the amenities of civilized institutions, and the benefits of orderly society. For these purposes God ordained the state, and history demonstrates that they are the rights desired by the *true* natural man" (CM, 49).

While Kirk was perhaps the most influential conservative promoter of Burke in the postwar years, he was not the first. Francis Graham Wilson featured discussions of Burke in a number of articles

published during the war<sup>6</sup> and in *The Case for Conservatism*, published in 1951.

According to Wilson, "Burke was trying to say...that while we must live with history, while we cannot escape its impact upon us, we can also live there with enthusiasm and with loyalty to the historical community of which we are a part."<sup>7</sup> Wilson maintained that "Burke's system was a defense of the national tradition, and of the nation-state as the context of the good life" (CC, 8). That is to say, Wilson understands Burke's universal argument for tradition and the nation-state to have particularistic and diverse implications for how different people should live their lives. "The lesson that Burke...taught," writes Wilson, "was that while there was a pattern in history, each nation had to learn its own lesson from its own national tradition" (CC, 13).

Wilson explicitly contrasts Burkean and American conservatism: "While Burke appealed both to the established principles of the British Constitution and to the principles of sound government, our leaders could appeal only to the principles of society on which they believed a just system might exist" (CC, 57). In Wilson's opinion, *The Federalist* "ranks with the writings of Burke in the creation of the modern conservative spirit in politics" (CC, 56).

Wilson's sense of American conservatism is best captured in this passage: "Conservative spirit in America is...never simply a defense of things as they are, for at the height it seeks to blend the fading past and the emerging future into an imaginative present. What it can never do is to relieve men of their responsibility in the vast context of experience" (CC, 51).

While Francis Graham Wilson sees Burke and *The Federalist* as coequal foundations of American conservatism,

one of his students, Willmoore Kendall, was not as forbearing in his comments and pushes Wilson's insight into *The Federalist* further than Wilson did. In the posthumously published "The Benevolent Sage of Mecosta," Kendall takes direct aim at Kirk's claim that Burke is the father of American conservatism:

If we were to assume...that conservatism = adherence to the old and tried = opposition to change...then we must look askance at the contention that *both* Burke and the Founders of the American Republic were conservatives. For, even if we grant...that the American Revolution was *on one side* a "conservative reaction" against innovation by that wicked fellow George III,...the feat of fitting the Founding Fathers into the category "opponents of change" or "adherents to the old and tried" is one that, quite simply, no one, not even someone with Russell Kirk's gifted pen, is going to bring off, because it cannot be done. "Change," and not "slow" change either, was the watchword on these shores from the moment of the Mayflower Compact, which in and of itself was a breathtaking political innovation—as, in due course, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were also to be innovations. I know that all that was done in accordance with the traditional rights of Englishmen,... but after you have milked all that dry you are still up against the fact that principled, general opposition to change (political, social, economic, what have you) was *not* characteristic of our Founding Fathers, was never in American conditions, and is not today a possible political posture, save perhaps as we confine our purview to the ancient moral traditions of man-

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kind, and then only if you can work "all men are created equal" into your picture of those ancient moral traditions. Put otherwise: take Burke as your Bible for this purpose, take as your premise that what Burke taught is conservatism, and you will indeed find yourself with passages on your hands that point you to adherence to the old and tried as the essence of conservatism. But take the *Federalist* as your Bible, and you will find few such passages, and very guarded ones when you do find them.<sup>8</sup>

Leo Strauss's account of Edmund Burke is a valiant effort gone awry. Burke attempted a "last minute" "return to the premodern conception of natural right."<sup>9</sup> At one level, perhaps, Burke was successful in this venture, for his "conservatism" is in full agreement with classical thought" (*NRH*, 318). At a deeper level, however, Burke's career is marked by a tragic paradox (my term, not Strauss's), for while Burke's conservatism is in agreement with classical thought, Burke's "interpretation of his 'conservatism' prepared an approach to human affairs which is even more foreign to classical thought than was the very 'radicalism' of the theorists of the French Revolution" (*NRH*, 318-19).

"In opposing [the radical French] intrusion of the spirit of speculation or of theory into the field of practice or of politics" (*NRH*, 303), Burke seems to return to Aristotle's practical political science. However, "Burke is not content with defending practical wisdom against the encroachments of theoretical science. He parts company with the Aristotelian tradition by disparaging theory and especially metaphysics" (*NRH*, 311). While initially it appeared as if Burke joined Aristotle in affirming the distinction between theoretical science and practical

science, in Strauss's account it becomes clear "that Burke's distinction between theory and practice is radically different from Aristotle's, since it is not based on a clear conviction of the ultimate superiority of theory or of the theoretical life" (*NRH*, 312).

