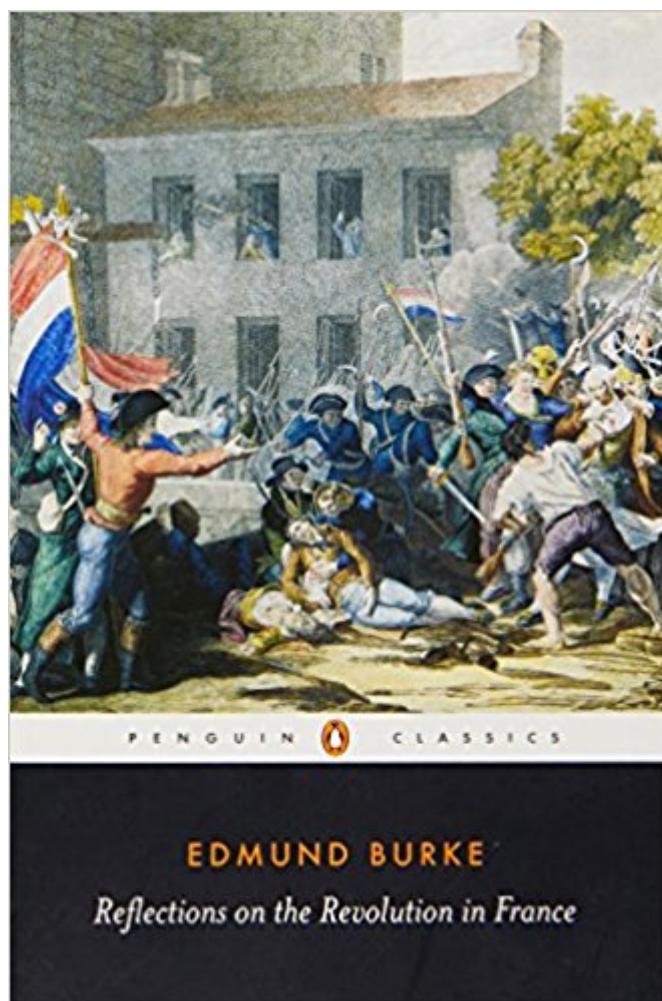


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Reflections On The Revolution In France (English Library)



Synopsis

“To make a revolution is to subvert the ancient state of our country; and no common reasons are called for to justify so violent a proceeding.” Burke’s seminal work was written during the early months of the French Revolution, and it predicted with uncanny accuracy many of its worst excesses, including the Reign of Terror. A scathing attack on the revolution’s attitudes to existing institutions, property and religion, it makes a cogent case for upholding inherited rights and established customs, argues for piecemeal reform rather than revolutionary change and deplores the influence Burke feared the revolution might have in Britain. *Reflections on the Revolution in France* is now widely regarded as a classic statement of conservative political thought, and is one of the eighteenth century’s great works of political rhetoric. Conor Cruise O’Brien’s introduction examines the contemporary political situation in England and Ireland and its influence on Burke’s point of view. He highlights Burke’s brilliant grasp of social and political forces and discusses why the book has remained so significant for over two centuries.

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Customer Reviews

Pocock is, without question, the leading historian of eighteenth-century British-American political thought. . . . All of his skills are brilliantly employed in the Introduction. . . . In addition to being the best treatment of Burke's thought in context, it is . . . the best and most concentrated presentation of Pocock's own view of the main contours of eighteenth-century political thought. . . . Finally, the Reflections and other texts by Burke are then woven into this rich fabric, thus providing the reader with an understanding of Burke's thought which is deeper and more complex (and surely more historically sensitive) than any available in the secondary literature. --James Tully, McGill University

Of all the scholars who currently study the history of Western political thought, no one is more fertile, eloquent, and ingenious than J. G. A. Pocock. --Keith Thomas, in the *New York Review of Books*

--This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Rethinking the Western Tradition Series --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Edmund Burke, politician, philosopher and historian, known as the father of conservatism. When the revolution in France broke out with the death of the King and the revolution being led by sidelined liberal radicals, Burke was horrified. In his reflections he shows just that, his horror and critique of where the revolution went wrong. Burke is a classic figure in the late 18th and early 19th century. Although not in opposition to the basic revolutionary principles, he disliked how the revolution was going about bringing in its ideas of liberty and equality, out with the old and in with the new. Burke was more of a gradualist, believing in growth of kingdoms, nations, and politics among other things. To paraphrase Burke's own words in the book that we must take to heart, what is a tree without its roots?

I've always heard of Burke, but never had occasion to read him until my book club decided to read *Reflections*. Now you do have to slow down to read it to an 18th century pace; you'd miss the beauty of the language and the fascinating details of life in England and France if you tried to speed read. It's worth the time. Hard to believe how relevant it is to many of today's issues!

Burke is a master of philosophy, religion, history, literature and rhetoric, and such is reflected in his holistic approach to civics. The first half of his work elaborates on the faulty principles of the

Jacobins, while the second deals primarily with their naive reliance on these false principles in the face of various practical difficulties. Though still one of the best explications of traditional conservatism, Burke's writing is often tedious and hampered by the epistolary format of his work.

Apart from aspects of style - a function of the times - Burke articulates the argument against revolution of any kind with brilliant clarity. Nothing worthwhile was ever built by tearing something else down. Except when the perversion is so repugnant it must be replaced. NB. Replaced - not simply torn down. Almost without exception revolution succeeds only in making matters worse. Lincoln and the Civil War is one magnificent exception. Slavery was replaced with emancipation - and still today Lincoln's genius reaches out from 1865, as does Burke's from even earlier.

Classic work of political philosophy that remains relevant two centuries later. A must read in a well annotated edition

I never really appreciated Edmund Burke historically but after encountering a reference to this book, I read it and I really can appreciate his monarchical view and why he was appalled at what happened in France. If we look at current events, destroying a system of government because you don't like a particular individual does not lead to a better government when you have to start over . . . Historically this always leads to chaos . . . and aren't we there now?

Needed for a class. Got it real quick. Donated to local library when I was done with it. Makes for a great read for those interest in Political Science.

All the other reviews I've read have reviewed the book in isolation. It's better read with (either after or before) Thomas Carlyle's The French Revolution, both are deservedly classics.

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