

Hume: Conserving a Liberal Vision of Society

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Here is an abstract: "Hume made conservatism safe for a liberal world. Humean conservatism does not defend the intellectual, spiritual, moral, and political heritage of the West, exemplified in the revelation of God in Jerusalem, the metaphysics and ethics of Athens, and the republicanism of Rome. Instead, it is narrowly focused on the present. It expresses an antipathy toward the past and a fear of rapid change. In this chapter, I examine the seemingly conservative aspects of Hume's thought: 1) the defense of Britain's mixed monarchy, 2) his late-in-life prioritization of authority over liberty, and 3) his analysis of custom and opinion in common life. Then, I examine his progressive narrative of civilizational development in the History of England, which, I argue, determines the nature of Humean conservatism, making it an inadequate resource for conserving the Great Tradition of the West."