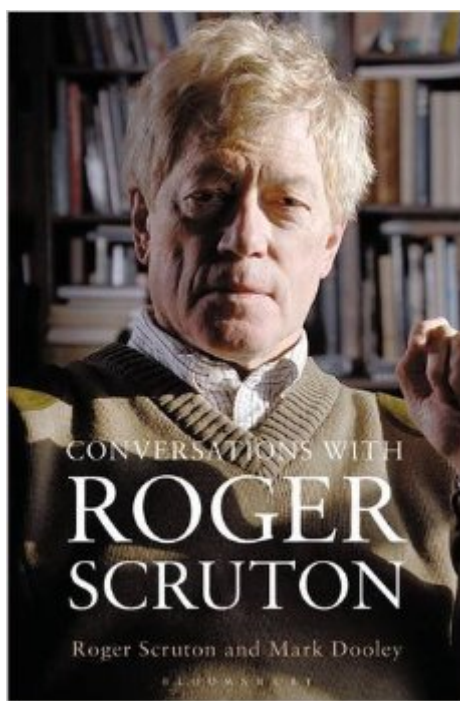


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Conversations With Roger Scruton



Synopsis

Roger Scruton is arguably the greatest living English philosopher. A prolific author of fifty books, composer of two operas, controversial columnist and academic dissident, he has stood at the heart of the intellectual life of Britain (and to some extent in the USA) for more than forty years. Mark Dooley is Scruton's intellectual biographer. In these conversations Dooley coaxes Scruton to speak candidly about those whom he has loved and loathed, about his early philosophical influences and about those who have shaped him personally and intellectually. Going deeper than any previous autobiographical statements by Scruton, this book reveals what motivated the philosopher to embrace Kant and Wagner, how he came to know and admire thinkers like Iris Murdoch, Elizabeth Anscombe and Mary Midgely, and what he said to the underground seminars in Communist Czechoslovakia and the precise circumstances surrounding his arrest and expulsion from that country. It examines what Scruton really thinks of his intellectual and political adversaries and why he believes their message remains a recipe for social collapse. He provides answers as to why he left Birkbeck University College and why he eventually abandoned academia altogether. It also includes insights into daily life on Scruton's farm, his writing routines and his astonishing capacity to produce so prodigiously. *Conversations with Roger Scruton* asks questions which Roger Scruton has never answered before.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mark Dooley is an Irish teacher and journalist who has previously written on the work of Roger Scruton. This book is the result of a three-day conversation with Scruton at his farm in Wiltshire. It is not written as a formal interview, but rather as a continuous narrative, with Dooley initiating subjects

for discussion and Scruton then responding. The text is filled with extended quotes from Scruton's works that reinforce the narrative. Given the fact that Scruton's works are very, very far-ranging (he has written on art, architecture, intellectual history, Kant, Spinoza, sex, politics, music, etc. and has composed operas, written novels, taught, created consultancies and worked in think tanks), so is the discussion. Dooley asks intelligent questions, demonstrates a professional familiarity with many of the subjects at issue and is not afraid to get personal. The conversations are in approximate biographical order, so that the book constitutes a mini-biography as well as a latter day example of *tischreden* or table talk. The talk is more "extended" than epigrammatic and the result is less marvellous than one sees with Eckerman or Boswell, though it is unfair to compare anyone's talk "even one as formidable as Scruton" with titans like Goethe and Johnson. There are some interesting anecdotes and some new facts (that, e.g., RS wrote his introduction to Kant in four days). The book is a pleasant read of some 200 pp. There are no illustrations, but pictures of RS's farm and family are available on the internet.

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