



Preface

This volume deals with a part of the history of Western philosophy after Kant. Western philosophy, as almost anyone picking up this volume will know, has a history that began with the pre-Christian Greeks and Romans. It continued (after a fashion) in the European Middle Ages as a ward of Christian theology, and then underwent a renaissance in the Renaissance, recovering its autonomy and commencing what is commonly referred to as its “modern” (or “early modern”) period. That period is generally considered to have begun with such late Renaissance thinkers as René Descartes and Thomas Hobbes in the first half of the seventeenth century, and to have culminated impressively in the “critical philosophy” of Immanuel Kant toward the end of the eighteenth century. It featured the emergence and development of the very different traditions of “empiricism” and “rationalism” and their synthesizing supersession in Kant’s “critiques” of the various forms of reason and judgment. Kant thought nothing of importance remained for philosophy to do.

The history of philosophy did not end with Kant, but philosophy after him certainly did change. The period that ended with him was followed by another, during which philosophy went in different directions that undoubtedly would have astonished (and perhaps distressed) him, and yet became even more interesting in many ways than it had been previously. This post-Kantian era—which may or may not turn out in the eyes of posterity to have ended in the late twentieth century—is sometimes referred to as philosophy’s “recent modern” period. It was a period during which two quite different traditions emerged and developed, one of which became what has come to be known as “analytic philosophy,” while the other became a kind of adventuresome contest of modes and avenues of *interpretation*. They are explored in the two *After Kant* volumes of this anthology of Western philosophy: the present volume, *The Interpretive Tradition*, and its companion volume, *The Analytic Tradition*.

These two volumes provide selective introductions to these somewhat parallel (and, for much of the twentieth century, antagonistic) post-Kantian traditions in the history of philosophy, and to thinkers who figured prominently in them. The two developments are sometimes identified geographically as “Anglo-American” and “Continental” because although both had European origins, one relocated to the Anglo-American part of the world (in the 1930s), while the other remained centered in Continental Europe for much of the twentieth century. But it is both possible and more appropriate to designate them differently and more informatively, in the above manner—in terms broadly indicative of the differing basic characters and preoccupations of the developments themselves. Thus the former is commonly referred to as “analytic” philosophy, or

philosophy as it has been pursued in the “analytic” tradition, in which primacy has been accorded to various sorts of *analysis*.

That tradition’s geographically-identified “other” and longtime rival may contrastingly but comparably be thought of as a tradition in which philosophy has had a more *interpretive* character. Its characterization as a contest of “interpretations” is to be understood rather broadly. This term’s virtue is its suggestiveness as a flexible but meaningful rubric that can be used to embrace diverse attempts at *sense-making comprehension and assessment*, addressing many sorts of matters and issues (mostly relating to human reality and possibility) about which there are no clear and decisive decision procedures—including the problem of what to make of these competing ways of thinking themselves. And in this “contest,” convincing *case-making* pro and con—rather than rigorous proof, straightforward analysis, or factual determination—is the name of the game.

This volume is an introduction to a broad range of thinkers who have figured significantly in this philosophical tradition, from Kant’s immediate successors—most notably Hegel and Marx—through the generations of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, and of Heidegger and Sartre, to that of Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas (and to a few others at each end). This is as much of the interpretive tradition as can reasonably be regarded at this point as a part of the history of modern Western philosophy. Special attention is given to a relatively small number of figures who were of particular importance in the development of this tradition (Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger in particular). The thinkers to be encountered are presented in four broad groupings. These groupings, and the resultant division of the volume into four parts, reflect some of the affinities and differences among them. Other groupings are possible, however, and may better suit particular courses or interests. Instructors and individual readers alike are encouraged to bring together figures from different parts of the volume as may suit their purposes and interests.

