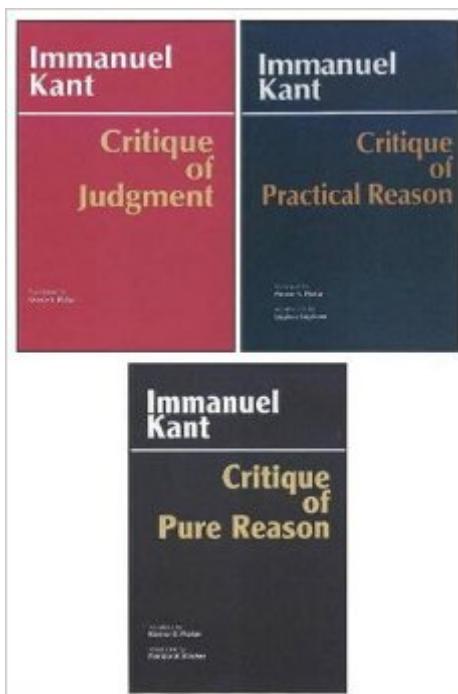


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Synopsis

"On Critique of Pure Reason: The text rendered by Pluhar is the work of an expert translator. . . the virtues of his text are manifold; his translation exhibits an incontrovertible mastery of both English and German. Equally important is the fact that Pluhar has given the original a very close read during the act of translating. . . . Pluhar consistently resists the tendency to translate woodenly word-for-word. . . . In point of fact, accuracy of translation stands in no direct relation to literalness; it is much more a product of meticulous textual reading and skilful writing, and in this respect Pluhar has no modern equals in English Kant translation." --James Jakob Fehr, *Kant-Studien*

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"On Critique of Judgment: Pluhar maintains a fine, even tone throughout. . . . Those who have found the prospect of teaching the third Critique daunting will admire its clarity. . . . No one will be disappointed." --Timothy Sean Quinn, *The Review of Metaphysics*

Werner S. Pluhar is Affiliate Professor of Philosophy, Pennsylvania State University, Fayette.

These are really good translations at a really phenomenal price. I'm closing in on the end of the Critique of Pure Reason and eagerly awaiting Critique of Judgment.

...need a lot of effort to read it

The value of this set is incredible. As an 'amateur' studying Kant outside of an academic context, it's almost hard to believe this set exists. Not being fluent in German, I've had to read Kant with all his technicality by way of translation. After trying a few other translations of the 'Critique of Pure Reason' (notably Meiklejohn's, published by Dover; and Weigelt's revision of Mäfller's, published by Penguin), I was astounded by the readability of Pluhar's. Certainly, Kant is still tough going, but the grandeur of his thoughts and his occasional wit shine through uninhibited by stale or musty language. The introductions, too, elucidate Kant's philosophy (jargon and all) and make it (almost!) accessible to the point that if the introductions were published as separate essays, they would be worth paying for. Combine all this with the shockingly low price (to put it in perspective, Pluhar's translation of the 'Critique of Pure Reason' alone is going for \$34.00 on) and you have an idea of how indisputably indispensable this set is. Just get it.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is considered one of the giants of philosophy, of his age or any other. It is largely this book that provides the foundation of this assessment. Whether one loves Kant or hates him (philosophically, that is), one cannot really ignore him; even when one isn't directly dealing with Kantian ideas, chances are great that Kant is made an impact. Kant was a professor of philosophy in the German city of Konigsberg, where he spent his entire life and career. Kant had a very organised and clockwork life - his habits were so regular that it was considered that the people of Konigsberg could set their clocks by his walks. The same regularity was part of his publication history, until 1770, when Kant had a ten-year hiatus in publishing. This was largely because he was working on this book, the 'Critique of Pure Reason'. Within the next decade and a half, Kant published the two later volumes of the Critique project. Kant as a professor of philosophy was familiar with the Rationalists, such as Descartes, who founded the Enlightenment and in many ways started the phenomenon of modern philosophy. He was also familiar with the Empiricist school (John Locke and David Hume are perhaps the best known names in this), which challenged the rationalist framework. Between Leibniz' monads and Hume's development of Empiricism to its logical (and self-destructive) conclusion, coupled with the Romantic ideals typified by Rousseau, the philosophical edifice of the Enlightenment seemed about to topple. Kant rode to the rescue, so to speak. He developed an idea that was a synthesis of Empirical and Rationalist ideas. He developed the idea of a priori knowledge (that coming from pure reasoning) and a posterior knowledge (that coming from experience) and put them together into synthetic a priori statements as being possible. Knowledge, for Kant, comes from a synthesis of pure reason concepts and experience. Pure

