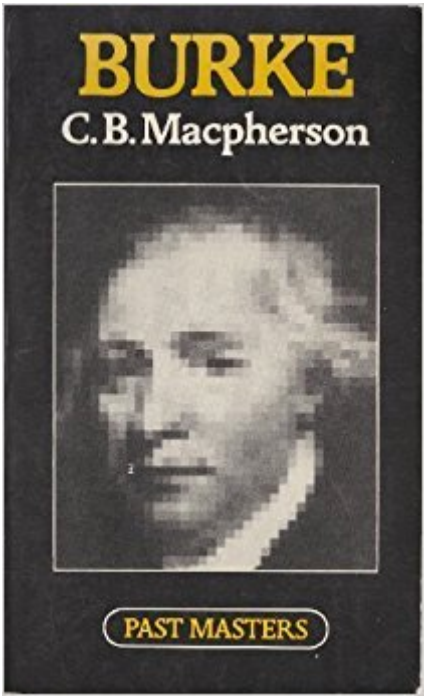
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Burke (Past Masters)



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Synopsis

In this concise yet powerful book, one of the twentieth century's most respected political philosophers presents a controversial reassessment of the political ideas and intellectual legacy of Edmund Burke. A practicing politician and powerful writer, full of ideas, Burke was intent on getting those ideas translated into government policies. But he was too much the impatient practitioner to set out his principles in a single book in the manner of Locke or Hume, leaving both admirers and opponents ample scope to reinterpret his work in different ways. Macpherson, however, finds Burke's views on political economy to be the one consistent factor in his thinking. Today Burke is often viewed as one of modern conservatism's founding lights, and in an era of global capitalism unfettered by national borders, Macpherson's reassessment of Burke's ideas is perhaps more timely than ever. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

C.B. Macpherson (1911-1987) was professor of political science at the University of Toronto. Widely regarded as Canada's pre-eminent political theorist of the twentieth century, he was the author of numerous books, including The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke, and The Real World of Democracy, and was named to the Order of Canada, the country's highest civilian honour. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This short study tries to understand Burke's place in political thought. Macpherson's conclusion is as follows: " We have seen that Burke was both a defender of a traditional heirarchical social and political order and a believer in the necessity of a pure capitalist economic order." The defense of the traditional order is felt of course in his famous attack on the French Revolution . In his long and distinguished parliamentary career Burke was a defender of ' property' but fought for its proper management and use for the greater benefit of all of society. His literary ambitions were central to his life, and his great contribution to aesthetics his essay on the Sublime is still read as part of the literature on the subject today. Macpherson concludes his study with a consideration of Burke's relevance to political philosophy today. His concluding summary is as follows:" Twentieth century democrats, both libral and conservative, share with Burke , the non- democrat, the perception that what is at stake is the legitimitation of a social order, and that this is ultimately a question of moral values. They also share some of Burke's most general moral values. But if they heed Burke's warning about the vital necessity of adjusting principles to concrete circumstances , they must think twice about recruiting him. By his insistence on the importnce of circumstances Burke ruled himself out of court for the late twentieth century." pp.74

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