Anyone familiar with figures and developments in this tradition is likely to find some favorites missing here. Even anthologies as substantial as this one are finite, and choices had to be made. Instructors may well want to integrate other figures—and other texts by included figures—into their courses on developments in this tradition. There is a lot here, however; and the contents of this volume should be largely sufficient to enable readers to become broadly acquainted with this extraordinarily rich and interesting part of modern philosophy. It is hoped and expected that many readers will want to read more deeply in authors whose writings included here inspire their interest. Time will tell which of them continue to seem to be of importance, and which others will come to seem deserving of inclusion with them—or in their places.

The interpretive tradition is a tradition that originated and largely developed in Continental Europe (hence the label “Continental”), and in a period during much of which the leading lights in most disciplines (philosophy included) were predominantly male and of European descent. That is inevitably reflected in the demographics of this volume, the primary focus of which is upon key figures in the first two centuries of this tradition. An effort has been made, however, to make the volume more inclusive than a standard list of choices would be by attempting to identify notable figures from other demographics during that time-frame whose thought and work may reason-

ably be considered to be both associated with the interpretive tradition and of sufficient quality and significance to warrant their inclusion. (This is an advantage of construing this tradition as broadly “interpretive,” which readily allows for its compass to be conceived as extending beyond its “Continental” originators and mainstays to others with links to them and whose thought has a similarly and relatedly interpretive character.) Hence the inclusion of W. E. B. Du Bois and Frantz Fanon; of Mary Wollstonecraft (as well as John Stuart Mill and Ralph Waldo Emerson—other non-Continental interpretive kindred spirits); of Hannah Arendt and Simone Weil (as well as Simone de Beauvoir); and of several contemporary figures differently but plausibly associated with strands of this tradition as it is configured here, Judith Butler and Martha Nussbaum among them.

While the four groupings in this volume are not the only ones possible, there are good reasons for them. The first two parts divide philosophers in the interpretive tradition between Kant and Husserl (and the beginning of the phenomenological movement) in a way that is both roughly chronological and philosophically meaningful. Part I is devoted primarily to variations on the philosophical “idealisms” that were inspired by combining Kant’s “transcendental idealism” with his insistence on the irreducibility of moral reality to sensible reality. Part II presents a number of figures who reacted against these “idealisms” and approached and interpreted human reality quite differently, as something whose character and distinctiveness are owed to its development as a form of *life*. Their approaches may in contrast be characterized, very broadly and loosely, as “naturalisms.”

Part III features twentieth-century thinkers from Husserl onward who, reacting against this “naturalistic” turn, gave interpretive priority to “first-person” experiential perspectives over others, often under the label “phenomenology.” It includes some associated with “existential philosophy” (the philosophy of human “existing”) and the “existentialism” derived from it, as well as others who were very differently-minded—including Husserl himself. The fourth and final part introduces a number of thinkers who have gone in other directions—and who have little more in common than a dissatisfaction with (or even an aversion to) what might be called the “phenomenological turn” encountered in the previous part. They include representatives of such other significant developments as philosophical anthropology, poststructuralism, hermeneutics, and various sorts of critical (social, race, and gender) theory.

Two basic uses for this volume are envisioned. One, of course, is in courses in the history of philosophy after Kant. But it may also be used as a resource by individuals in philosophy and other disciplines, and also by readers more generally, who are interested in (or may simply be curious about) some of these figures and developments and wish to become better acquainted with them. The interpretive tradition features many daunting thinkers and works; and without help both in finding key texts and in understanding them, few readers are likely to get very far. With this volume as a guide and resource, interested readers can actually explore it on their own. And since few potential readers—even in philosophy—are likely to have taken courses on very many

of these figures and developments, even the more knowledgeable among them should find this volume a very useful resource. It is sure to fill many gaps in the personal libraries of students in philosophy, and in any other discipline to which the history of recent modern philosophy is relevant.

Most philosophy departments have one or more faculty members who can easily teach a survey course in the history of philosophy from Descartes to Kant. This frequently does not extend to the post-Kantian interpretive tradition, even though student interest in some of its leading figures is often high. This volume is designed to be of assistance to instructors whose familiarity with this tradition is limited but who are nonetheless confronted with the challenges of teaching courses in it, as well as to supply those who know their way around with a rich array of textual assets and assistance for their students.

