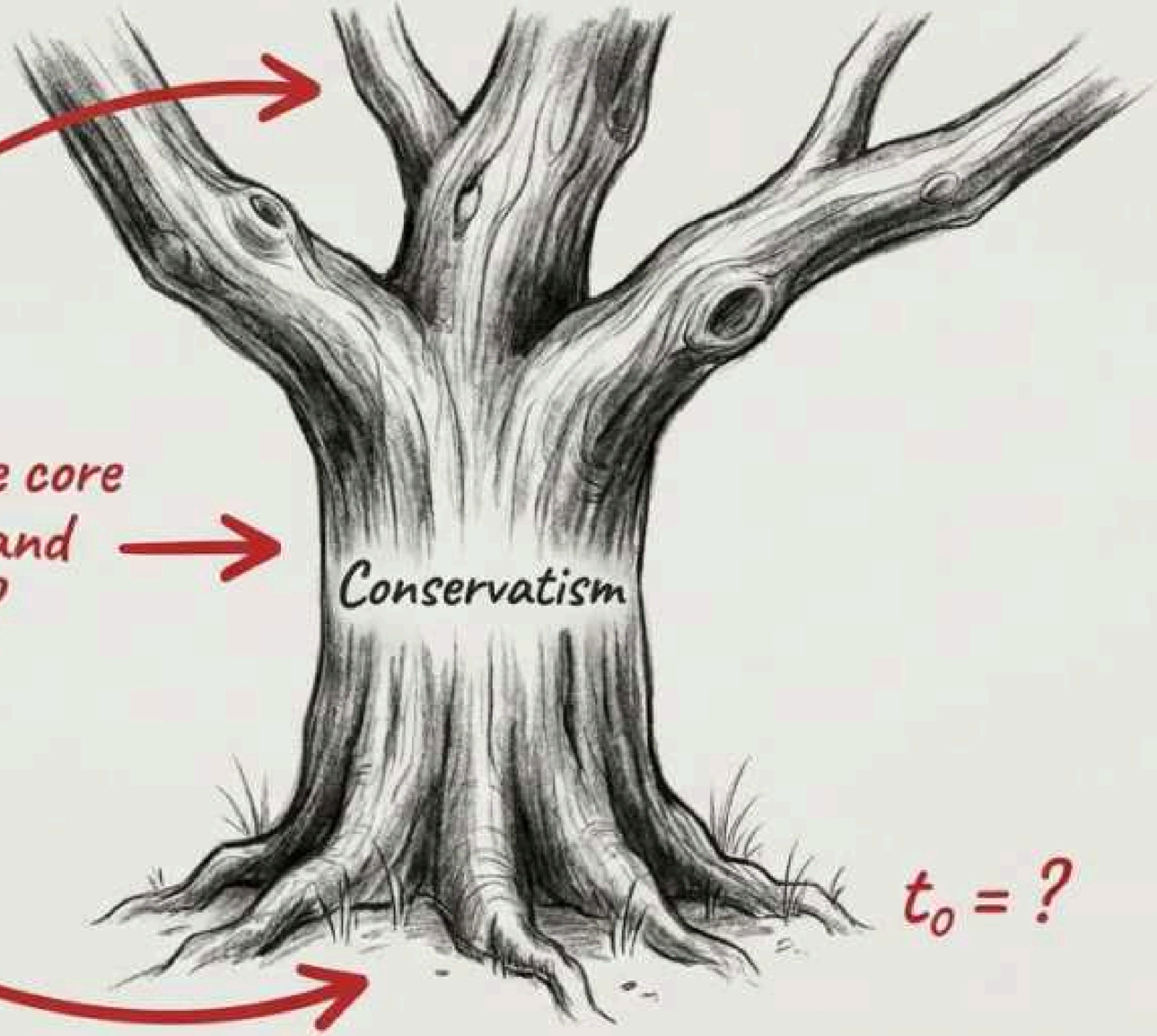
The Three Questions of Conservatism

¶ 2.1

Branches — How has the tradition split into modern factions?

Beliefs — What are the core views on human nature and the necessity of change?

Origins — Where did it come from?



$t_o = ?$

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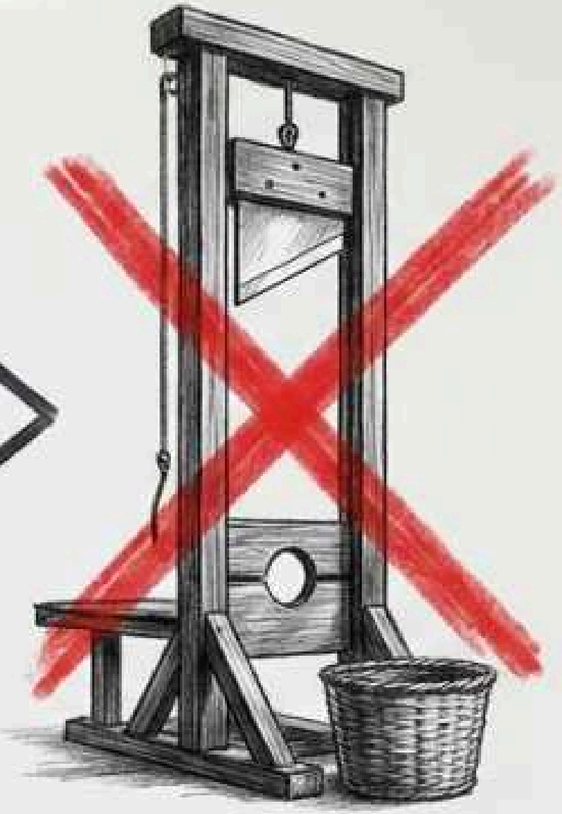
Origins: The Reaction to Revolution

¶2.2



1790 — Edmund Burke publishes *Reflections on the Revolution* in France.

