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978-0-521-12185-9 - Kant and the Power of Imagination

Jane Kneller

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KANT AND THE POWER OF IMAGINATION

In this book Jane Kneller focusses on the role of imagination as a creative power in Kant's aesthetics and in his overall philosophical enterprise. She analyzes Kant's account of imaginative freedom and the relation between imaginative free play and human social and moral development, showing various ways in which his aesthetics of disinterested reflection explains moral interests. She situates these aspects of Kant's aesthetic theory within the context of German aesthetics of the eighteenth century, arguing that his contribution is a bridge between early theories of aesthetic moral education and the early Romanticism of the last decade of that century. In so doing, her book brings the two most important German philosophers of Enlightenment and Romanticism, Kant and Novalis, into dialog. The book will be of interest to a wide range of readers in both Kant studies and German philosophy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

JANE KNELLER is Professor of Philosophy at Colorado State University. She is editor and translator of *Novalis: Fichte Studies* (2003) in the Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy series.

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Preface and acknowledgments

This book contains work that has been in process for over fifteen years, and during that time I was greatly aided by the encouragement and advice of wonderful colleagues and students in many places: philosophers and scholars too numerous to mention here, but some of whom will perhaps recognize their influence in parts of the book that follow. Let this serve as a gesture of my thanks and deep appreciation for their time and thoughtful discussions. Three constellations of scholars deserve mention in connection with this book, all tied in one way or another to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH): The NEH Summer Seminar “What is Enlightenment?” conducted by James Schmidt at Boston University during the bicentenary of the French Revolution, the NEH Workshop “Figuring the Self” conducted by David Klemm and Günter Zöller at the University of Iowa over the Spring semester of 1992, and the NEH Summer Institute for College Teachers on “Nature, Art and Politics after Kant: Reevaluating Early German Idealism” directed by Karl Ameriks and myself at Colorado State University in 2001. The participants at these NEH venues were truly inspired and inspiring, and without them much of this book would have remained unwritten, even unconceived.

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Hans-Georg Richert and Helga Slessarev, and (since they were not particularly fond of Kant) I dedicate the Novalis sections of this work to their memory.

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