

PREFACE

I came to Kant because I had studied no foreign languages in my undergraduate program at Amherst College. After graduating, I entered the B.Phil. program at Oxford University and decided to study subjects that I had not pursued at Amherst. Much to my dismay, I learned that I could not study Plato or Aristotle without knowing Greek. The Kant dons were less fastidious: to work on Kant required no German.

The challenge and beauty of Kant's critical system entranced me. After a few months had passed reading the *Critique of Pure Reason* with Dr. Quassim Cassam, I knew that I was hooked for life. My two years at Oxford passed quickly. I wrote a thesis on transcendental arguments and transcendental idealism and survived the harrowing B.Phil. exams on Kant, the political philosophies of Hegel and Marx, and the philosophy of language and logic.

At Berkeley, I was eager to devote all my energies to understanding Kant. Professor Ginsborg's seminar on natural kinds introduced me to new Kantian texts, as did a reading group in German philosophy where I studied with a superb group of philosophers that included Wayne Martin, David Cerbone, Gopal Sreenivasen, Michael Della Roca, and Professor Daniel Warren. A term paper on Kant's idea of the systematicity of nature led to a topic in my oral examination, and it was in this area where I set out to find a dissertation topic.

I became interested in Kant's notions of organism and purposiveness in the *Critique of Judgment*. Meanwhile, I taught a course on the philosophy of biology in the Berkeley summer school. My students were outstanding, and one of the texts we studied, Timothy Lenoir's *The Strategy of Life*, propelled my dissertation research into a new area.¹

Lenoir wrote about German biologists of the early nineteenth Century who took themselves to be pursuing a Kantian research program. As I set out to write on the foundations of Kant's philosophy of biology, I noticed that what Kant took as paradigm cases of biological knowledge underwent major shifts. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant showed little interest in empirical knowledge of living things. In the *Critique of Judgment*, he conceived of the systematic study of form and anatomy as the route to biological knowledge. Most interestingly, at the end of his life Kant took the paradigmatic case to be our self-awareness of our own bodies. Eckart Förster's translation of Kant's *Opus postumum* had just been published, and I was keen to understand what Kant argued about bodily self-awareness in the *Selbstsetzungslehre* section.²

Despite Professor Förster's help, I found the *Opus postumum* a maddening text. However, I became clear about one thing: Kant understood the human

¹ Timothy Lenoir, *The Strategy of Life: Teleology and Mechanics in Nineteenth-Century German Biology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

body to be important not just as a route to biological knowledge, but also for cognition generally. I had finally found a concrete topic: the role of the body in cognition in Kant's late work.

I covered the distance from this topic to Kant's earliest solution to the mind/body problem relatively quickly. Thanks to an audience member's comments during a conference presentation, I learned that Kant's early works also contained many references to the human body. I was amazed to find that Kant's first writings included extremely interesting comments about the role of the body in cognition. As I re-read the *Critique of Pure Reason*, I discerned evidence that this theme was important to Kant in the main critical period as well. My dissertation topic broadened considerably: I was to write on the overlooked topic of Kant's lifelong concern with embodiment.

I still wish to write that work someday, but Professors Ginsborg and Warren properly disabused me of any thought of pursuing this in a Ph.D. dissertation. I decided to end my time at Berkeley by starting at the beginning. This study is the result of that decision.

² Eckart Förster, ed. and tr., *Immanuel Kant: Opus postumum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).