$Abstract Rights → Tearing Down Institutions → Chaos + Tyranny

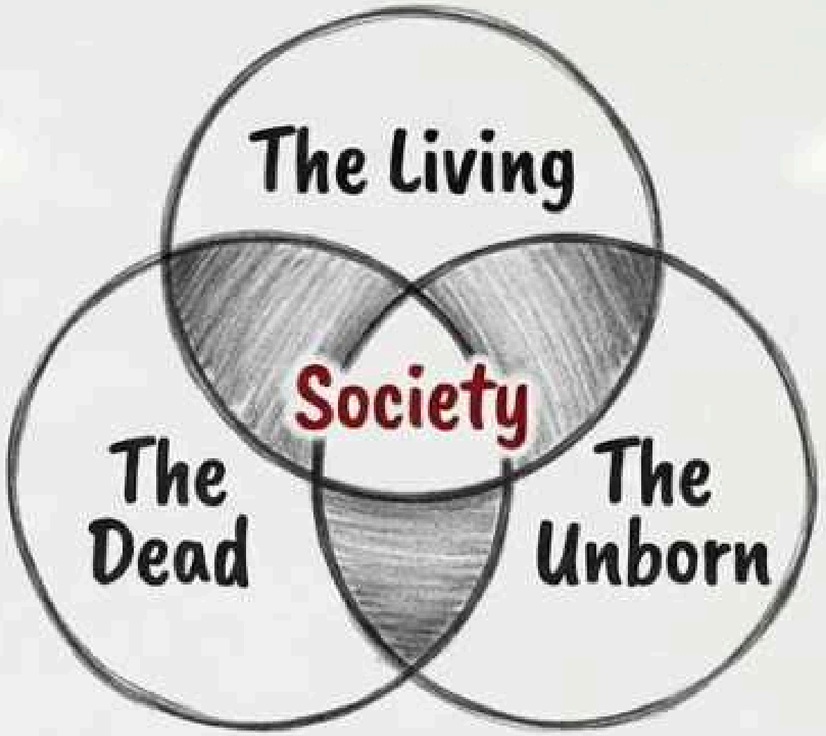


1793–1794 — The Reign of Terror confirms the warning.

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Society as a Transcendent Partnership

¶2.3



$$\$Society = \sum(The\ Dead + The\ Living + The\ Unborn) \qquad \int_0^t Experience\ dt = Institutions$$

Key Takeaway: Treat accumulated generational experience with deep humility before altering it.

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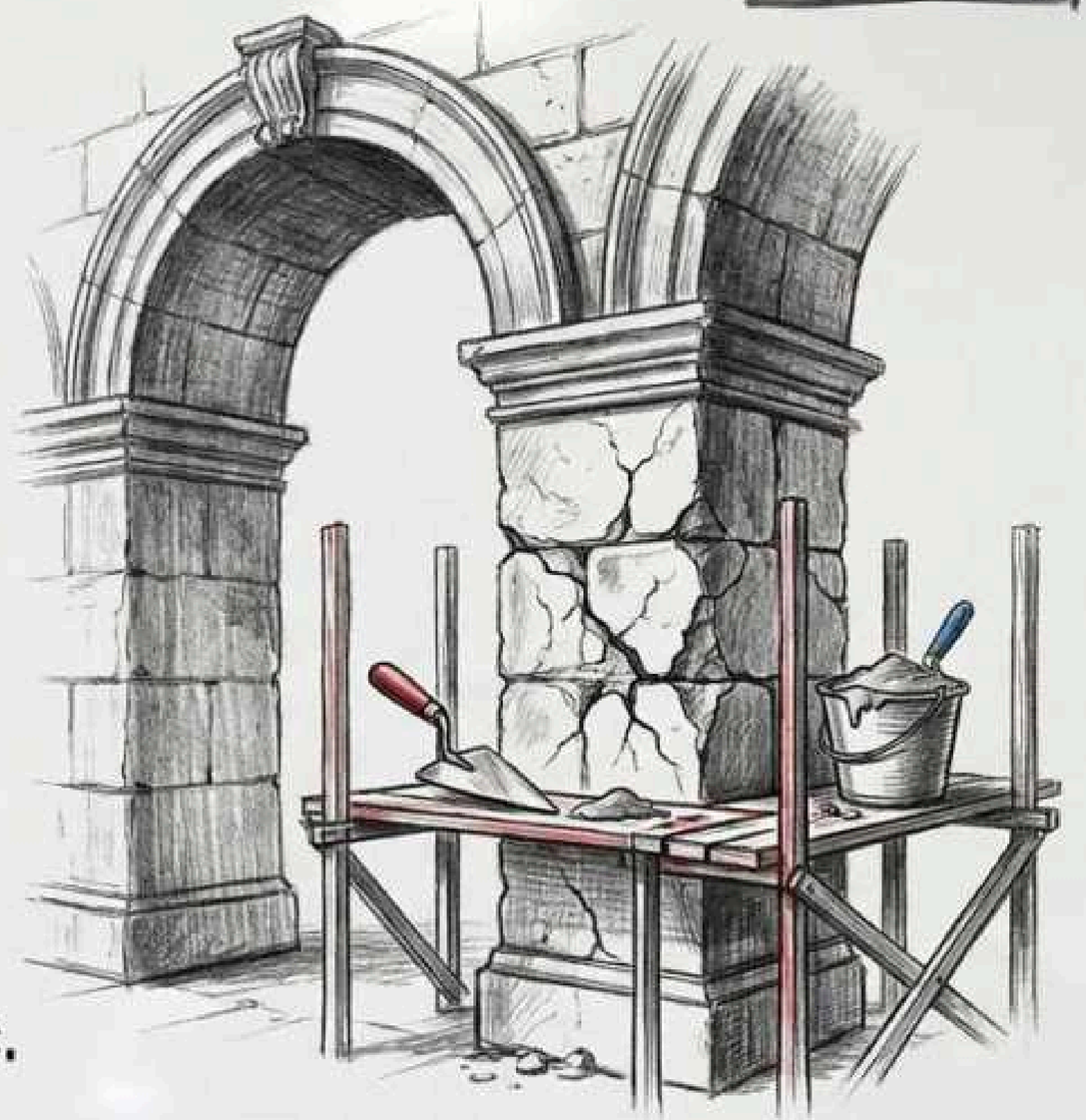
The Necessity of Change

¶2.4

"A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation."

