

Rachel Zuckert.

“Kant’s Philosophy of History as Stoic Consolation”

Abstract: At least since Pauline Kleingeld’s defining work, scholars recognize that Kant’s aims in his philosophy of history are practical as well as theoretical: not just to describe history, but also to provide a view of it that supports moral action. Often scholars understand this support to be similar to that provided by the postulates of practical reason: the progressive view of history Kant articulates is taken to be a belief necessarily presupposed in moral agency, supporting the more general belief that the agent’s moral ends are realizable. Prompted by Kant’s description of his view as “consoling” (*Idee*, 8:30), I consider whether his view in *Idee* may instead be interpreted as a form of Stoic consolation on the model of Seneca’s consolatory writings, with a different practical import: to relieve the moral agent from grief concerning large-scale historical events, thereby freeing her to act effectively within her own sphere.