The contents of this volume greatly exceed what could be covered (or even reasonably assigned) in a one-semester course. Such coverage, even if selective, would require a two-semester course or sequence (for which its four-part division makes it well suited). A one-semester survey of the whole period could be devised that would pass over many of the less prominent figures and deal only with some selections from major figures, while encouraging students to take note of and sample the rest. But other types of courses in this general area are also possible (and popular) that can be variously structured, not just chronologically but also by developments that span both centuries (for example, existential philosophy). The volume is designed to work well in any such course—and it has the advantage of being able to serve as the single primary text in a variety of them that might be offered (and taken) successively.

The amount of material included from the various figures varies greatly. In a fair number of cases one or two relatively brief selections must suffice, offering simply a sample of the sort of work for which they deserve recognition and attention. For major figures, on the other hand, enough of their work has been provided—selected with an eye to (relative) accessibility as well as to significance and interest—that instructors who wish to do so can devote considerable attention to them individually, and can construct whole courses around relatively small numbers of them with few if any supplementary texts. Other figures fall in between, with selections more modest in number and length but still sufficient to provide a good introduction to their thought.

For some authors, such as Schopenhauer, Heidegger, and Sartre, the volume includes substantial portions of the particular major works that are their primary claims to enduring importance (along with samplings of their other writings). For others, such as Hegel and Nietzsche, no one or two of whose writings stand clearly above the rest in that respect, selections from a variety of different works are offered in an attempt to provide a more suitable introduction to their thought. Excerpts have been made with a view to enabling readers to get a good sense of the works from which they are taken, and of what it is about them (and in them) that matters. Instructors can also select from the selections, using those that they find work best for them and their students, within the time they choose to devote to the figures in question. Individual readers can do the same.

Hegel is a special case, owing not only to his special place and importance in the interpretive tradition but also to the problems presented by the character and variety of his texts and terminology. This volume offers a solution to what has long been a challenge for anyone who undertakes to introduce Hegel to those who are new to him—or anyone attempting to become acquainted with him on their own: the challenge of text selection, since none of his major writings by themselves works very well for this purpose. The approach taken here involves making use of Hegel's own introductions to his various lecture series (in which he communicates his thought most clearly and accessibly) as well as judiciously selected and topically arranged excerpts from his *Encyclopedia* (itself written as a kind of textbook to accompany his core series of lecture courses) and from accompanying lecture notes, paired with corresponding excerpts from his *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Philosophy of Right*. In these ways readers are introduced to the range (and power) of Hegel's thinking; and his own explanations and elaborations are employed to make his thought optimally comprehensible and teachable—in the very way he himself (to great acclaim) led his own students and wider audiences into it. (Instructors and readers can decide for themselves how much and which of the extensive array of these selections they wish to avail themselves of; for they are intended to enable those who are so inclined to proceed well beyond the level of simply making Hegel's philosophical acquaintance.)

Each of the four parts of this volume has its own introduction, presenting the developments and figures that will be encountered in it. A good deal more about each figure is conveyed in the headnote that precedes each author's selection or group of selections, and sometimes in footnotes to the selections. Readers are strongly encouraged to avail themselves of all explanatory material; for there is often much about the figures, and in and about the selections, that is helpful to know and that needs explaining. The footnotes as well as the headnotes are often interpretive as well as factual, and so are not beyond dispute. They are intended to begin discussion of the texts rather than to end it; and their discussion should itself serve both to enhance the comprehension of the selections and to heighten interest in them.

Headnotes begin with brief introductions to the featured figures, followed by biographical information, discussion of their thinking and significance, and some remarks about the selections that follow. Bibliographical sections for each figure are to be found in the back of the volume (along with general bibliographies). They provide information both about writings by them available in English or English translation and about the secondary literature on them that is available in English. (This extensive bibliographical information is another feature that makes the volume a valuable resource for advanced graduate students and faculty in philosophy and in kindred disciplines who are interested in these figures. It also provides an indication of the extent to which the various figures have [or have not] received attention in the English-speaking world.)