— **Edmund Burke** *(sympathizer to the American colonists)*

- Burke's Parameters for Reform:
  - Must be gradual ($\frac{dC}{dt}/dt < \text{threshold}$).
  - Must repair what is explicitly broken.
  - Must respect the existing social fabric.



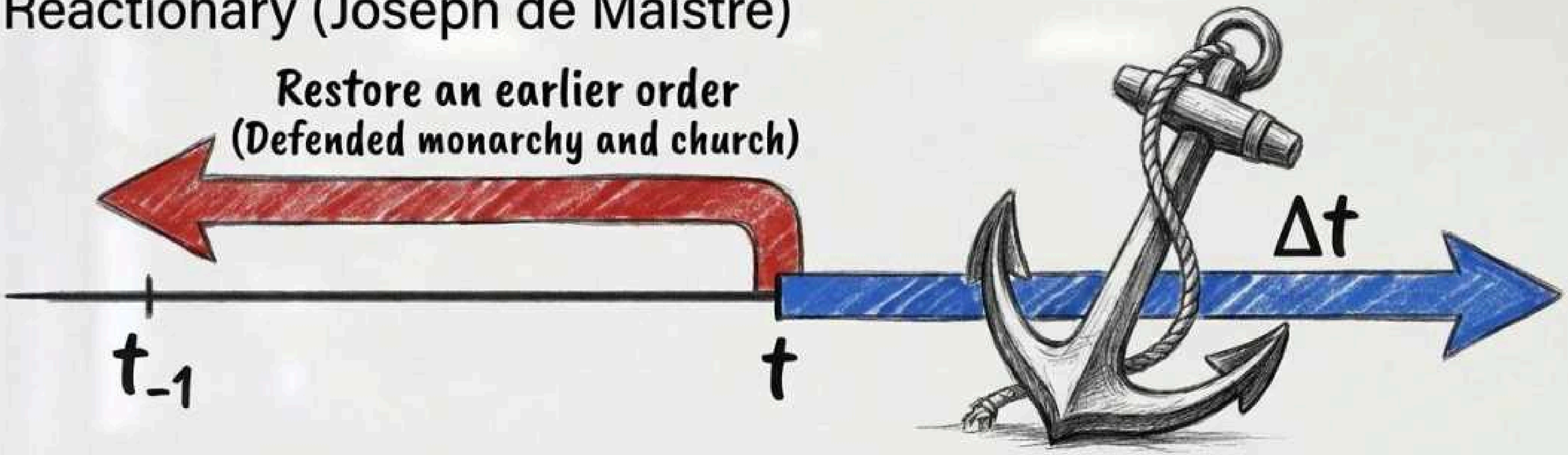
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Conservative vs. Reactionary

¶2.5

Reactionary (Joseph de Maistre)

Restore an earlier order
(Defended monarchy and church)



Preserve & Adapt what currently exists

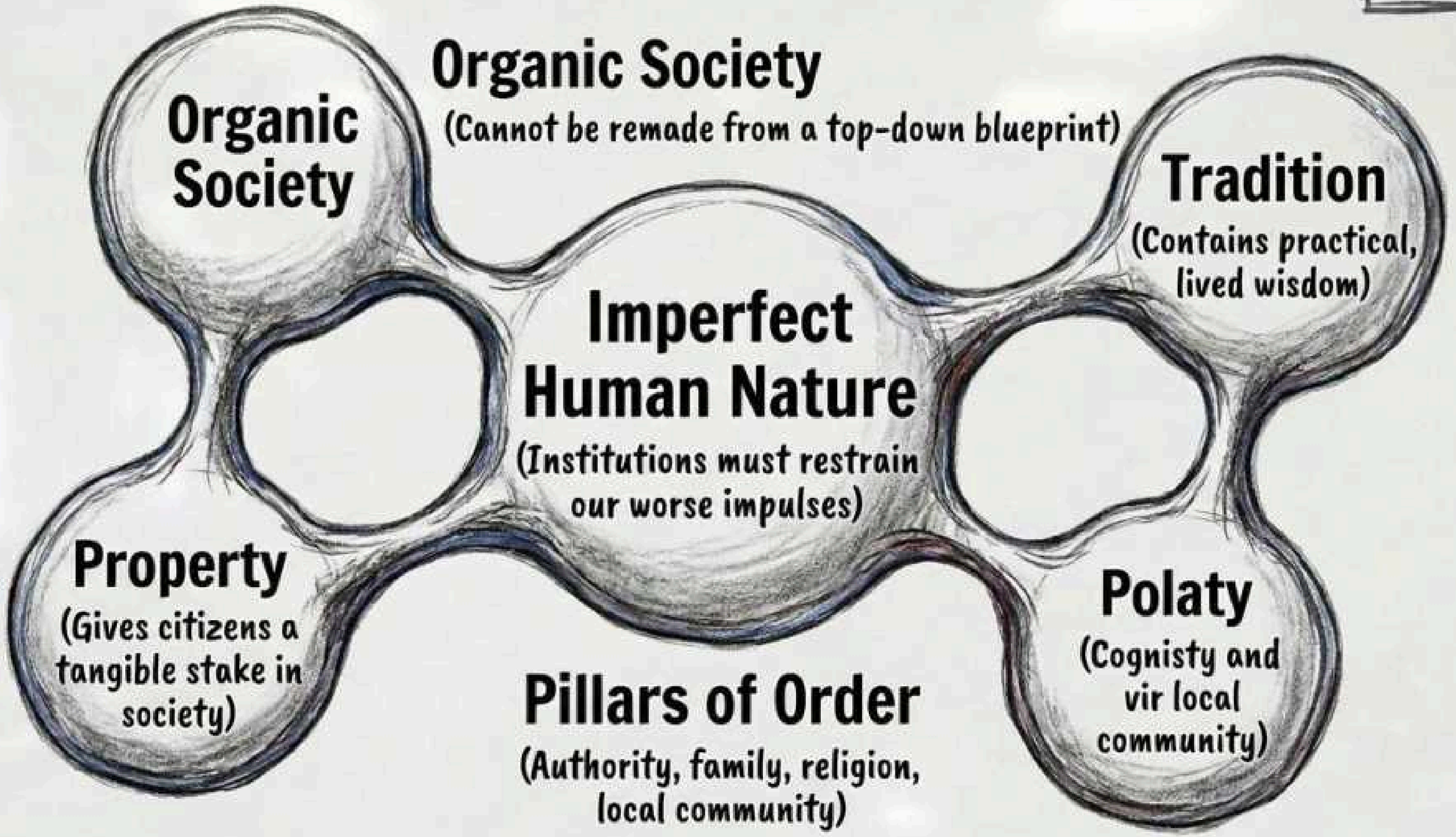
Conservative (Edmund Burke)

*Note: While distinct in theory, the two vectors frequently overlap in political practice.

