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Kant: Political Writings (Cambridge Texts In The History Of Political Thought)



Synopsis

The original edition of Kant: Political Writings was first published in 1970, and has long been established as the principal English-language edition of this important body of writing. In this new, expanded edition two important texts illustrating Kant's view of history are included for the first time, his reviews of Herder's Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind and Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History, as well as the essay What is Orientation in Thinking?. In addition to a general introduction assessing Kant's political thought in terms of his fundamental principles of politics, this edition also contains such useful student aids as notes on the texts, a comprehensive bibliography and a new postscript, looking at some of the principal issues in Kantian scholarship that have arisen since the first edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the best affordable paperback collection of Kant's essays on politics and the philosophy of history. You get Perpetual Peace, Idea for a Universal History, Contest of the Faculties, The End of all Things, Theory and Practice, What is Enlightenment and several other essays. Hans Reiss' introduction is well written and illuminating as well. There is another, cheaper collection published by Hackett Publishing Co. (Perpetual Peace and Other Essays). However, it is smaller and less comprehensive than this edition.

Most students are pounded with the same material over and over again. The categorical imperative, with that understanding, is never so original as it is projected in these essays. The context of political thought is a neglected area that certainly must be considered a part of Kant's working process. I believe the essay on Universal Peace in particular brings neglected areas to light, about a kind of categorical perspective not only on class systems (opportunity, viability, flexibility speaking in intuitive terms) but also the natural order, and how nature intuitively reflects the rational mind's categories. I would highlight that categorical thought is the crowning achievement of Immanuel Kant, and as such one or two of these essays are very useful in the appreciation of that area. Even so, although these essays are relatively lucid (by comparison to the Critique of Pure Reason, some may disagree with me, preferring his most popular form of language) most of these essays were not wholly enlightening. But by the standard of the excessive consistency of most works about Kant, the striking impression is one of originality and ingenuity not encountered elsewhere in his work. For the most part, these essays have not been available to students of Kant's work. Consequently, I recommend this book as necessary to any student of Kant, because of its breadth and inclusiveness. Another possible book to pursue in the area of categorical knowledge is my own book, *The Dimensional Philosopher's Toolkit*, which outlines the method of categorical deduction as an expansion on Kant's imperatives, to areas other than ethics, and as a kind of information theory. While my book is less specialized and academic than Kant's book, in some ways it has more technical things to say. Nonetheless Kant's book is recommended for its importance in the study, historical or otherwise, of Kant's under-riding theories.

Classic texts compiled into a useful volume.

A book I must have close by.

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