



# The Coherence of Kant's Doctrine of Freedom

*Bernard Carnois*

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## **The Coherence of Kant's Doctrine of Freedom** Bernard Carnois

The term *freedom* appears in many contexts in Kant's work, ranging from the cosmological to the moral to the theological. Can the diverse meanings Kant gave to the term be ordered systematically? To ask that question is to test the consistency and coherence of Kant's thought in its entirety.

Widely praised when first published in France, *The Coherence of Kant's Doctrine of Freedom* articulates and interrelates the disparate senses of freedom in Kant's work. Bernard Carnois organizes all Kant's usages into a logical "grammar," isolating and defining the individual meanings and pointing out their implications and limits. In a first step, he shows how Kant's notion of *intelligible character* makes possible a synthesis of transcendental freedom, as a problematic concept of theoretical reason, and practical freedom, as a fact demonstrated by experience. He then develops the concept of freedom under the rubric of the will's autonomy in the context of the moral law. And finally, Carnois persistently explores the role of negativity in Kant's idea of freedom. For within the magisterial coherence of the system the imperfection of human finitude is inscribed. This introduces the "history" of our freedom—a freedom which posits itself, but then inevitably denies itself, even while preserving the possibility of its regeneration.

The only work in English to consider in detail all of Kant's writings on freedom, this book also introduces French Kant scholars whose works have often been unavailable to English-speaking readers. As both an interpretation of Kant and a trenchant analysis of the relationship between ethical commitments and metaphysical assumptions, it will be a useful addition to moral, religious, and political philosophy as well as to Kant scholarship.

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