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Core Convictions of Conservatism

¶2.6



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The Conservative Temperament

¶2.7

Source: Michael Oakeshott, Rationalism in Politics (1947)

Tips Away From:
The Unknown,
The Untried,
Abstract Plans,
Utopian Bliss



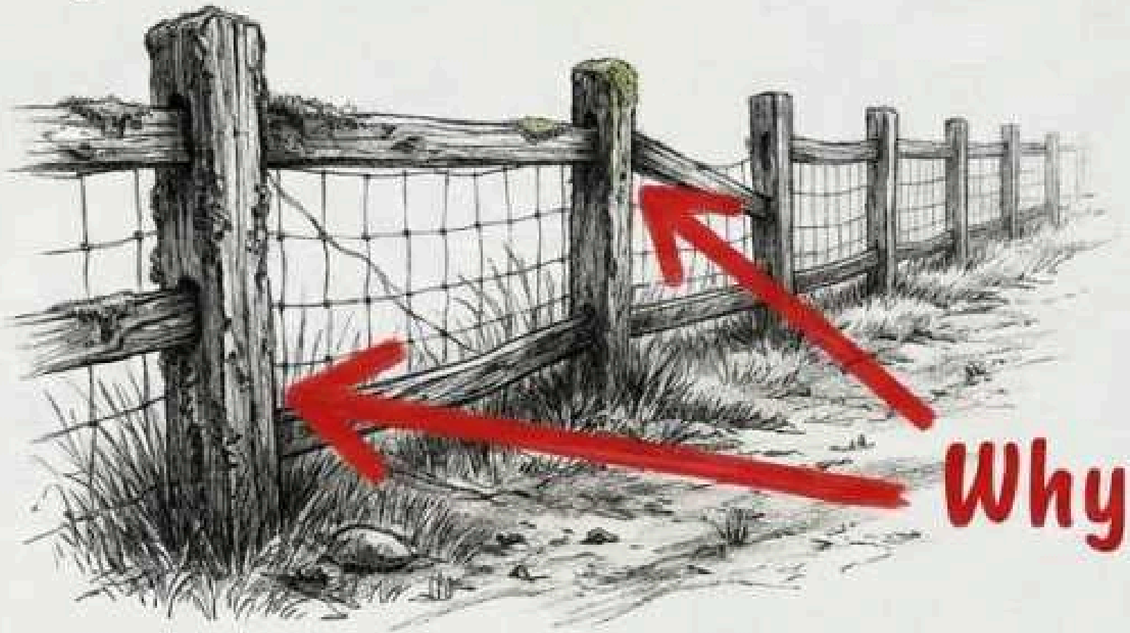
Tips Toward:
The Familiar,
The Tried,
Practice & Habit
Present Laughter

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Chesterton's Fence

¶2.8

"Do not tear down a fence until you understand why it was built." (G.K. Chesterton)



If $Understanding\ of\ Origin = 0$, then $Permitted\ Reform = False$.

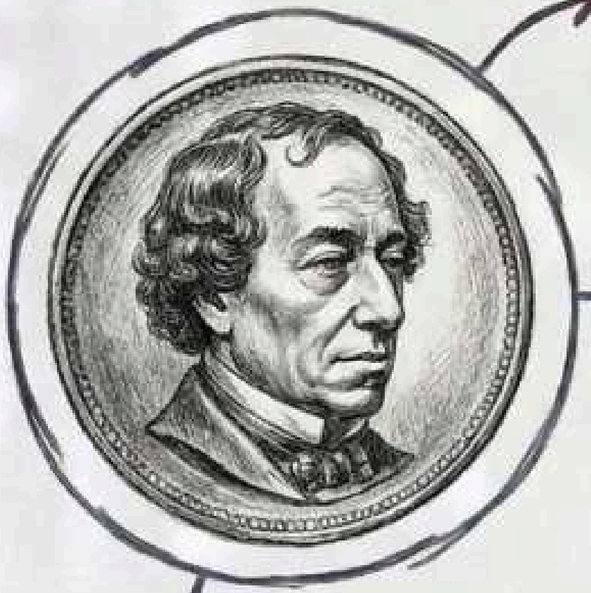
The Debate: Burden of Proof

Critics rightly note that some fences do deserve to come down.

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National Variations: Britain & Germany

¶2.9



Britain (Disraeli)

One-Nation Conservatism

The privileged have inherent duties to the poor.



Germany (Bismarck)

First National Social Insurance (1880s)

