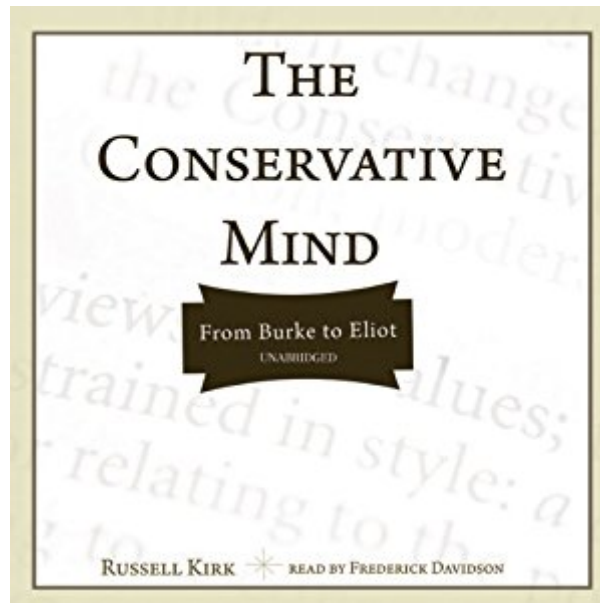




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# **The Conservative Mind: From Burke To Eliot**



## Synopsis

[Library Edition Audiobook CD in Vinyl case.] [Read by Phillip Davidson] \*One of the National Review's 100 Best Nonfiction Books of the Century First published in 1953, this magnificent work will be remembered in ages to come as one of our century's most important legacies. The then-young Kirk wrote this during a time when liberalism was heralded as the only political and intellectual tradition in America. There is no doubt that this book is responsible to a large degree for the rise of conservatism as a viable and credible creed. Kirk defines "the conservative mind" by examining such brilliant men as Edmund Burke, James Fenimore Cooper, Alexis de Tocqueville, John Quincy Adams, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Benjamin Disraeli, Cardinal Newman, George Santayana, and finally, T.S. Eliot. Vigorously written, the book represents conservatism as an ideology born of sound intellectual traditions. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Anyone interested in the history of the conservative movement should read at least one of Kirk's books, and this perhaps is his best.. You might want to have a bit of a political philosophy background though. Also, remember that he first wrote this in the 1950's so be prepared for the rhetoric and conventions of the time period.

"Conservative" means much more than "against things" and might be better thought of in "don't fix what ain't broke". There is a natural process to change but change in the name of progress without

considering the traditions and prescriptions (social habits) that have thus far sustained a functioning society will often lead to chaos instead of stability. A review of the thinking of Edmund Burke is as eye opening as it is accurate in its prophetic concern for the fate of a society that, forgetting its past and the lessons of history, presses on to unsustainable ideologies of equality and fraternity without any regard for life as it really is. God, or at least the concept of an ultimately correct and unchanging way of existence (The Good), is as necessary a part in the healthy functioning of society as is the faith and humility of those who rise up to lead it.

Kirk provides an overview of intellectual conservatism, as the book's subtitle reads, from "Burke to Eliot." Students of conservative thought would do well to enrich their understanding of the conservative tradition with the help of Kirk.

Best book on conservatism I have ever read. It is a demanding text, but well worth the effort.

I understand conservatism much better now. It's safe to say that this is probably the best book on conservative thought I've ever read. If every so-called conservative read this, we'd live in a different world

This book helped give rise to late 20th century conservatism. It's a must read for anybody who thinks he or she is a conservative (the term gets abused today today people who don't want to conserve anything) and for those who want to understand the movement. Requires some understanding of intellectual history to keep up.

Although I have only finished the first three chapters of this book, I still want to give it a rave review, at the same time as I wonder why I was never exposed to it, at any time during my American education. I read plenty of books by liberals, but somehow this brilliant work by Russell Kirk was regarded as something like the deadly nightshade. Not so! And I will repeat the same complaint again: after reading the chapter on Edmund Burke, I wonder again why no teacher, and no course, ever even \*mentioned\* Edmund Burke, certainly one of the most profound thinkers of the last five centuries. And this book acquires even more importance when put with Melanie Phillip's *The World Turned Upside Down: The Global Battle over God, Truth, and Power*, because I suspect that she has not read it. She should read it, because some solutions to her problems appear in these profound pages. As Kirk summarizes Burke: the moral order among men is only a reflection of the

moral order of God. Governments are instituted among men primarily to provide for safety --- safety from the marauding Saracen without our borders, and safety from the mob within our own borders. From this, Burke deduces his own, extremely interesting list of the rights of man, which to my mind rivals the list of natural rights listed in the Founding Documents of America. "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" -- yes! But Burke adds: freedom to participate in an ordered, organized and intelligent society [not his words, I paraphrase]. After trying to summarize Burke, Kirk turns to the equally difficult task of trying to summarize John Adams, until recently our most-overlooked Founding Father. This "dour Federalist" is most likely the man responsible for our Federalist system of government, with its three branches (legislative, executive, and judicial). He accomplished this by "simply" writing an immense three-volume lawyer's brief, which surveyed and examined an immense range of successful governments:Â A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America Against Attack of M. Turgot in His Letter to Dr. Price, Dated the Twenty-Second Day of March, 1778. Fortunately, David McCullough has been resurrecting the life and career of this brilliant man,Â John AdamsÂ --- and the life of John Adams is now available on DVD:Â John Adams (HBO Miniseries). There are lots of books on the market "explaining" liberalism, which usually teach such dubious doctrines as the Perfectibility of Man (Condorcet) and the Natural Equality of All Men. For the Conservative side, Russell Kirk's book is the heavyweight champion. On the negative side, Kirk strikes me as much too fond of religion and much too critical of economic progress. If we were to take him at his word, we would wind up with a much poorer America absolutely devoted to the Virgin Mary. If Kirk understands that a strong economy can pay for a strong military, he doesn't say so. Myself, I'm pretty comfortable with a strong and free America, with enough money to go around for everyone. If you want to have a balanced and informed view of the 21st-century political debate, this is a book which you must take into account.

One of the best books I have ever read in outlining what it means to be a conservative...

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