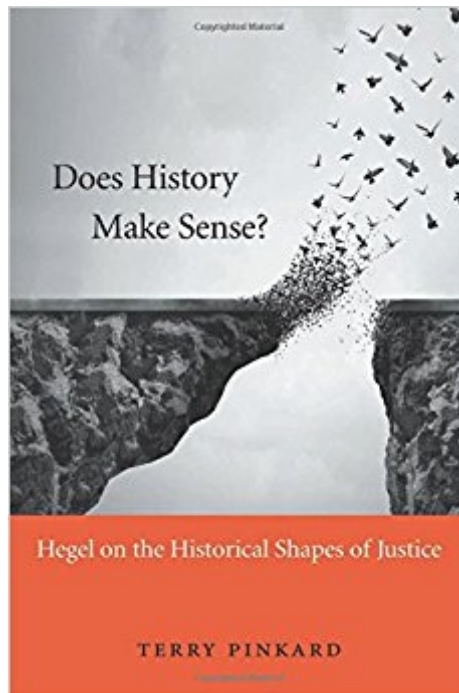


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Does History Make Sense?: Hegel On The Historical Shapes Of Justice



Synopsis

Hegel's philosophy of history – which most critics view as a theory of inevitable progress toward modern European civilization – is widely regarded as a failure today. In *Does History Make Sense?* Terry Pinkard argues that Hegel's understanding of historical progress is not the kind of teleological or progressivist account that its detractors claim, but is based on a subtle understanding of human subjectivity. Pinkard shows that for Hegel a break occurred between modernity and all that came before, when human beings found a new way to make sense of themselves as rational, self-aware creatures. In Hegel's view of history, different types of sense-making become viable as social conditions change and new forms of subjectivity emerge. At the core of these changes are evolving conceptions of justice – of who has authority to rule over others. In modern Europe, Hegel believes, an unprecedented understanding of justice as freedom arose, based on the notion that every man should rule himself. Freedom is a more robust form of justice than previous conceptions, so progress has indeed been made. But justice, like health, requires constant effort to sustain and cannot ever be fully achieved. For Hegel, philosophy and history are inseparable. Pinkard's spirited defense of the Hegelian view of history will play a central role in contemporary reevaluations of the philosopher's work.

Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: Harvard University Press (February 27, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0674971779

ISBN-13: 978-0674971776

Product Dimensions: 1.2 x 6.5 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

This book tackles what is far and away the most controversial and uniformly rejected aspect of Hegel's philosophy, his claim about the rationality, even the necessity, of the course of

human history. Terry Pinkard has written both an extremely accessible and lucid book, as well as one that offers the sophisticated philosophical reader a number of fascinating and important animadversions on the issues motivating Hegel's philosophy of history. This is clearly the product of a scholar's lifelong work. It is philosophically provocative and valuable. (Robert B. Pippin, University of Chicago) History is the theme for which Hegel is best known to non-philosophers, but it is also one of the easiest ways to misunderstand what Hegel is all about. Does History Make Sense? is an excellent companion to Hegel's actual text on history, and fulfills a pressing need in Hegel scholarship. Pinkard is one of the leading interpreters of Hegel, and this is the most accessible book-length presentation of his views on a host of issues that are of interest to Hegel scholars and to a wide range of systematic philosophers. Pinkard makes Hegel intelligible without in any sense ignoring the difficulties of the text or of the system as a whole. (Dean Moyar, Johns Hopkins University) Pinkard examines Hegel's philosophy of history with care; he is one of a surprisingly small number of writers to do so. (M. Blitz Choice 2017-08-01)

Terry Pinkard is University Professor of Philosophy at Georgetown University.

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