

Finally, one must ask: How successful is this ambitious defense of pluralist capitalism? Substantively, I think, quite successful, since *The Enduring Tension* assembles a wealth of evidence and argument, brought vigorously to bear upon an impressively wide range of controversies, both philosophic and empirical. Anchored in a respectful reading of authors ancient and modern, Devine investigates topics as heterogeneous as *Homo sapiens*' social organization, ancient Stoicism, post-war American trends, and twentieth-century-atonal music. Organizationally, however, I wonder if these same ambitions do not too often compel readers to navigate a welter of thematic deviations, topic shifts, and even argumentative cul-de-sacs. In a single paragraph concerned to defend Locke against charges of irreligion, for instance, Devine references, among other writers, the Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray, Thomas Aquinas, Hayek, Descartes, Voltaire, Adam Smith, Tocqueville, Locke, and Burke!

In sum, this is an apt book for assiduous readers who seek an erudite defense of modern capitalism. It can be profitably read alongside other notable recent efforts such as Jonah Goldberg's *Suicide of the West* (2018), Yoram Hazony's *Conservatism* (2022), F. H. Buckley's *Progressive Conservatism* (2022), George Will's *The Conservative Sensibility* (2019), and Matthew Continetti's *The Right* (2022).

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The Good Ancestor: A Radical Prescription for Long-Term Thinking

Roman Krznaric
New York: The Experiment, 2020 (336 pages)

In *The Good Ancestor: A Radical Prescription for Long-Term Thinking*, philosopher Roman Krznaric argues that we should focus on the long-term and reorient ourselves towards future living. Krznaric's argument is motivated by the ideals of Jonas Salk, the inventor of the polio vaccine. Salk coined the phrase "good ancestor" and exemplified this concept for future generations through his vaccine research and development. Krznaric seeks to build upon this legacy of being a "good ancestor," by arguing that humanity urgently needs to give far greater consideration to future generations and give greater weight to the long-term over the short-term in nearly every sphere of life.

Krznaric, much in the same vein as Salk before him, contends that it is not only the responsibility but also the duty of the present generation to look after those who will come after them. Future generations cannot vote in current elections, nor can they set present policy, but that does not mean they cannot or should not be considered when we elect leaders or set policy. Krznaric makes the convincing case that

our world suffers from what he calls “pathological short-termism,” the idea that we are giving increasingly less consideration to future generations. He contends that present decisions must be based on how they will affect those who presently have no voice or seat at the table now but will one day inherit the consequences of the decisions their ancestors made.

The proposed solution to this problem of short-termism and shortsightedness is to shift our consumeristic perspective of instant gratification to a perspective of long-term thinking. Krznaric’s overarching prescription for this solution to short-termism is outlined in the second part of the book in six points (i.e., “Good Ancestor Conversations”): deep-time humility, intergenerational justice, legacy mindset, transcendent goals, holistic forecasting, and cathedral thinking.

While this acknowledgement of the brevity of life and the shortsightedness of much of humanity is not novel—being noted in every world religion and plausibly an innate human feeling—Krznaric does offer unique responses to this problem of short-termism. The need for sustainability, and the opposition to short-termism (whether in capitalism, energy policy, etc.) has been an emerging movement within academia and pop culture in recent years. Krznaric certainly capitalizes on recent academic and social trends, but he is critical of the idea that science holds the answers to all problems. He instead attributes many of the greatest global problems, most still in need of solutions, directly to “scientific development.” Furthermore, Krznaric contends that one of the barriers to greater societal shift away from short-termism is an insufficient sense of crisis, of which he successfully emphasizes in this book.

The presiding strength of this work is that Krznaric squarely addresses an obvious and culturally relevant issue: sustainability. He posits that humanity cannot continue forever in its current trajectory of short-termism at the expense of long-term thinking and planning. Exactly *how* this can be achieved is an imperative matter for discussion, and although not exhaustive (and often lacking tangibility), this book undoubtedly provides a good starting point. Although genuine in its aim and successful in its goal, Krznaric’s work is not without its flaws.

Krznaric frequently engages in selective moralization, unlikely to relate to a significant portion of his readers. As stated, he claims that decisions need to be made today based on how they will affect those who have no voice in future generations. However, Krznaric never references the issue of abortion, which not only ignores future voices, but prevents them from ever speaking. It would seem the issue of abortion would be inherent to his thesis of being a good ancestor, but there is silence on this seemingly fundamental issue. Krznaric further moralizes at the close of the book by advocating that we should not see ourselves as individuals, but as components of a chain of billions of other human beings, which will connect us to a sense of meaning. However, Krznaric assumes that there is a universal goal of the human species to which we all are, or should be, working toward. But perhaps many individuals would rather chart

their own course and view themselves as distinguishable individuals, rather than being a part of some inorganic chain of being or human experiment. These selective moral judgments from Krznaric are unlikely to be shared by many of his readers.

