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**Thomas Cushman, ed.**

*Handbook of Human Rights* (London: Routledge, 2014) ISBN 9781138019478, pp. 744, £35,99.

This Routledge Handbook is a rich resource on many aspects of rights. The collection by 66 authors, mainly from North America and Europe, begins with foundations and critiques of rights, examining such diverse topics as Kant's theory of human rights (he said very little about them) to Hegel and hate speech, from Hannah Arendt to Roger Scruton's analysis of rights as 'nonsense on stilts'. Part II offers new frameworks for understanding human rights and includes two British sociologists: Iain Wilkinson on social suffering as a foundation for rights, and Bryan Turner on the vulnerable body and Malthusian scarcity. Four world religions are reviewed in Part III for their relations with human rights and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is viewed as a non-religious basis of overlapping consensus.

Controversies in social, economic, group and collective rights are carefully analysed in Part IV: language and food rights, and the rights of groups such as refugees and disabled people as well as fetal rights. Two very interesting forward-looking chapters by Americans, the political scientist Richard Hiskes and the ethicist Nancy Tuana, consider climate change and environmental human rights. They propose that rights are dynamic, constantly changing and developing and that, in everyone's present interests and also their hopes of survival, we have to recognise rights beyond those of identifiable embodied individuals to embrace future generations. The profligate present threatens the future survival of humanity, and human rights offer powerful moral and practical arguments for respecting the shared interests of future as well as present generations. Also in this section are two somewhat backward-looking chapters on children. David Archard offers a quite negative and abstract defence of children's rights in response to critics, rather than reviewing the massive problems that children increasingly experience across the world and their urgent need for rights-based justice. Jenny Kupter competently reviews international child law, but both authors cite few recent texts or debates.

Part V gives critical perspectives on human rights organisations, institutions and practices, exploring such tensions as those between peace and justice, besides international finance and transnational corporations versus human rights. There are fascinating chapters on reparation for human rights abuses, on memory, truth commissions, migrants' rights, on bystanders to abuse, proportionality and on discord between values of human prosperity and of human rights. Joshua Yates's chapter on humanitarianism is rightly probing and critical. These themes continue in Part VIII with reviews of human rights in China, South America and Africa.

Readers may be surprised to see in Part VI only three chapters on law, and these are mainly about international responses to abuses and terror (although there are numerous references to law, and also to children, through the book). However, the editor Thomas Cushman, a sociologist, explains in his Introduction, the book's aims to criticise and problematise rights and to resist concepts of them as an ideal outside history. Most of the authors value rights highly, and tend to favour the European welfare state basis for social democratic economic rights. Yet they tackle challenging and dissenting ideas, and such problems as dangerous utopianism, and the way human rights can violate classical libertarianism and property rights. The three main traditional oppositions to rights are debated: conservative, Marxist and utilitarian. The volume includes traditional liberal authors and other critics of human rights in order to highlight the dialogue between their views and more recent interpretations. The intention is also to avoid giving one account of ideological advocacy of rights as if they are closed orthodoxies, but instead to concentrate on new insights that are emerging mainly from the social sciences. Part VII is perhaps the most unusual section, considering major contributions to the promotion of human rights from literature, art history, architecture, theatre and photography, showing how the arts vividly and powerfully represent and promote abstract concepts. Here the main aim is to expand theories and applications of human rights and to reflect radical new thinking. Cushman invites readers to continue to expand this huge area of inquiry by taking part in the ongoing project of human rights.

The collection will be valuable to experts on rights to assist them in expanding their work, as well as to students and others who want to learn more about the basics of human rights and to develop expertise in new directions.

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