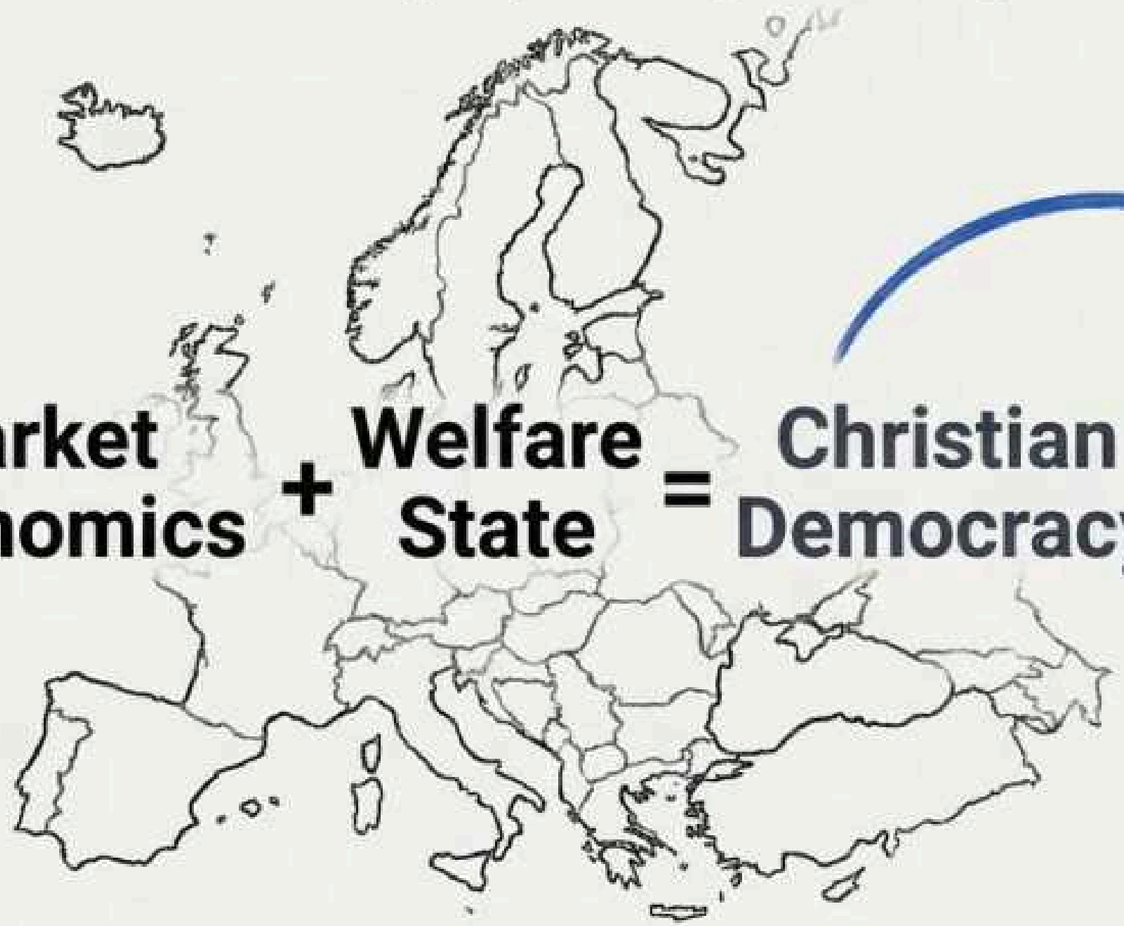
A pragmatic tool designed to keep workers loyal to the state rather than socialist movements.

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¶ 2.10

Christian Democracy in Europe

Context: Post-1945 Europe (primarily Germany and Italy).



$Religious Values + **Market Economics** + **Welfare State** = **Christian Democracy**



Outcome: A major driving force in building the European Union.

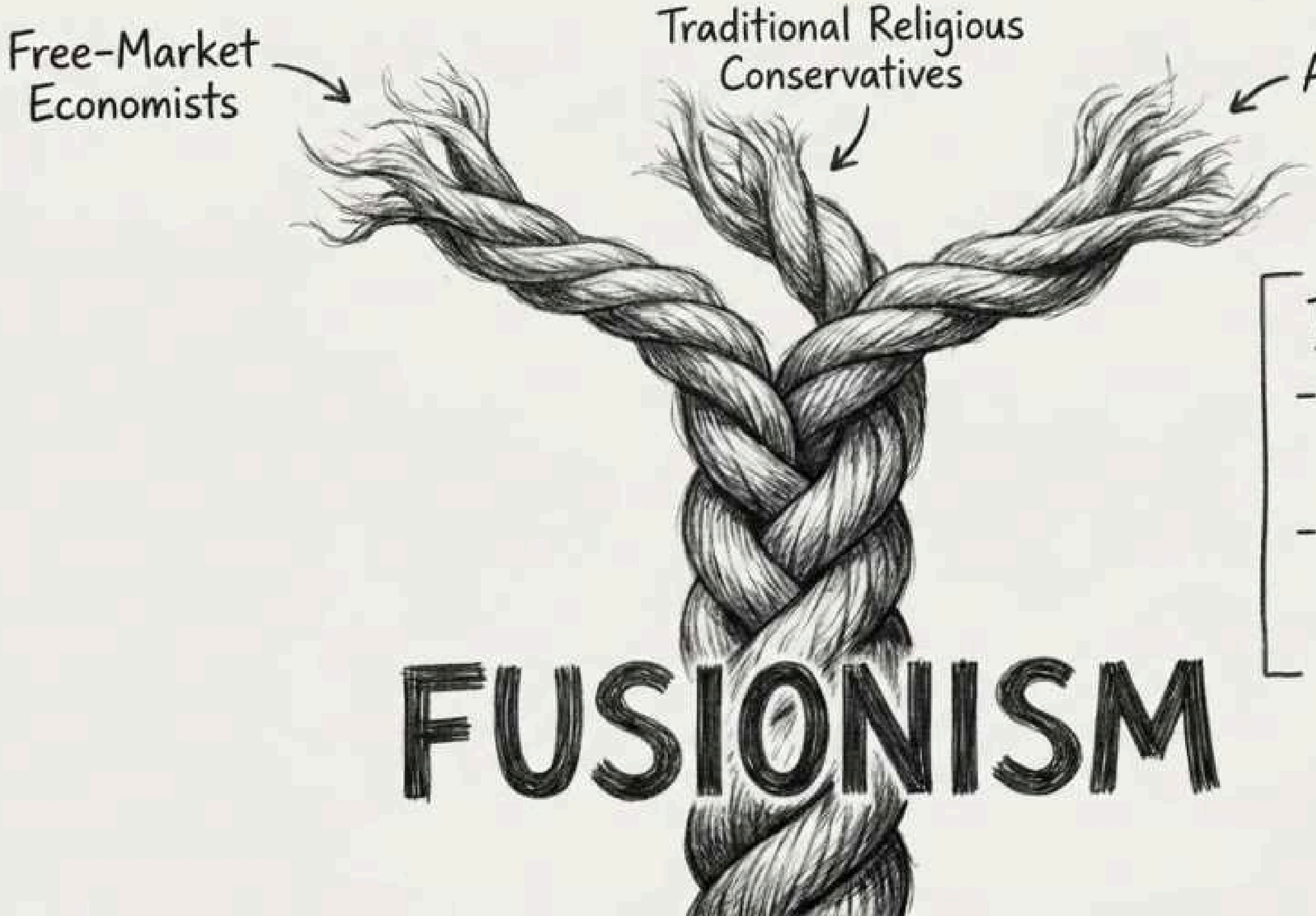
Core Insight: Conservatism varies wildly depending on the nation and the historical era.

