Review of Kant's System of Rights

Harry van der Linden
Butler University, hvanderl@butler.edu

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look like. In short, Locke’s conception of political theory is much closer to Aristotle’s understanding of practical action than Grant recognizes.

Most of the discussion of John Locke’s Liberalism is concerned with the substantive elements of Locke’s political thought, and here, Grant does a very good job of explaining Locke’s views. Her insistence upon Locke’s commitment to natural law and the common good as the standard for assessing political action, and the fact that “throughout the Two Treatises, property ownership is clearly separated from claims to political rule” (pp. 59, 123), are especially important guidelines in understanding the objectives of Locke’s political theory.

R. A.


This study offers a rich and thorough discussion of Kant’s doctrine of rights, largely following the topical order of The Metaphysical Elements of Justice but making use of all Kant’s legal and political writings, including his Nachlass. The first third of the book examines Kant’s ethics in much more detail than is needed for explicating Kant’s doctrine of rights. However, Mulholland presents here an important comparative analysis of the natural law and humanity-as-an-end-in-itself formulations of the Categorical Imperative.

Mulholland’s main critical thesis is that Kant should be viewed not as a consent or social-contract theorist but rather as a modern natural law theorist. One problem with this thesis is that Mulholland adheres to a rather narrow definition of social-contract theory, typically stating that the social contract presupposes “actual consent” (p. 293). Another problem is that he insufficiently addresses the question of why Kant phrased his doctrine of rights in social-contractarian terms.

Mulholland concludes by comparing Kant to both Robert Nozick and John Rawls. Mulholland’s excellent analysis of Kant’s justification of property is skillfully used to criticize Nozick’s view of original acquisition. H. V.

Kant, Immanuel. Political Writings, 2d ed. Edited by Hans Reiss; translated by H. B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Pp. 311. $44.50 (cloth); $14.95 (paper).

This volume in the Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought is an expansion of the 1970 edition of Kant’s Political Writings. The earlier edition contains Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose, What Is Enlightenment? On the Common Saying: “This May be True in Theory . . . ,” Perpetual Peace, excerpts from The Metaphysical Elements of Justice, and one section of The Contest of the Faculties. This edition adds Kant’s Reviews of Herder’s Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind, and the important Conjectures on the Beginning of Human