Preface

Innovation is the basis for economic growth. It enhances the quality of life and it is apt to improve our state of health. But in nature, the pursuit of technological progress is not necessarily complementary to the objective of improving society’s state of health. If it is only profitability that drives innovative activities, medical innovations may not always follow the medical needs of society. If we want to align technological change to society’s well-being, we have to understand the innovation process in general and in particular, if technological change affects society’s health.

On these grounds, this book investigates the origination and diffusion of novelty as it addresses health. It discusses methodological approaches as well as combining and applying neoclassical and evolutionary approaches to reconcile the economics of innovation with a comprehensive view on health.

Some of the questions I try to answer in this book are ones I asked one of my prior teachers, a long time ago. Ever since, the topics of health economics, technological change and economic methodology have become major topics of my research interest. This book is the result of those reflections which have been inspired by that scholar. In the meantime, Uwe Cantner, currently professor in economics at the Friedrich-Schiller-University of Jena, has become a best friend and colleague. It has been a pleasure working with him and his team. I am indebted to Holger Graf, Marco Guerzoni, Kristina von Rhein, Simon Wiederhold and our secretary Olga Gaessner. I am grateful for their support and valuable comments which helped me greatly to improve the quality of this work.

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Thomas Grebel

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