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U.S. FUSIONISM

Frank Meyer's postwar coalition

¶ 2.11



The Catalysts:

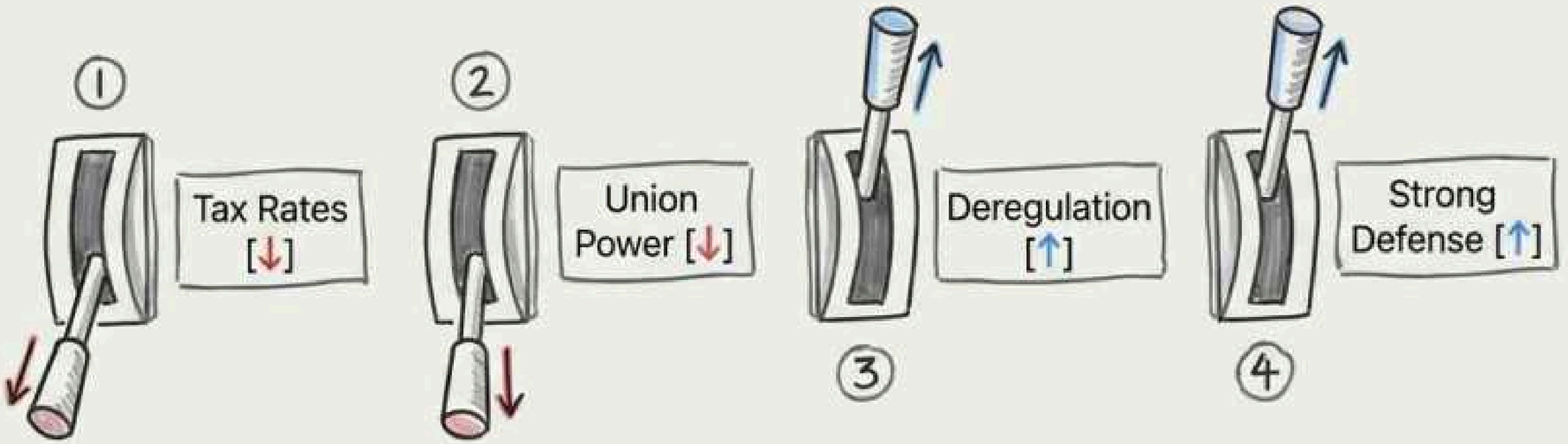
- William F. Buckley Jr. (National Review, 1955)
- Barry Goldwater's energizing 1964 presidential run.

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¶ 2.12

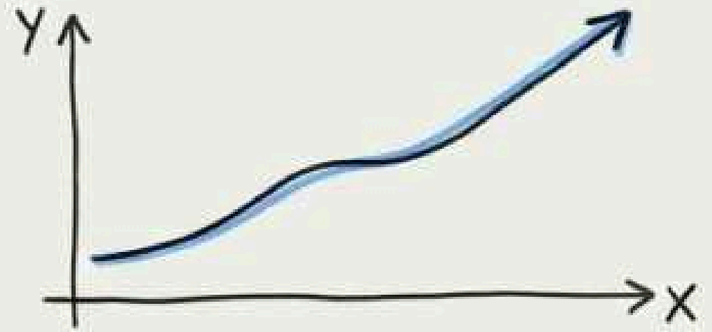
The Movement Reaches Power

Margaret Thatcher (UK: 1979–1990) & Ronald Reagan (US: 1981–1989)

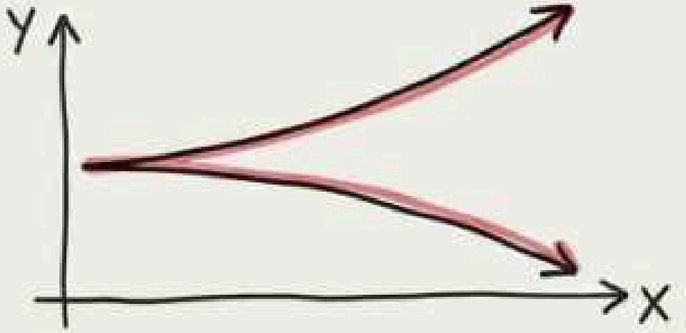


Competing Outcomes (The Debate)

Supporters: Revived economic growth.



Critics: Rising inequality & heavy industry decline.



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¶ 2.13

The Coalition's Internal Tension

Free Markets
Drives constant change; uproots customs and communities.

Traditionalists
Demands stability, tight bonds, and community cohesion.



The Synthesis View

Both forces reinforce each other by relying on voluntary cooperation and local knowledge.

The Friction View

Unchecked capitalism acts as a universal solvent, dissolving the very bonds traditionalists cherish.

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¶ 2.14

Neoconservatism

The Political Left

Origins: 1970s US
(Irving Kristol, former liberals/leftists)

The Three Pillars:

1. Robust, strong foreign policy.
2. Skepticism toward specific welfare programs.
3. Deep concern over cultural decline.



Apex of Influence:
The controversial debates surrounding the 2003 Iraq War.