Strauss finds a "connection between [Burke's] strictures on metaphysics and the skeptical tendencies of his contemporaries Hume and Rousseau" (*NRH*, 312), and concludes that Burke's philosophy encourages "a certain emancipation of sentiment and instinct from reason, or a certain depreciation of reason." For Strauss, "it is this novel attitude toward reason which accounts for the nonclassical overtones in Burke's remarks on the difference between theory and practice." In Strauss's words, "Burke's opposition to modern 'rationalism' shifts almost insensibly into an opposition to 'rationalism' as such" (*NRH*, 313).

This "novel element in Burke's critique of reason" (Strauss uses the term "novel" twice in a key paragraph on this issue in a way that clearly suggests he means the "modern element" in Burke, not that Burke himself is the originator of the view) is seen most clearly ("reveals itself least ambiguously") "in its most important practical consequence": Burke's rejection of the classical view that constitutions can be made by wise founders or legislators and his parallel assertion that constitutions are grown. After a comparison of classical and Burkean views of constitution making, Strauss offers this summary conclusion: classical political philosophy was "the quest for civil society as it ought to be," the best regime without qualification, but "Burke's political theory is, or tends to become, identical with a theory of the British constitution" (*NRH*, 319).

By favoring "historical jurisprudence" over "metaphysical jurisprudence," however, "Burke paves the way for 'the historical

school' (NRH, 316). And this is the tipping point that converts the conservative Burke into the most radical opponent of classical philosophy. Rather than judging the wisdom of the British constitution solely by its adherence to transcendent standards, Burke affirms that "our constitution is a prescriptive constitution; it is a constitution whose sole authority is that it has existed time out of mind." Burke wanted to establish political principles on historical foundations, but the search for standards grounded in the particulars of history ignores the possibility "that particular or historical standards can become authoritative only on the basis of a universal principle which imposes an obligation" to accept them. For Strauss, therefore, the historical school inevitably slides into historicism (NRH, 12), which for Strauss is a particularly virulent form of relativism.

Richard Weaver's primary treatment of Burke is found in *The Ethics of Rhetoric* and offers an analysis of Burke's style of argument. "The true conservative," writes Weaver, "is one who sees the universe as a paradigm of essences, of which the phenomenology of the world is in continuing approximation."<sup>10</sup> William F. Buckley Jr. declared this to be the best one-sentence definition of *conservative* he knew. Following this line of argument, Weaver maintains that "those who prefer the argument from definition... are conservatives in the legitimate sense of the word" (ER, 112).

While Weaver recognizes that "Burke is widely respected as a conservative who was intelligent enough to provide solid philosophical foundations for his conservatism," he concludes that Burke had "a strong addiction to the argument from circumstance," and he further maintains "that [this] is the argument fatal to conservatism" (ER, 58). This is crucial for Weaver, for he believes

"that a man's method of argument is a truer index of his beliefs than his explicit profession of principles."

Weaver documents Burke's "addiction to the argument from circumstance" in three representative controversies in Burke's political career—the Catholic question, the American Revolution, and the French Revolution. Weaver's final judgment is that Burke's primary reliance on the argument from circumstance undermines his explicit invocation of natural law, leads to shortsightedness, a mindless opposition to incumbency, and the (unintentional) courting of failure. While Burke "left many wonderful materials which [political conservatives] should assimilate," these were always "auxiliary rhetorical appeals" (ER, 83). Weaver concludes that "Burke was magnificent at embellishment, but of clear rational principle he had a mortal distrust," and therefore "Burke should not be taken as prophet" by conservatives (ER, 83).

Edmund Burke enters *The Constitution of Liberty* as a member of the English team in Friedrich Hayek's comparison of the English and French traditions of liberty.<sup>11</sup> The English approach to liberty is captured in Adam Ferguson's observation that "nations stumble upon establishments which are indeed the result of human action but not the execution of human design" (CL, 57).

For Hayek, "The greatest difference between the two views... is in their respective ideas about the role of traditions and the value of all the other products of unconscious growth proceeding throughout the ages" (CL, 61). Rationalists "who believe that all useful institutions are deliberate contrivances and who cannot conceive of anything serving a human purpose that has not been consciously designed are almost of necessity enemies of freedom." What the English team

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For those open to accidental and evolutionary developments, however, "the value of freedom consists mainly in the opportunity it provides for the growth of the undesigned, and the beneficial functioning of a free society rests largely on the existence of such freely grown institutions." After noting the importance of "a genuine reverence for grown institutions, for customs and habits," Hayek concludes, "Paradoxical as it may appear, it is probably true that a successful free society will always in a large measure be a tradition-bound society" (CL, 61).

