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978-1-107-00657-7 - Edmund Burke and the Art of Rhetoric

Paddy Bullard

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OF RHETORIC

Edmund Burke ranks among the most accomplished orators ever to debate in the British Parliament. But often his eloquence has been seen to compromise his achievements as a political thinker. In the first full-length account of Burke's rhetoric, Paddy Bullard argues that Burke's ideas about civil society – and, particularly, about the process of political deliberation – are, for better or worse, shaped by the expressiveness of his language. Above all, Burke's eloquence is designed to express ethos or character. This rhetorical imperative is itself informed by Burke's argument that the competency of every political system can be judged by the ethical knowledge that the governors have both of the people that they govern, and of themselves. Bullard finds the intellectual roots of Burke's 'rhetoric of character' in early modern moral and aesthetic philosophy. He traces its development through Burke's parliamentary career to its culmination in his masterpiece, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

PADDY BULLARD is Lecturer in Eighteenth-Century Studies at the University of Kent, Canterbury, and a lecturer in English at St Catherine's College, Oxford. He is a former AHRC Research Fellow attached to the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift, and Rank Junior Research Fellow at St Catherine's. He is co-editor of the online Jonathan Swift Archive.

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to Rebecca

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Acknowledgements

The late Christopher Lloyd, gardening correspondent for *The Guardian* and castellan of Great Dixter, maintained that the point of growing one's own vegetables – especially the sort of root crops with which Edmund Burke experimented at his farm near Beaconsfield – is to bring them on slowly in relatively uncultivated soil. This makes them far more delicious than the super-fertilized, shop-bought alternative. *Edmund Burke and the Art of Rhetoric* has been a long time growing, and hopefully its flavour is the better for it. But the analogy is a bad one, because the book could hardly have been planted in richer or sweeter soil. The President and fellows of St John's College, Oxford elected me to a Lamb and Flag Senior Scholarship in 1997, providing a home in which to complete the doctoral thesis from which this book germinated. Isabel Rivers and Nicholas Phillipson were scrupulous D.Phil. examiners. They have continued to offer me much-valued advice and encouragement, and to write me references, for which I cannot thank them enough. While writing the book I held posts at three Oxford colleges. My chief friend and colleague at each must stand in for many others in these acknowledgements: Ros Ballaster at Mansfield; Tom Keymer while he was at St Anne's; and Bart van Es at St Catz. I am particularly indebted to the Master and fellows of St Catherine's for electing me to the Rank Junior Research Fellowship in 2005, and for extending their wonderful generosity with a Research Associateship in 2008–9. It was at St Catz that this book took root and ripened. At the University of Kent, Jennie Batchelor, Bernhard Klein, Donna Landry and many other kind new colleagues have welcomed me warmly, ahead of harvest home.

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Abbreviations

<i>Corr.</i>	<i>The Correspondence of Edmund Burke</i> , ed. Thomas W. Copeland, 10 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1958–78)
<i>CW</i>	<i>The Collected Writings of Rousseau</i> , gen. ed. Roger Masters and Christopher Kelly, 13 vols. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England for Dartmouth College, 1990–)
<i>EB</i>	F.P. Lock, <i>Edmund Burke</i> , 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998–2006)
<i>LRBL</i>	Adam Smith, <i>Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres</i> , ed. J.C. Bryce (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983)
<i>OC</i>	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <i>Œuvres complètes</i> , ed. B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 5 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1959–95)
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>PE</i>	Edmund Burke, <i>A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful</i> , ed. J.T. Boulton (London: Routledge, 1958)
<i>PW</i>	<i>The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift</i> , ed. Herbert Davis, 16 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1939–74)
<i>TMS</i>	Adam Smith, <i>The Theory of Moral Sentiments</i> , ed. D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie (Oxford University Press, 1979)
<i>WS</i>	Edmund Burke, <i>The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke</i> , gen. ed. Paul Langford, 9 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981–2000)