The Political Right

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¶ 2.15

Social & Religious Conservatism



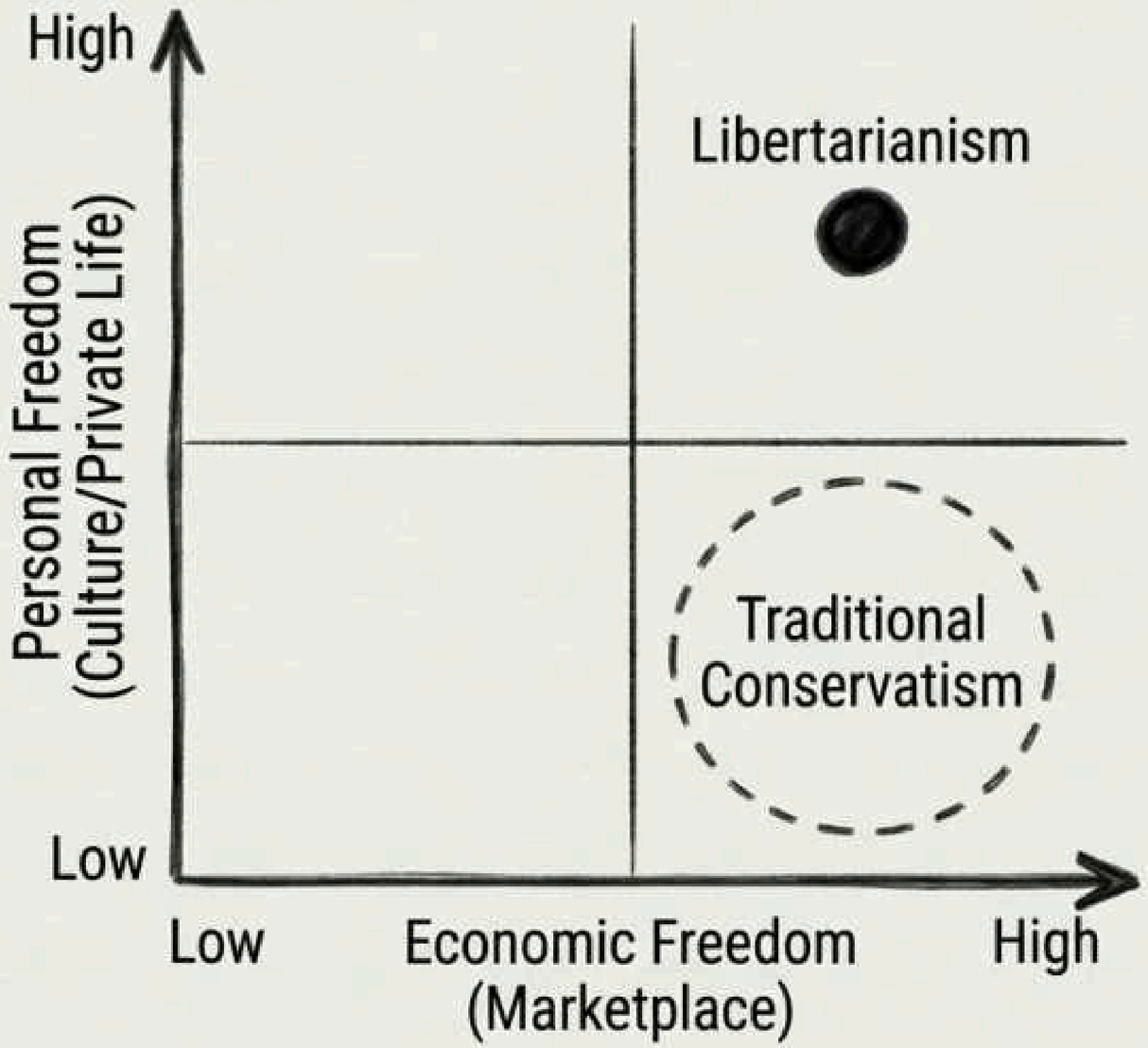
The Progressive Critique:
These foundational positions restrict individual choices, particularly marginalizing marginalizing women and sexual minorities.

The Core Argument:
Stable families and strong communities are the absolute prerequisites for freedom.

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¶ 2.16

Libertarianism



Alignment: Agrees with conservatism on Economics (small government). Differs sharply on Culture (demands small government in private life too).

Key Intellectuals: Ludwig vin von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, Ayn Rand.
Milestone: US Libertarian Party founded in 1971.

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¶ 2.17

Serious Charges, Serious Defenses

Progressive Critique



Appeals to tradition have historically served as a mask for privilege, actively defending slavery, segregation, and the subordination of women.

Conservative Response



Radical, utopian schemes have historically caused vastly greater harm. Furthermore, great moral reforms (e.g., abolition, civil rights) succeeded by drawing upon inherited moral traditions, not destroying them.

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¶ 2.18

Conservatives as Reformers

Abolition



William Wilberforce (Evangelical) appealed directly to Christian tradition to champion the end of slavery.

Voting Expansion



Disraeli's government dramatically extended the vote in Britain in 1867.

Welfare & Peace



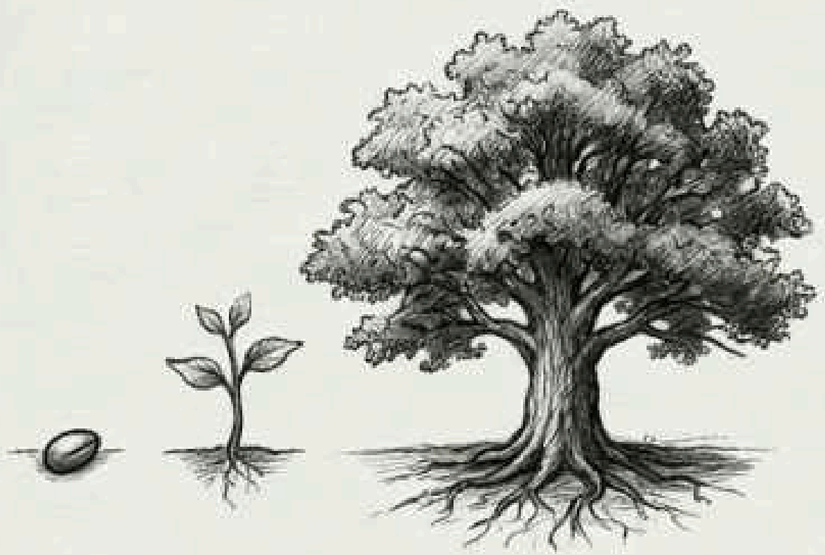
Various conservative governments have historically expanded the welfare state and ended wars.

