

The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics, Revised Edition



The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics: Revised Edition by Mark Lilla

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English



File size	: 1822 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 249 pages



The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics, Revised Edition is a thought-provoking work by Peter Coleman that examines the dangers of intellectuals engaging in political activism. Coleman argues that when intellectuals abandon their role as objective observers and become involved in the political fray, they risk compromising their integrity and damaging the public discourse.

Coleman begins by defining what he means by an intellectual. An intellectual, he says, is someone who is "engaged in the life of the mind" and who "has a special responsibility to speak truth to power." However, Coleman argues that when intellectuals become involved in politics, they often abandon this responsibility and instead become advocates for particular political causes.

Coleman identifies a number of dangers that arise when intellectuals become involved in politics. First, he argues that intellectuals risk losing their objectivity. When intellectuals become invested in a particular political cause, they may be less likely to critically evaluate the evidence and arguments that support that cause. This can lead to intellectual dishonesty and a distortion of the public discourse.

Second, Coleman argues that intellectuals risk damaging their reputation. When intellectuals become associated with a particular political party or ideology, they may lose the trust of the public. This can make it difficult for intellectuals to speak out on important issues and to be taken seriously by policymakers.

Third, Coleman argues that intellectuals risk alienating their colleagues. When intellectuals become involved in politics, they may alienate their colleagues who do not share their political views. This can create a hostile work environment and make it difficult for intellectuals to collaborate on important research and scholarship.

Coleman's Argument

Coleman's argument is based on the belief that intellectuals have a special responsibility to be objective and to speak truth to power. He argues that when intellectuals become involved in politics, they abandon this responsibility and instead become advocates for particular political causes. This, he says, leads to a number of dangers, including intellectual dishonesty, a distortion of the public discourse, damage to the reputation of intellectuals, and alienation of colleagues.

Coleman provides a number of examples to support his argument. He points to the example of the French intellectuals who supported the Soviet Union during the Cold War. These intellectuals, he says, were blinded by their ideological commitment to communism and were unwilling to criticize the Soviet Union's human rights abuses. He also points to the example of the American intellectuals who supported the Vietnam War. These intellectuals, he says, were misled by the government's propaganda and were unwilling to question the war's legality or morality.

Critique of Coleman's Argument

Coleman's argument has been criticized on a number of grounds. Some critics have argued that Coleman's definition of an intellectual is too narrow. They argue that there are many different types of intellectuals, and that not all of them have a special responsibility to be objective and to speak truth to power.

Other critics have argued that Coleman's argument is based on a false dichotomy. They argue that it is possible for intellectuals to be involved in politics without compromising their integrity or damaging the public discourse. They point to the example of intellectuals who have used their expertise to inform public policy debates and to advocate for social justice.

Finally, some critics have argued that Coleman's argument is simply unrealistic. They argue that in the modern world, it is impossible for intellectuals to remain completely objective and detached from politics. They argue that intellectuals have a responsibility to use their knowledge and expertise to address the important issues of the day.

The *Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics*, Revised Edition is a thought-provoking and controversial work that raises important questions about the role of intellectuals in society. Coleman's argument that intellectuals should avoid becoming involved in politics is a valid one, but it is also important to recognize the contributions that intellectuals can make to the public discourse. Ultimately, the decision of whether or not to become involved in politics is a personal one that each intellectual must make for themselves.

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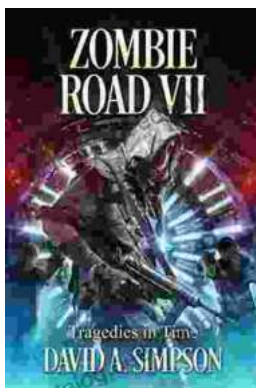
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