Dimova-Cookson, Maria, and Mander, W. J., eds. *T. H. Green: Ethics, Metaphysics, and Political Philosophy.*
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This edited collection of twelve essays on the ethics, metaphysics, and political philosophy of Thomas Hill Green (1836–82) is an original and first-rate contribution to a growing body of scholarship on this important Victorian era British philosopher. It will be an invaluable pedagogical and scholarly resource for philosophers, political theorists, historians of philosophy, and anyone else seeking to come to terms with the nature and significance of Green's philosophical thought.

T. H. Green is arguably the most influential nineteenth-century British idealist, as well as the second most important nineteenth-century liberal thinker (second only to John Stuart Mill). However—somewhat curiously—within the contemporary Anglo-American philosophical world Green is perhaps best known as the author of a lengthy introduction to an edition of Hume's *Philosophical Works* (1874) and for receiving the brunt of G. E. Moore's and Bertrand Russell's scathing attacks on absolute idealism (which partly paved the way for the development of contemporary analytic philosophy), Isaiah Berlin's attack on the idea of positive freedom, and W. D. Ross's attack on the notion that all rights are products of social recognition. Yet, Green authored several posthumously published works that have long captured the attention of theorists outside of philosophical circles, works which are only in recent years getting serious philosophical attention as worthy of more than just criticism but worthy as sources of positive philosophical inspiration as well. These works include *Prolegomena to Ethics* (1883), *Principles of Political Obligation* (1886), *Lectures on Logic* (1886), and *Lectures on Kant* (1886).

Along with the useful introduction by the editors, which provides a concise overview of Green's importance and which situates him within a larger historical and philosophical context, the remaining eleven essays in this volume introduce and critically assess various aspects of Green's ethics, metaphysics, and political philosophy. And they do so in way that conveys a clear sense for both the breadth and depth of Green's thought, covering his understanding of the relationship between mind and world, reason and knowledge, individual and society, as well as his understanding of the normative ideals of the eternal consciousness, self-realization, the common good, rights, and freedom. Overall, the volume makes a compelling case for why we should read Green and take his philosophical thought seriously today, whether we ultimately find ourselves embracing or rejecting some of his more controversial ideas.

Some readers may rightly complain that the volume is clearly slanted toward celebrating Green's thought by giving it a largely charitable treatment, with all but two of the essays defending rather than attacking Green. To some extent this complaint is unavoidable since the main concern of the volume is obviously to make a case for why Green is worth taking seriously. However, even though most of the contributors share this concern, it would be unfair to say that Green is treated with a gentle touch. Most of the chapters are highly critical of some of the most suspect aspects of Green's ethics, metaphysics, and political philosophy. Indeed the three parts of the volume itself are organized around a critical

assessment of some of the most contentious aspects of his thought: the doctrine of eternal consciousness which appears to be the metaphysical foundation of his entire philosophy, the role that his metaphysics of the self (via the eternal consciousness and a perfectionist theory of self-realization) plays in his ethical thought, and his social recognition-based theory of rights and the nineteenth-century version of what we might now call welfare state liberal perfectionism.

Perhaps his most contentious idea, at least from a secular modern philosophical perspective, is his doctrine of the 'eternal consciousness': the so-called spiritual principle (i.e., God), neither in time nor in space, immaterial and immovable, eternally one with itself, that is implanted in persons allowing them to appreciate the gap between what they are and what they ought to be and which among other things provides normative direction for the activity of pursuing self-realization and the common good of all. Skepticism about the viability of this doctrine is especially troubling because, as many commentators agree, to the extent that Green's philosophy is unified and this unity is linked to his metaphysical views about the nature of persons, then insofar as this doctrine is suspect so are the other aspects of his philosophy that rely upon it, including his epistemology, ethical, and political views. Responses have varied from arguing that Green's other views are rightly suspect for this reason, from arguing that his views are not unified, to arguing that the eternal consciousness is not indispensable to Green's philosophy—a fairly common strategy among those who believe, for example, that we can understand his political philosophy without getting bogged down with his metaphysics of the self. Interestingly, John Rawls's political philosophy was defended with this same reply against the first round of communitarian objections launched by Michael Sandel and others.