Burke also plays a role in Hayek's postscript to *The Constitution of Liberty*, "Why I Am Not a Conservative." Hayek begins by noting the contemporary confusion in the meaning of "liberal," "liberalism," and "conservative," "made worse by the recent attempt to transplant to America the European type of conservatism, which, being alien to the American Tradition, has acquired a somewhat odd character" (CL, 397). His "decisive objection" to conservatism "is that by its very nature it cannot offer an alternative to the direction in which we are moving" (CL, 398). Conservatives may serve as a "brake on the vehicle of progress" but cannot move society toward a new objective. The true conservatives of Europe, Hayek argues, "did show an understanding of the meaning of spontaneously grown institutions such as language, law, morals, and conventions. . . . But the admiration of the conservatives for free growth generally applies only to the past" (CL, 400).<sup>12</sup>

Hayek, however, does not include Burke among the true conservatives. Rather, he accepts Lord Acton's account "of Burke, Macaulay, and Gladstone as the three greatest liberals" (CL, 407). In part, Hayek's lecture is a search for "the appropriate name for the

party of liberty" (CL, 398). Nearing the end of the lecture, Hayek almost sighs, "What I should want is a word which describes the party of life, the party that favors free growth and spontaneous evolution" (CL, 408). Earlier he had written, "Edmund Burke remained an Old Whig to the end and would have shuddered at the thought of being regarded as a Tory" (CL, 401). As Hayek concludes his search, he states, "The more I learn about the evolution of ideas, the more I have become aware that I am simply an unrepentant Old Whig—with the stress on the 'old'" (CL, 409).

Thus far the structure of my remarks replicates the format of one of my favorite childhood television shows, *To Tell the Truth*, in which three challengers each claimed to be the same person, someone who had a unique experience or career, and a panel attempted to identify the real Mr. X by asking a series of questions. Let's quickly review our team of challengers: Russell Kirk's Burke is primarily a defender of "good old prescription" and the intellectual founder of conservatism on both sides of the Atlantic. Francis Graham Wilson recognizes both Burke and *The Federalist* as foundational for "the modern conservative spirit" and emphasizes Burke's pluralism in acknowledging a variety of national traditions. Willmoore Kendall rejects Burke, defender of Crown and Church, as foundational for an authentic American conservatism. For both Leo Strauss and Richard Weaver, Burke's mode of argument undercuts the explicit principles he articulates. Friedrich Hayek embraces Burke as a fellow Old Whig, a member of "the party of life, the party that favors free growth and spontaneous evolution."

If this were an episode of *To Tell the Truth*, it would conclude with the host saying, "Would the real Edmund Burke please



stand up.” I am not going to reveal which, if any, of these contenders I believe to represent the true Edmund Burke, and if I did, or if I offered a composite of a number of these writers, I would merely be adding one more voice to the already crowded field of contenders desiring to tell you who Edmund Burke is.<sup>13</sup> To borrow an expression from Robert Penn Warren, for our understanding of Burke to be of any real significance, it must represent “a vision earned.”<sup>14</sup> It is only through our individual grappling with the text that “the answer” can become our answer, or more properly, my answer and yours. My hope is that the different perspectives I’ve summarized will invite you to turn to, or return to, Burke himself.

Russell Kirk notes that, in most of the major political struggles that occupied Burke, he had little practical success in terms of achieving the policy goals he advocated. This could lead to a reflection on lost causes, and Kirk would no doubt remind us of T. S. Eliot’s comment, “There is no such thing as a Lost Cause because there is no such thing as a Gained Cause.”<sup>15</sup> Richard Weaver, who spent a good deal of time studying the antebellum South, might demur. In his autobiographical essay “Up from Liberalism,” Weaver writes,

I am now further convinced that there is something to be said in general for studying the history of a lost cause. Perhaps our education would be more humane in result if everyone were required to gain an intimate acquaintance with some coherent ideal that failed in the effort to maintain itself. It need not be a cause which was settled by war; there are causes in the social, political, and ecclesiastical worlds which would serve very well. But

it is good for everyone to ally himself at one time with the defeated and to look at the “progress” of history through the eyes of those who were left behind.<sup>16</sup>

One final thought: It may be that the really important things we have to learn from Burke have less to do with the principles he argued for than how he conducted himself. The lesson that I draw from Robert Nisbet’s comments on Burke is that the real value of Burke is as an exemplar, not as (to use Weaver’s term) a prophet. When I was teaching modern political thought, I quit assigning *The Federalist* and began to use Madison’s *Notes on the Constitutional Convention*, because I wanted my students to experience an example of political thinking in action. I wanted them to see the contingent nature—I could say “accidental nature”—of many of the decisions the delegates stumbled upon<sup>17</sup> during debate and that went into making our Constitution, a Constitution later defended by *The Federalist* as representing reflection and choice as opposed to accident and force.