thought and sense experience were intertwined. However, there were definite limits to knowledge. Appearance/phenomenon was different from Reality/noumena - Kant held that the unknowable was the 'ding-an-sich', roughly translated as the 'thing-in-itself', for we can only know the appearance and categorial aspects of things. Kant was involved heavily in scientific method, including logic and mathematical methods, to try to describe the various aspects of his development. This is part of what makes Kant difficult reading for even the most dedicated of philosophy students and readers. He spends a lot of pages on logical reasoning, including what makes for fallacious and faulty reasoning. He also does a good deal of development on the ideas of God, the soul, and the universe as a whole as being essentially beyond the realm of this new science of metaphysics - these are not things that can be known in terms of the spatiotemporal realm, and thus proofs and constructs about them in reason are bound to fail. Kant does go on to attempt to prove the existence of God and the soul (and other things) from moral grounds, but that these cannot be proved in the scientific methodology of his metaphysics and logic. This book presents Kant's epistemology and a new concept of metaphysics that involves transcendental knowledge, a new category of concepts that aims to prove one proposition as the necessary presupposition of another. This becomes the difficulty for later philosophers, but it does become a matter that needs to be addressed by them. As Kant writes at the end of the text, 'The critical path alone is still open. If the reader has had the courtesy and patience to accompany me along this path, he may now judge for himself whether, if he cares to lend his aid in making this path into a high-road, it may not be possible to achieve before the end of the present century what many centuries have not been able to accomplish; namely, to secure for human reason complete satisfaction in regard to that with which it has all along so eagerly occupied itself, though hitherto in vain.' This is heavy reading, but worthwhile for those who will make the journey with Kant. The 'Critique of Practical Reason' is the second volume in Immanuel Kant's major Critique project. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is considered one of the giants of philosophy, of his age or any other. It is largely this book that provides the foundation of this assessment. Whether one loves Kant or hates him (philosophically, that is), one cannot really ignore him; even when one isn't directly dealing with Kantian ideas, chances are great that Kant is made an impact. The foundations of this text (a much briefer one than the first Critique) can be found in the short volume 'Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals'. Whereas 'Groundwork' sets out some short, basic principles, the Critique is a more synthetic text - it takes these principles and combines them with experiences, then presenting them 'as the structure of a peculiar cognitive faculty, in their natural combination.' According to translator and scholar Lewis White Beck, this second Critique has two functions - it affirms concepts 'without which moral experience would be unintelligible or

impossible' while it negates dogmatism and fanaticism that claims unique ultimate insight into metaphysical realities. Kant does make his argument for the existence of the immortal soul and for God in this volume, but these are considered lesser areas of Kant's competence. His discussion of freedom and autonomy, carried forward from his discussion in 'Groundwork', is much more studied and used in today's philosophical circles. The third book, the 'Critique of Judgement', is the third volume in Immanuel Kant's Critique project, which began with 'Critique of Pure Reason' and continued in 'Critique of Practical Reason'. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is considered one of the giants of philosophy, of his age or any other. It is largely this book that provides the foundation of this assessment. Whether one loves Kant or hates him (philosophically, that is), one cannot really ignore him; even when one isn't directly dealing with Kantian ideas, chances are great that Kant is made an impact. This book is divided into two major sections, the Critique of Aesthetic Judgement, and the Critique of Teleological Judgement. In the part on Aesthetics, Kant sets up for possible judgements - agreeable, good, sublime and beautiful. This relates back to the 'Critique of Pure Reason' (and scholar J.H. Bernard indicates that this framework is sometimes a bit of a shackle placed on Kant). Those things that are agreeable are wholly sensory in character, whereas those things that are good are ethical in nature. Kant argues that those things that are beautiful and sublime fall between the two poles of 'agreeable' and 'good'. Beauty is involved in purpose (teleology), whereas sublimity is that which goes beyond comprehension (and can be an object of fear). This also involves an idea of mind that allows for genius and creative activity. In the section on teleology, this is a way of looking at things based on their ends (telos), and links to aesthetics in terms of beauty (which has a sense of finality of form) as well as links to scientific purposes - Kant particularly is concerned to explore biology and the telos of the natural world. This also involves physics and logical principles, bringing Kant full circle back to some of the ideas from the 'Critique of Pure Reason'. This is one of Kant's master works, and while there is much that modern philosophers disagree with, there is also the sense in which no subsequent philosophy can ignore the developments and implications of Kant's Critique project.

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