



Kant's Critique of Spinoza

By Omri Boehm

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Contemporary philosophers frequently assume that Kant never seriously engaged with Spinoza or Spinozism-certainly not before the break of *Der Pantheismusstreit*, or within the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Offering an alternative reading of key pre-critical texts and to some of the Critique's most central chapters, Omri Boehm challenges this common assumption. He argues that Kant not only is committed to Spinozism in early essays such as "The One Possible Basis" and "New Elucidation," but also takes up Spinozist metaphysics as Transcendental Realism's most consistent form in the Critique of Pure Reason. The success -- or failure -- of Kant's critical projects must be evaluated in this light. Boehm here examines The Antinomies alongside Spinoza's Substance Monism and his theory of freedom. Similarly, he analyzes the refutation of the Ontological Argument in parallel with Spinoza's Causa-sui. More generally, Boehm places the *Critique of Pure Reason*'s separation of Thought from Being and Is from Ought in dialogue with the Ethics' collapse of Being, Is and Ought into Thought.

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Editorial Review

Review

"While Boehm's arguments achieve varying degrees of success, it is worth noting up front that, even taken alone, his addition to the literature on contemporary considerations of the principle of sufficient reason (PSR) in chapter 4 is well worth the price of admission." --*Journal of the History of Philosophy*

"An avalanche of important work has been done recently on Spinoza as well as on Kant, but no one has considered their philosophical relationship in extensive detail in the way that Omri Boehm does here. In addition to offering challenging original treatments of the concept of God and the Pantheism Controversy, a unique contribution of this volume is its systematic analysis of the relation of Spinoza's arguments to Kant's complex First and Third Antinomies. These chapters alone make the book required reading now for anyone concerned with the central themes of modern philosophy."

--Karl Ameriks, McMahon-Hank Professor of Philosophy, University of Notre Dame

"I found the book not only interesting, but convincing. That is very unusual for a book with a clear, pointed thesis! The writing is very clear and direct. There is a good deal of analytic engagement with arguments, but the book is also (as required by its theme) informative about historical context without being overburdened by scholarly detail. I would definitely recommend the book in any graduate course on Kant."

--Alan Nelson, Professor of Philosophy, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

"Boehm's book is an original, provocative and timely contribution to current Kant studies. Rather than relating Kant the metaphysician to the Leibniz-Wolffian school philosophy, Boehm identifies as the chief target of Kant's life-long concern with metaphysics the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza. But the philosophical merit of Boehm's study exceeds the scholarly innovation of replacing Leibniz with Spinoza as the stand-in for dogmatic, 'bad,' metaphysics. Throughout Boehm takes Spinoza's metaphysics seriously as presenting the most formidable rival to Kant's own original position of transcendental idealism. For Boehm, Kant's Spinoza is not a representative of old metaphysics to be overcome and left behind but the final challenge to be met in establishing transcendental philosophy."

--Günter Zöller, Professor of Philosophy, University of Munich

About the Author

Omri Boehm teaches philosophy at the Department of Philosophy of the New School for Social Research. He earned his PhD at Yale and has done philosophical work in Heidelberg and LMU-Munich. His publications include work on Kant, Early Modern Philosophy and the Philosophy of Religion. He is the author of *The Binding of Isaac: A Religious Model of Disobedience* (Continuum, 2007).

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