Regeneration through Rights: Law, Family, and the Making of Modern American Conservatism

Regeneration through Rights: Law, Family, and the Making of Modern American Conservatism interrogates the familial anxieties and fantasies that inform modern American conservatism. The project offers portraits of how prominent American conservatives (such as William F. Buckley, Jr., Ronald Reagan, and Clarence Thomas) obsessively employ a distinctive rights-based discourse that links the capacity for virtuous civic behavior to a personal history of growing up in conventional family settings, particularly ones that featured strong paternal and weak maternal authority. This widely-shared obsession with the familial dynamics that allegedly produce virtuous, rights-bearing citizens is the unifying and regenerative force of modern American conservatism.

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