Burke’s speeches—and we should remember that all of Burke’s political philosophy and principles are embedded in speeches or political writings, not in systematic and abstract philosophical works—provide us the same opportunity to observe a serious political actor struggle with difficult issues and who exercised, in Nisbet’s phrase, a noble expediency as he sought to articulate reasonable policies and promote responsible action. Such an approach to Burke, which perhaps appears to be superficial, may actually lead us to a level far more profound that we might imagine, for as Weaver writes, “The study and appreciation of a lost cause have some effect of turning history into philosophy.”<sup>18</sup> †

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- 1 Robert Nisbet, *Prejudices: A Philosophical Dictionary* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 3. Hereafter cited as PPD. For a more systematic discussion of Burke and conservatism, see Nisbet's *Conservatism: Dream and Reality* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001), esp. 19ff.
- 2 Concerning the opponents in this battle, while Nisbet finds the activities of the pro-abortion forces “repugnant,” he believes that “It does not present the danger to the social fabric and to individual liberty that is posed by the ranks of the aggressive antiabortionists. In denying the right of the woman or her family to terminate pregnancy, these soldiers of righteousness strike at the very heart of both family and individual rights” (PPD, 5).
- 3 See Josef Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 3–40.
- 4 Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Santayana* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953). Hereafter cited as *CM*.
- 5 One source worth considering in relation to this question is Edward Shils's discussion of the distinction between “tradition” and “traditionalism.” See “Tradition and Liberty: Antinomy and Interdependence,” in Edward Shils, *The Virtue of Civility*, ed. Steven Grosby, (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1997), 103–22, especially 114–19. Also worth reflecting on is Eric Voegelin's discussion of “second reality,” the ideological substitution of a truncated vision of reality for reality itself, that one accepts as a foundation for action. Voegelin argues in “The Equivalences of Experience and Symbolization in History” that reality is found in the psyche's encounter with the “out there” and can never be totally captured in concepts or definitions (see *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 12, *Published Essays, 1966–1985* [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990], 115–33). Rather, symbols can point to reality, which must then be experienced by each individual in their own search. Some students of Voegelin believe that “second reality” has to do with the content of one's view of the world, but I think any view can be hardened into “second reality” if one merely accepts the account of another rather than conducting one's own investigation. This view, of course, may present problems for any effort to elevate prescription into a foundational epistemological principle.
- 6 See Francis Graham Wilson, *Political Philosophy and Cultural Renewal*, eds., H. Lee Cheek Jr. et al. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001), 59, 72, 98–100, and 157.
- 7 Francis Graham Wilson, *The Case for Conservatism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1990 [1951]), 5. Hereafter cited as *CC*.
- 8 Willmoore Kendall, *Willmoore Kendall Contra Mundum*, ed., Nellie D. Kendall (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1972), 36–37.
- 9 Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 294. Hereafter cited as *NRH*.
- 10 Richard Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1965), 112. Hereafter cited as *ER*.
- 11 F. A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 55. Hereafter cited as *CL*. Hayek acknowledges Francis Lieber's “Anglican and Gallican Liberty” written a century earlier as the source of this idea. The English and French team members are determined by the structure of their thought and not their nationality. The English team includes Scots Ferguson, Smith, Hume, as well as Josiah Tucker, Burke, and William Paley, and Frenchmen Montesquieu, Benjamin Constant, and Alexis de Tocqueville. The French team included “the Encyclopedists and Rousseau, the Physiocrats and Condorcet,” as well as Hobbes, Godwin, Priestly, Price, Paine, and Jefferson.
- 12 See Strauss, *NRH*, 314–15, for an account of Burke's politics compatible with Hayek's understanding of spontaneous order.
- 13 Were I to undertake such an explication of Burke, I would begin with his reaction to Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1984). On September 10, 1759, Burke wrote to Smith praising this work for “its solidity and Truth” and for being “founded on the Nature of man” (see *Correspondence of Adam Smith* [Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987], 46–47). The same year Burke published a review of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* in the *Annual Register*, again praising it for being “founded on truth and nature” (see *On Moral Sentiments: Contemporary Responses to Adam Smith* [London: Thoemmes Press, 1997], 51–52). In particular, see Smith's comparison of the “man of public spirit” with “the man of system” in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 231–32.
- 14 See “The Use of the Past,” in Robert Penn Warren, *New and Selected Essays* (New York: Random House, 1989), 50–51.
- 15 Which Kirk quoted from time to time, including in a later edition of *The Conservative Mind*; see Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot*, 7th rev. ed. (Chicago: Regnery Books, 1986), 495. For the original, see T. S. Eliot, “Francis Herbert Bradley,” in *Selected Essays 1917–1932* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932), 363.
- 16 “Up from Liberalism,” in *In Defense of Tradition: Collected Shorter Writings of Richard M. Weaver*, ed., Ted J. Smith III (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2000), 38–39.
- 17 See Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, ed., Fania Oz-Salzberger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 119.
- 18 Weaver, “Up from Liberalism,” 39.