homelessness that Arnold takes as a paradigmatic of our contemporary world, while also constituting a direct challenge to the territorializing imperatives of capital and the modern nation state. While to some extent this is an unfair observation, as Arnold's more encompassing conception of home as 'not merely a fixed address but a variety of relationships and locations that have at their core some type of stability and consistency and, ideally, support' (p. 62) does extend to travellers and nomadic groups, it is a theme that surprisingly is not explicitly tackled in the book. A final issue concerns Arnold's reworking of the notion of homelessness: while she persuasively draws attention to the ontological character of homelessness — the all-pervasive uncanniness and rootlessness of contemporary experience — she does not really explore the conditions for the subjective recognition of this dislocation and disorientation, and the varieties of subjective response to it. These political concerns, which arise directly from this challenging book, constitute important food for future thought.

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Conservatism: Burke, Nozick, Bush, Blair?
Ted Honderich
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This is an impressively crotchety book. Reading it is rather like being beaten over the head with Labour's 1983 election manifesto for a terribly long time by Victor Meldrew. Ted Honderich's (1989) original attack on conservatism has been extended and supplemented by discussion of Tony Blair and George Bush.

Honderich's nominal aim is to find a usable definition of conservative thought, and evaluate it. The result is, however, a diatribe. The admirable clarity of style encourages an unfortunate populism. He makes Michael Moore seem like H.L.A. Hart.

There are four major problems with *Conservatism*. First, the edition isn't revised so much as expanded with scattergun attacks on New Labour. Even Blair's chancellor Gordon Brown, the hope of many on the left, is dismissed as

a phoney, pro-business hack who lets the rich avoid tax (p. 156) and lazily subscribes to conservative theories of economic incentive (p. 62).

Apart from the anti-Blair/Bush sections, however, there is very little post-1989 stuff included. Much of it, such as the sentimentality over the miners or collective bargaining, seems like an echo from a long-lost world, a world where *apartheid* still flourishes in South Africa (p. 224) and in which a paper from 1985 can be called recent (Chapter 6, n. 18). And maybe David Miller (1999) or Geoffrey Cupit (1996) might want to deny that George Sher's is the only known book on desert (p. 294).

Second, Honderich is too far away from his target to see relevant distinctions. He discusses a range of figures on the right, heedless of whether they might properly be described as conservatives, neo-liberals, moral fundamentalists, fascists, pro-business, racists or moderate democrats, and assumes that there is an ideological unity underlying them.

There are arguments for such a unity put by, among others, W.H. Greenleaf (1983, 189–195), Enoch Powell (1990), Michael Freeden (1996, 348–383) and Robert Eccleshall (2003). But nowhere does Honderich allude to these, or rebut the charge of circularity. He shows that conservatives are not against change, for example (p. 8) by exhibiting the radical restructuring of society undertaken by Margaret Thatcher, but if the prior question — whether Mrs. Thatcher, and the new right more widely, were conservatives at all — has yet to be answered, the conclusion cannot be deduced from the premise. Quoting Joseph against Flew (p. 287) works only if it has been established that Joseph and Flew are on the same team.

And there are plenty of commentators who insist on some distinction here, including Hayek (1960, 397–411), John Gray (1995), E.H.H. Green (2002, 280–290) and Mark Garnett (2003). Indeed, the first of these is one of the villains of *Conservatism*, yet it passes without comment that he is the author of an essay entitled 'Why I am not a conservative'.

In a testy introduction (pp. 1–5), Honderich challenges those of his reviewers who are upset by his definition to come up with an alternative; for the record, I defend a view of conservatism as an extension of scepticism, in the tradition of Hume and Montaigne, in a non-academic book that appeared too late for Honderich to mention (O'Hara, 2005). That interpretation meets many, if not all of his criticisms, and indeed has been called 'a comfortable mooring for exiled lefties' (Kruger, 2005), so perhaps he would find it congenial. More importantly, the omission of Michael Freeden's detailed definition and analysis (1996, 317–414) is a major flaw.

Freeden is missed on methodological grounds too. Honderich examines a number of simple principles in turn, and rejects them all as not individually characteristic of conservatism; hence his conclusion that it can be no more nor less than 'organized selfishness' (p. 302). However, he doesn't seem to consider

that what is characteristic of conservatism might be a particular *combination* of principles, as in Freeden's morphological framework.

Third, Honderich's bile leads him to prefer misinterpretation to correctness too often. An assertion of Oakeshott's that the conservative regrets the loss of the familiar is twisted (p. 16ff.) into a contradiction, and Friedman is taken to condone conservatives breaking the law (pp. 249, 251). No doubt Honderich was aiming for rhetorical effect, but it is impossible to see how the relevant quotes can bear the interpretation put on them, even in jest.