English-speaking readers often have difficulty with many of the European-language names to be encountered here. (The pronunciation of my own name illustrates the problem; “shocked” is acceptable—for non-Germans—but that

needs telling.) Learning to pronounce these philosophers' names properly is almost as important as learning to spell them properly (when writing about them). Unless the proper pronunciation of a name is completely obvious (for example, "Marx"), pronunciation guidance is offered near the beginning of each headnote. Such assistance is also provided for the pronunciation of a number of Hegel's (and some other German writers') key terms in German, which are often shown in their selections. Readers are urged to think of the German terms when encountering the English terms commonly (but often oddly or misleadingly) used to translate them; and to be able to do so, knowing how they are pronounced helps.

Keeping key German (or French) terms in mind is desirable because translating them—not only in Hegel's writings but in those of many of the other figures in the interpretive tradition as well—is a tricky business. It sometimes happens that there are no exact or even close counterparts in English to the terms' standard use in the original languages, let alone to the special meanings they have been given or usages they have acquired in the writings of Hegel and others. In some cases there are no counterparts at all that are not confusing or misleading, particularly when the meanings of the English terms originally chosen have themselves changed in the course of the decades (or even century or more) since some translations were made. And there are also cases in which the word choices of translators are simply perplexing, or have interpretive consequences that are problematic. Sometimes, therefore, it arguably would have been better to leave key terms untranslated in the text and to explain them in footnotes—as some translators themselves have done. Where this has been possible and has seemed to me to be advisable, I have replaced misleading or questionable translation choices with their (mainly German) originals. Where for copyright reasons this has not been possible but arguably would have been desirable, I have inserted the original terms in brackets following the translators' choices of English terms, to remind readers of the terms actually used on those occasions, and of any special points of meaning that may have been noted.

This volume is intended to serve as a kind of guide into and through the fascinating but rocky and often bewildering terrain of the interpretive tradition in philosophy after Kant. The landscape is sufficiently strange and daunting upon first encounter that such a guide is needed to assist newcomers in learning their way around in it. I certainly needed such guidance myself in my student days. I had the good fortune to be at the right places at the right times to receive it—first from Paul Tillich at Harvard (as an undergraduate), then from Walter Kaufmann at Princeton (as a graduate student), and subsequently from the excellent philosophy faculty at Tübingen University in Germany (during two lengthy stays there early in my career)—Otto Bollnow, Ernst Bloch, Walter Schultz, Helmut Fahrenbach, and Frithjof Rodi in particular. Those were only beginnings; but they were essential ones toward enabling me to become such a guide myself, both for students and for others.

What I and others seeking to provide that guidance have long needed but lacked has been a volume like this one, to be able both to use in courses and to recommend to anyone interested—a volume bringing together a substantial

array of suitably introduced selections and excerpts from key texts (in English or English translation) of thinkers who have figured significantly in this tradition. That is the resource this volume is intended to be. Differing approaches have been taken to the selection of texts by the various interpretive tradition figures included. Their mix is what I believe to be the best way of introducing this tradition and these figures to readers who do not yet know them well—and of enabling such readers to gain a fuller sense of the dimensions, contours, and major themes of the thought of the more prominent figures among them. The latter objective, as I have pursued it, has involved taking a “key parts” (rather than “single portion” or “short work”) approach to the work of these figures. That is one of the forms of assistance a good guide is needed to provide. But it should go without saying that, after benefiting from it, readers in whom interest has been kindled by the gathered parts should go to their sources (and further texts, and secondary sources) to see them in full context, and take their studies to the next level.

I dedicate this volume to my grandchildren, Madison, Kayley, Noelle, and Wade, in the fond hope that they may one day come to know and take an interest in what it’s all about—but with just as much love even if they don’t.