Part 2 of the volume considers various problems raised by Green's doctrine of eternal consciousness. Peter Nicholson, one of the world's foremost Green scholars, takes very seriously the objections to this doctrine, acknowledges that the eternal consciousness is indeed fundamental to Green's philosophy, but offers a charitable interpretation of this doctrine that purports to meet certain objections. The upshot of Nicholson's essay is that although Green's conception is informed by his particular moral and religious convictions, a minimal interpretation of the eternal consciousness allows one to ground it on one's own moral and religious convictions, precisely because the exact nature of the eternal consciousness and its relationship to human beings, by Green's own lights, is and will always be a matter of speculation (148). In his essay, "Green's Idealism and the Metaphysics of Ethics," Leslie Armour vindicates Green's doctrine of the eternal consciousness by drawing on idealism more generally and on Kant in particular while taking care to distinguish Green from other idealists. And part 2 concludes with an essay by W. J. Manders further vindicating Green by addressing pressing objections to the doctrine of eternal consciousness. Although each of these essays takes very seriously challenges to Green's doctrine, it would have been nice to see an essay by an unsympathetic critic of Green's doctrine to add balance to the section.

Part 1 contains four chapters that deal with various aspects of Green's ethics. In one way or another each essay illustrates or speaks to connections between Green's ethics and his metaphysical views concerning the nature of persons, which appears to lend support to the view that there is indeed a certain unity

between these aspects of his thought. David Brink's chapter, "Self-Realization and the Common Good: Themes in T. H. Green," argues that Green is best viewed as defending a perfectionist ethical theory to the extent that he calls for persons to pursue self-realization via the exercise of their deliberative capacities. However, in addition to the inspiration that he receives from the Greek eudaemonist ethical tradition, Green also goes beyond them by calling for a much broader understanding of the common good in a fashion similar to Kantian and utilitarian traditions in ethics. More specifically, he contends that full development of the exercise of one's deliberative capacities can take place only in a community of persons in which each person regards all other persons as ends in themselves on whom one's own perfection depends. This is, of course, a departure from the apparent restriction of the common good in Aristotle to exclude women, barbarians, slaves, and manual laborers.

In his chapter, "Green and the Idealist Conception of a Person's Good," John Skorupski considers Green's idealist conception of a person's good as self-realization in detail and notes how it informs a perfectionist understanding of the role of a liberal state. Of particular interest in this discussion is the observation that Green's developmental view of the good diverges from others—Hegel, Mill, and Marx in particular—in that he goes to greater lengths in underscoring the attainment of self-realization by virtuous pursuit of the common good, and this elaboration of Green arrives at his understanding of the good of a person as freedom by defining the good of a person as self-realization and defining freedom as self-realization. These observations support the thought that a liberal state committed to promoting freedom must thereby promote individual self-realization, understood as the development of certain moral capacities, and must do so in a way that allows for the common good of all.

Andrew Vincent takes up a detailed examination of the relationship between Green's metaphysics and ethics. And his result, much like the result of Nicholson's essay, suggests that indispensable reliance on the eternal consciousness makes Green a legitimate target of some of his critics. Vincent argues that while there are indeed ethical injunctions, albeit indirect ones, in Green's moral philosophy contrary to a more popular view that takes Green's moral philosophy to have a direct injunctive role—typically some version of Kantianism, consequentialism, or some form of perfectionism—the main source of inspiration for Green's moral philosophy, whatever specific normative theoretical shape it might take, is a very particular Christian moral code associated with a certain historical teleology. The upshot of this chapter is that when we situate Green's ethics in its true metaphysical and epistemological context (via the eternal consciousness doctrine), we see that the agency and telos of the eternal consciousness is the core of Green's injunctive perspective regarding how we ought to live. This part concludes with a chapter by T. H. Irwin, "Green's Criticism of the British Moralists," which is the most hard-hitting of the volume. Irwin argues that some of the shortcomings of Green's moral philosophy are attributable to his relative neglect or insufficient consideration of some of the British moralists that preceded him, including Butler, Price, Reid, Shaftesbury, and Whewell.