Sometimes he misses the point entirely. For instance (p. 49), while arguing correctly that conservatives theorize, he says that sufficiency claims are less important than necessity claims. The conservative surely says the exact opposite; our claims to have recognized necessary connections in politics are almost always mistaken, whereas a sufficiency claim at least has the advantage that it might be instantiated and observed. There are many such slips. Conservatives are not committed to the assumption that 'we are primarily self-concerned rather than altruistic' (p. 94), only that a system that does not assume altruism will be more robust. His discussion of private property seems to miss out any mention of exchange (p. 116), and that of relative and absolute value simplistically assumes that resources are fixed and so wage bargaining is a zero sum game (p. 235).

Sometimes he gets over-excited and jumbles up his evidence. He uses Gini coefficient data, which measure inequality, to argue that the rich have got richer and the poor poorer (e.g. pp. 28, 111). However, Gini coefficient increases are consistent with everyone getting richer, or everyone getting poorer, or even with the rich getting poorer and the poor richer, in the admittedly unlikely event that the people in the top quintile at t_0 had fallen into the bottom quintile by t_1 and *vice versa*. To make his conclusion, Honderich illicitly assumes that if X's income is greater than Y's at t_0, then it must also be greater at t_1.

And his grasp of fact is very ropey. One could only suggest that George Bush is carrying on Hayek's mission (p. 114) if one knew nothing of Bush, or knew nothing of Hayek, or, possibly, knew nothing of either. The removal of collective bargaining does not necessarily increase profits (p. 123), as any football club owner will tell you. And it is incredible to claim that 9/11 would not have happened without the oppression of Palestine by Israel (p. 190) given that the attack was planned well before the second *intifada*, that Palestine always features well down the list of demands of Osama bin Laden, and that al-Qaeda still has no significant presence in either Palestine or Israel (Roy, 2004, 53).

Fourth, Honderich's attacks are self-defeating. His assumption that Conservatives and Republicans are driven by the same evil selfishness is the

ultimate trump card of his opponents. The left's failure to understand and engage, to realize that many on the right wish to do good, however misguidedly, contributes massively to its marginalization and impotence.

He hints at 'a certain connection between conservatism and fascism' (p. 183), but then backtracks: 'Truth is not served by putting conservatism, if with some reason, in this lurid light' (p. 184). If there *is* some reason, then why is truth not so served? On the other hand, if conservatism shouldn't be put in that lurid light, then why did he do so on the previous page? And why no mention of the awkward fact that much fascist support came from the white working class? Actually, anyone who thinks that communism is 'free of racial prejudice generally' (p. 209), or that repressive Cuba (Amnesty International, 2005) is a good example of a country espousing the 'Principle of Humanity' (Chapter 8 n. 24), is unlikely to be very sound on such topics. Which is a shame, as the occasional good discussion, for example of the Iraq War (pp. 261–266), may well be overlooked as a result.

Old Labour hasn't won a clear (majority greater than 10) victory in a UK general election for nearly 40 years, while the United States has seen only one old-style Democratic President since Johnson. However, Labour and the Democrats, when they ignore those of the Honderich persuasion, can win effortlessly, as the undefeated Blair and Clinton have shown, while those furthest to the left, however saintly (Foot, McGovern), do worst. Nowhere does Honderich explain the inconvenient irrelevance of the left in the very countries where the right is so apparently monstrous. He would no doubt argue that most people (being less clever than Honderich) are duped by television (p. 211) and newspapers (p. 167), not that he and his kind overstate their case ridiculously and tiresomely.

'Know thine enemy' is sensible advice. Honderich has merely caricatured that enemy. To paraphrase Gibbon, *Conservatism* is an 'unfavourable picture, though not devoid of a faint resemblance, betray[ing], by its dark colouring and distorted features, the pencil of an enemy', which will give pleasure but no practical help to the many who wish to see the back of the Blair–Bush era.

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The revival of interest in the work of Isaiah Berlin is, perhaps, one of the more curious aspects of modern political thought. Apart from a short book on Karl Marx he did not write a sustained work of political philosophy as did, for example, his contemporary Michael Oakeshott, nor anything systematic to compare with John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*. Berlin was primarily an essayist and those essays, usually dictated rather than written, often seem to be repetitive and lacking in development. Nevertheless, despite the criticisms, Berlin has a large and influential body of supporters. Indeed, some go so far as to describe him as the most important political thinker of our time.

George Crowder's intention, he states, is to provide an accessible introduction to Berlin's work as well as to the criticisms that work has provoked. Most usefully Crowder has looked at the development of Berlin's ideas by others, such as John Gray, and he has, in the final chapter offered an appreciation of his significance both within the Liberal tradition and in