He appears to demonstrate a lack of self-awareness in assuming that his readers will have the same outlook as him. While there are certainly “short-termism” societal forces that are cause for great concern, Krznaric seems to make largescale sweeping assumptions that the present generation does not care about future generations. Most parents want good things for their children and want their children’s lives to be better than theirs and are in fact concerned with concepts such as sustainability and inheritance. It is unlikely that parents would purposefully undermine the world in which their children must live in. Perhaps this lack of self-awareness is most notably characterized implicitly in the very title of this book: *The Good Ancestor*, not “A” Good Ancestor. The title alone would suggest all paths of responsible, sustainable, and ethical living, to the path prescribed by Krznaric.

Another notable weakness of the book is that Krznaric presents unpragmatic solutions disconnected from the world as it currently operates. The reader will confront many problems lacking solutions. For example, Krznaric strongly denounces nuclear energy sources, but repeatedly underscores the existential threat of global warming and pollution. Similarly, many of Krznaric’s appeals border on the dramatic in their assumptions and declarations. Krznaric, for example, argues that “a mere shift of pronoun[s] has the power to change the world” (243), but never offers substantiating evidence for how this shift would be world-changing, and why or how pronouns would facilitate and sustain this world change. The reader is left lacking specific, tangible, and realizable solutions to many of the current and future crises discussed and ignores debatably feasible options that perhaps run counter to some sociopolitical narratives and platforms.

Krznaric asserts that the only way forward toward transformation of long-term thinking into long-term practice is that all of humanity must intentionally work together. While certainly a noble goal, it is seemingly unpragmatic, unachievable, and unrealistic; lacking both pragmatism and tangibility since complete global unanimity on any problem and solution has never been achieved. Krznaric pontificates and philosophizes on some of the world’s greatest problems, but often fails to present achievable, realistic solutions. It is difficult to determine what might be idealistic utopian fantasies, or realistic achievable goals.

While Krznaric’s book may leave much to be desired for readers looking for practical, tangible answers to some of life’s toughest questions, it is still a worthy read, sure to provoke creative discussion around some of humanity’s greatest problems. Whether the reader agrees with Krznaric’s conclusions and prescriptions or not, this book certainly will invite a diverse readership to consider their lives and lifestyles in relation to future generations. Drawing upon a vast array of academic disciplines

such as evolutionary psychology, archaeology, sociology, economics, and the latest in neuroscience, Krznaric expertly weaves together these academic subjects into a broad, multifaceted study that is both intellectual and accessible. Krznaric's *The Good Ancestor: A Radical Prescription for Long-Term Thinking* is sure to garner significant interest from widely varied readers interested in the future.

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A Consequentialist Defense of Libertarianism

Richard Fumerton

(Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021) (232 pages)

In the introduction to his book *Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know*, political philosopher Jason Brennan states that it was after reading the book *Economics in One Lesson* by economist Henry Hazlitt that he began to take libertarianism as a serious political theory. But there is one thing in particular that caught Brennan's eye: "Hazlitt taught me that when evaluating policies, you must see past people's intentions and look instead at results. He taught me to view politics without romance" (Brennan 2012). In short, this was not only Brennan's conversion to libertarianism but also his conversion to consequentialism. Brennan's marriage of political libertarianism and ethical consequentialism is not particularly novel, as other libertarians have also been consequentialists (Milton Friedman, Thomas Sowell, F. A. Hayek). However, in the most prominent defense of libertarianism to date, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, Robert Nozick takes specific aim at consequentialism, arguing that it is not how humans think and is not practical either, and for that reason, should be rejected by libertarians. What is needed, it seems, is a counter to Nozick's claim, and in his book *A Consequentialist Defense of Libertarianism*, Richard Fumerton aims to provide such a defense.

As the book's title implies, Fumerton aims to defend libertarianism on consequentialist grounds and, in particular, to show that when followed consistently, a consequentialist will have to be a libertarian. The first chapter of the book outlines Fumerton's case: he aims first to show that we have good reason to think of law, morality, and reason as separate but, in some sense, dependent on each other in certain respects; he then takes aim at other forms of moral realism, claiming that a consequentialist ethic is the most compelling theory of ethics; finally, he focuses on the cost-benefit analysis, as well as why the harm principle of John Stuart Mill needs to be rejected. Each of these areas could warrant a review in and of itself, so I will focus on the key part of Fumerton's argument, which comes in chapter 3 of the book. In chapter 1, Fumerton points out that before he can lay out the case