Part 3, containing the last four chapters of the volume, addresses Green's political philosophy. It opens with an essay by Gerald Gaus, "The Rights Recognition Thesis: Defending and Extending Green," that vindicates Green's social

recognition-based conception of rights. According to this conception a right obtains if and only if a power is recognized by some others or by society as contributing to a common good. Gaus defends Green by arguing that he advocates moral internalism and that a version of the rights recognition thesis follows from this. He extends Green by arguing that if Green had better understood the idea of a right as a recognized power, rather than only as claims, he could have arrived at the stronger view that actual social recognition is necessary for a right to be properly ascribed to a person. Gaus concludes the chapter by demonstrating that this extension of Green's theory of rights provides the resources to address W. D. Ross's objection that Green's recognition conception of rights leaves him unable to explain what is wrong with slavery.

In "Rights That Bind: T. H. Green on Rights and Community," Avital Simhony draws on Green's version of liberalism and theory of rights to rebut the familiar communitarian criticism that liberalism's preoccupation with rights is incompatible with, and even hostile to, the value of community. Simhony situates Green within the tradition of new liberalism, which deliberately sought to reconstruct liberalism so as to justify a more active state to address the various social ills, for example, poverty, bad health, addiction, and lack of education, that arose in late nineteenth-century industrial England, all without giving up the defining core of liberalism, namely, a deep preoccupation with taking individuals seriously. Simhony argues that when we consider Green's reconceptualization of freedom and of rights we see that taking individuals seriously need not be hostile to the idea of community. This chapter concludes with a useful account of how to situate Green within the contemporary landscape of political theory and philosophy and with the interesting suggestion that Rawls may owe a greater debt to Green than is typically acknowledged by contemporary theorists, due in part to a relative neglect of part 3 of *A Theory of Justice* (1971).

In the penultimate chapter, "Contesting the Common Good: T. H. Green and Contemporary Republicanism," Colin Tyler takes up Green's relationship to contemporary republicanism, arguing that a distinctive aspect of Green's republicanism is that he values participation and democratic contestation by active citizens as a necessary means of public dialogue between citizens about the good life and about the social arrangements that will help promote it. In the course of this discussion, Tyler provides illuminating insights about Green's conceptions of freedom, civic virtue, patriotism, and civil disobedience. The upshot of the chapter is that Green is a radical republican by today's lights, insofar as for him the development of a virtuous character and the development of civil, economic, and political institutions, practices, and norms fostering the development of such character are mutually sustaining and promoting, rather than being in a relationship where one is the precondition of the existence of the other but not vice versa.

The volume concludes with an essay by one of the editors, Maria Dimova-Cookson. Her chapter argues that Green offers us a better strategy for resolving moral conflict in a global pluralistic world than do John Rawls and Thomas Nagel. The advantage lies with Green, she argues, because unlike Rawls and Nagel, who identify morality almost exclusively with our knowledge of the right thing to do, Green identifies it with this as well as our determination to do the right thing, thereby combining both an epistemological and a volitional com-

ponent into his theory of moral action. The upshot of her discussion is that contemporary liberal moral theory's treatment of moral crisis, as characterized by these two prominent philosophers, can be revised and improved by taking lessons from Green.

This essay adds to the two general aims underlying the treatment of Green's normative philosophy in this volume: one is to show that taking it up can reshape and enrich our understanding of current debates and problems in contemporary moral and political philosophy; the other is to show that Green's normative thought cannot be summarily dismissed due to its association with some of his speculative metaphysical and epistemological views. Whether or not one takes Green to be a source of philosophical inspiration, which I most certainly do, particularly with respect to his conceptions of rights, freedom, and the nature of a liberal society, there is no denying that this volume makes the best overall case for why we should take the philosophy of Thomas Hill Green seriously. I strongly recommend this book, even if it is a more sympathetic treatment of Green than some critics might care for.

Derrick Darby
University of Kansas