Conclusion: A fair historical account cannot treat the tradition as a single, simple monolith.

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¶ 2.19

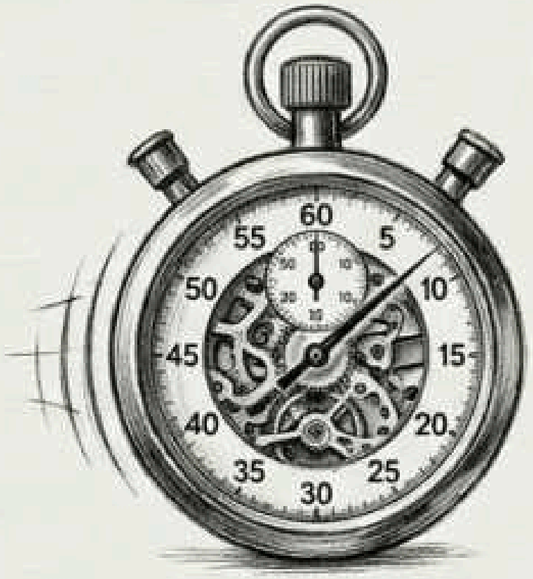
Modern Dilemmas & The Lasting Contribution



The slow accretion of social order.

$$\frac{\Delta(\text{Social Order})}{\Delta(\text{Time})}$$

→ Builds slowly, loses quickly.



The speed of modern destruction.

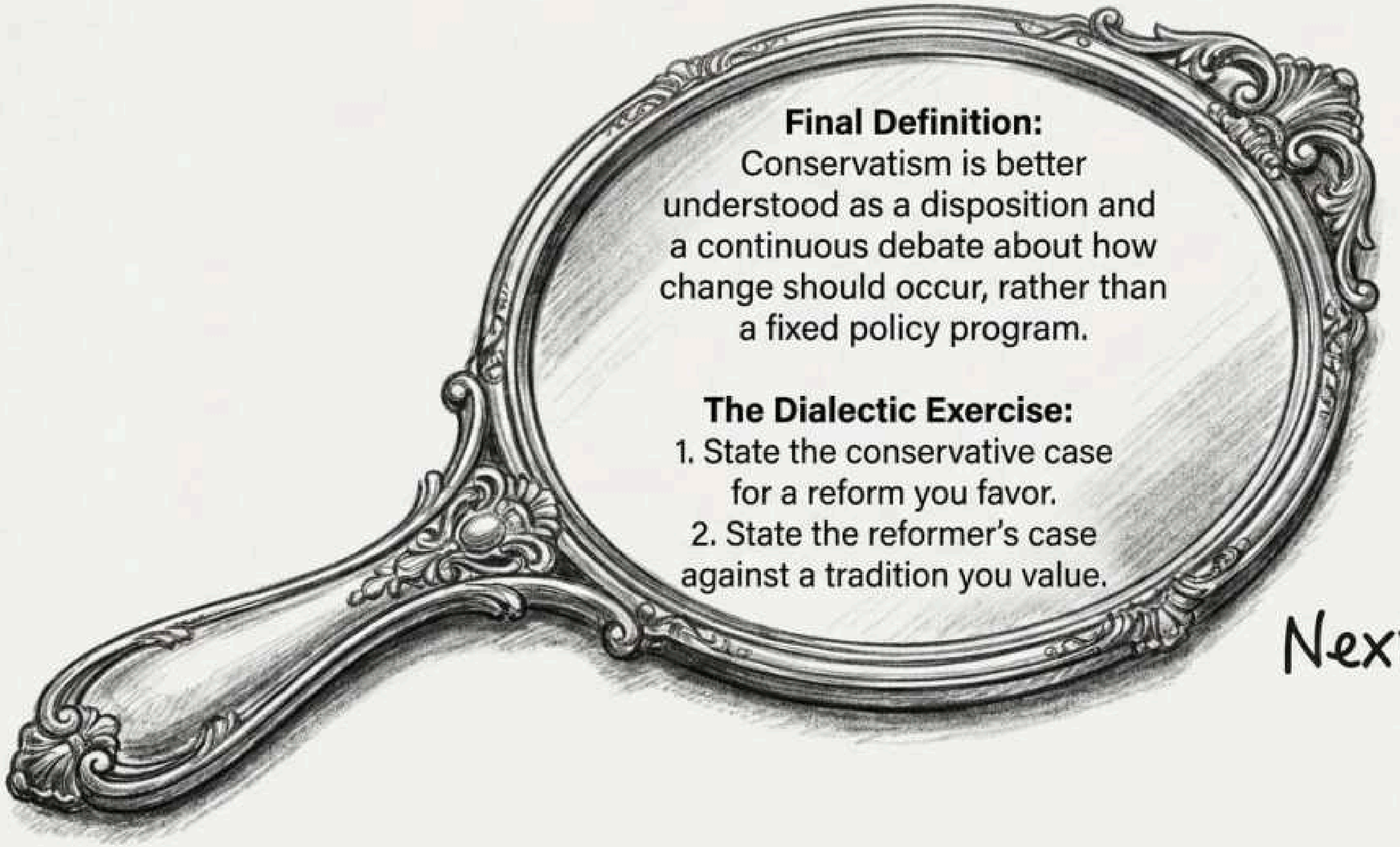
The Dilemma: What is there to conserve when societies change so quickly? (Institutions vs. National Identity vs. Economic Liberty).

The Pragmatic Middle Ground: Focus on safe neighborhoods, sound schools, and sustainable public finances.

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Takeaway & Transition

¶ 2.20



Final Definition:
Conservatism is better understood as a disposition and a continuous debate about how change should occur, rather than a fixed policy program.

The Dialectic Exercise:
1. State the conservative case for a reform you favor.
2. State the reformer's case against a tradition you value.

Next: The Left & Socialism



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