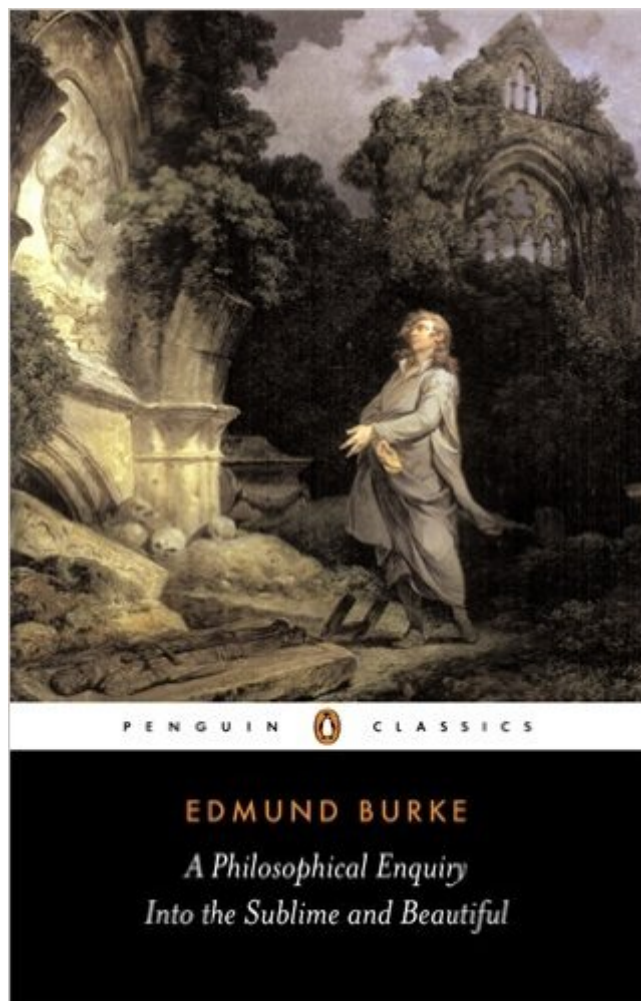


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A Philosophical Enquiry Into The Origins Of The Sublime And Beautiful: And Other Pre-Revolutionary Writings (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Edmund Burke was one of the foremost philosophers of the eighteenth century and wrote widely on aesthetics, politics and society. In this landmark work, he propounds his theory that the sublime and the beautiful should be regarded as distinct and wholly separate states - the first, an experience inspired by fear and awe, the second an expression of pleasure and serenity. Eloquent and profound, *A Philosophical Enquiry* is an involving account of our sensory, imaginative and judgmental processes and their relation to artistic appreciation. Burke's work was hugely influential on his contemporaries and also admired by later writers such as Matthew Arnold and William Wordsworth. This volume also contains several of his early political works on subjects including natural society, government and the American colonies, which illustrate his liberal, humane views.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a very good book -- one that bears re-reading. Burke has meditated long and hard to come up with a distinction that many of us would never arrive at under our own resources, namely, the distinction between that which is beautiful and that which is sublime. At times it is difficult to see the difference but once we get onto his point of view the book is a very good one.

This is a good book by the articulate (very quotable) and profound philosopher-legislator Edmund Burke, who served in the English Parliament around the time of the American Revolution. Burke (1729-97) also authored the famous and controversial (at least at the time) work, "Reflections on the

Revolution in France" (1790). Of course, the main work in the Penguin Classics edition featured here is "A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful". It was notably influential on many of Burke's contemporaries, as well as on later literary artists such as William Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold. However, some of the minor works appended to this edition, such as the 1777 "Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol on the Affairs of America" (which is like a long, eloquent letter home to constituents) should not be overlooked. Indeed, while perusing this latter piece (and others included here, such as "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents"), I couldn't help thinking how beneficial it would be to have a few sensible Edmund Burke-types serving in Congress or the White House right now as America deals with its global military adventures. America's Revolutionary War might even have been avoided if stubborn, indignant, autocratic, and belligerent King George III would have listened more closely to and followed Burke's reasoned advice. It's a bit hilarious and ironic to think that, today, Burke is typically thought of as a political "conservative". Read this stuff, and you will likely agree that, in many respects, he was much more a thoughtful, humane liberal.

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