

KANT'S *CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON*
Background Source Materials

Kant did not initially intend to write the *Critique of Practical Reason*, let alone three Critiques. It was primarily the reactions to the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* that encouraged Kant to develop his moral philosophy in the second *Critique*. This volume presents both new and first-time English translations of texts written by Kant's predecessors and contemporaries that he read and responded to in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. It also includes several subsequent reactions to the second *Critique*. Together, the translations in this volume present the *Critique of Practical Reason* in its full historical context, offering scholars and students new insight into Kant's moral philosophy. The detailed editorial material appended to each of the eleven chapters helps introduce readers to the life and works of the authors, outlines the texts translated, and points to relevant passages across Kant's works.

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PRACTICAL REASON

Background Source Materials

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Preface

This volume delivers both more and less than its title promises. It delivers less, because no single volume of this sort could ever provide *all* the background source materials that would be required to fully understand the *Critique of Practical Reason* in its historical context. My aim has been the rather more limited one of collecting only those materials that are: (1) the most essential for this purpose and (2) not already available in English. It delivers more, however, on three counts. First, the volume includes texts that help illuminate more than just the second *Critique*. The first part, for instance, contains substantial selections from texts by Wolff and Crusius that serve as background source materials for all of Kant's major texts on moral philosophy. Indeed, to the extent that any of the texts in this volume function as true *background* source materials, i.e., texts published prior to the second *Critique*, they also help illuminate many of the texts Kant subsequently published as well. Second, insofar as the volume's second part contains important reactions to both the *Groundwork* and the first *Critique*, the translations in that part offer an insight into the immediate reception of those texts as well. And finally, the third part includes several reactions to Kant's second *Critique*, which are included because they help situate the second *Critique* in its historical context by illustrating how the book was immediately received by some of Kant's most important contemporaries. Accordingly, the texts in Part III also serve as background source materials to some of Kant's later writings, especially when he explicitly responds to them, as I indicate in the introductions and editorial notes. To be sure, each of the volume's three parts could be expanded; indeed, they could each be an individual volume on their own. My hope, however, is that the selections I have made serve a variety of purposes and will help scholars and students better understand many of Kant's major writings on moral philosophy, especially but not limited to the second *Critique*.

In preparing the following volume it has been my practice to translate texts in full whenever possible. When this has not been possible, such as when selections are from book-length pieces, I have attempted to translate unified sections that stand alone and are not unduly harmed by extracting them from their larger whole. I have also attempted to strike a balance between being faithful to the original texts and making the translations readable for a present-day audience. I admit, however, that I have often favoured readability for particularly troublesome passages, or at least have tried to do so. I therefore apologize in advance to those whose sensibilities fall on the opposite side of the spectrum.

I hope that my efforts here make the texts I have translated better known, and that readers will be inspired to consult the original sources. Part of the reason for the obscurity of the texts in this volume, especially in the case of texts originally published in eighteenth-century journals, lies in the fact that the originals are often difficult to locate, and their bibliographic information is occasionally even listed incorrectly in the literature. But another reason why many of the texts translated in this volume are not especially well known outside of specialist circles has to do with certain biases: figures who were profoundly important at the time, such as Wolff and Crusius, are not presently major figures in the canon of Western philosophy. Furthermore, emphasis is often placed on studying monographs, when reviews and articles published in journals were extraordinarily important mediums for the exchange and testing of philosophical ideas, at least during the historical period that is my focus in this volume. The translations that follow therefore comprise my modest attempt to encourage readers to think beyond the canon, even if only to a small extent.

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Vesper and the members of the online Crusius reading group, and Howard Williams and the Cardiff Kant Reading Group. As always, thanks to my parents Harry and Margaret for their unconditional support of everything I do, to my sister Natalie for being my role model, and to Michael Baumtrog for keeping me grounded. I would also like to thank my son Oscar for inspiring me to develop an altogether different set of translation skills as he learned to speak while I finished the book.

I dedicate this volume to my wife Kacy: pursuing an academic career in this day and age is difficult, to put it as kindly as possible, and her generosity, support, and patience have made doing so both possible and bearable. Her advice, including countless suggestions concerning the style and content of this volume, has continually helped me to succeed. If the next ten years of our marriage are anything like the first, then we have a lot to look forward to.

General Note on Citations and Translations

References to Kant's works cite the volume, page, and line number of his *Gesammelte Schriften* (see Kant 1900ff.), except for references to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which follow the practice of referring merely to the page numbers of the first (A) and second (B) edition. Although I remain broadly consistent with the translations of Kant's texts available in the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, readers should assume that these translations are always modified. Translations from the *Groundwork*, however, are taken from the Gregor/Timmermann edition (Kant 2011), and again readers should assume they are modified. My primary reference for the German version of the second *Critique* has been a draft of Jens Timmermann's forthcoming edition that he is preparing under the auspices of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences.

Punctuation has been modernized in all the translations, and I often found it necessary to break up abnormally long passages into shorter sentences. New paragraphs have also been created at times, especially in texts that originally had no paragraph breaks whatsoever. Terms and passages that were emphasized in the original with slightly thicker type have been bolded, and Greek and Latin expressions have been italicized and translated in footnotes, unless the context makes their meaning clear. All footnotes in Arabic numerals are my own, and all footnotes marked with an asterisk are by the original author. Further translation notes that are specific to each individual text have been appended to the end of each chapter's introduction, where I have also mentioned the edition that formed the basis of my translation. The original page numbers from the translated text are given in square brackets throughout the translations. Original German terms are provided in square brackets throughout where I felt readers may wish to know how I have rendered a term. When my translation of a term is consistent

throughout a given text, the original German term is only provided once after the first instance so as to interrupt the flow of reading as little as possible. Finally, my translation choices often relied on the following dictionaries: Adelung (1811), Grimm and Grimm (2023), and Küttner and Williamson (1805–13).