

Preface to the 2004 Edition

In October 1986 I defended my Ph.D. on T.H.Green's theory of positive freedom with a book entitled *Beyond Equality: A Study of T.H.Green's Theory of Positive Freedom*. This was based on a reading of Green's unpublished manuscripts which are deposited in Balliol College Library, Oxford. I had chosen Green by way of compromise between my own interest in Hegel and the expertise of my supervisor at the European University Institute in Florence, the late Maurice Cranston. My interest in Hegel I had picked up in the course of my training in political theory at Leiden University where I had studied with Herman van Gunsteren, who eventually also was to become a supervisor to my Ph.D. But Cranston did not see fit to supervise a dissertation on Hegel, and so we came up with the British Idealists as a subject that would meet both our interests. British Idealism seemed like a fascinating period in British intellectual history since it so sharply contrasted with the traditionally empiricist nature of British philosophy. Green struck me as the 'best of the bunch' since he was the founder of the school and hence the principal champion of a new radical message in England. The topic of positive freedom was directly connected to the discipline in which I was trained. The fact that there was a substantial collection of unpublished manuscripts only made the project more exciting. I did soon realize, however, that my topic was going to be a rather lonely adventure: a relatively eccentric subject with only a handful of fellow researchers to share my interests. But I also saw the advantages: this way at least there still was something for me to discover.

I never made much of an effort to publicize this book and neither did the publisher. For that reason, it was for a long time one of the most difficult publications to obtain in the whole world. It was not just *Beyond Equality*, but also 'Beyond Reach' (I owe this quip to Derrick Darby). I completely acquiesced in the idea that my research on Green's manuscripts would remain a one man's enterprise. After all, everyone needs some subject to delve into for a dissertation and I decided that mine was as good as any. However, in 2002 I discovered much to my surprise that the climate for Idealist studies had altered radically. Not only were there many more people working in this field than I had ever thought possible, there even was sufficient support for a conference entirely devoted to Green, which was organized at Harris Manchester College, Oxford.

In this new edition of my book I want to give wider publicity to the findings of this research project from 1986. To do a full job would require a complete re-writing of the book, which would have taken much more extended research. Instead I have chosen to bring it up to date by supplementing the account from 1986 with references to all new studies on Green which have been published since then. It is not my ambition in the course of this book to actually enter into a debate with all scholars who published on Green since I finished the research on my Ph.D. In chronological order these are Jerry Gaus, 1983; Andrew Vincent, 1986, 2000; Geoffrey Thomas, 1987; Avital Simhony, 1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1993a, 1993b, 1995; Peter Nicholson, 1990; Colin Tyler, 1997; Maria Dimova-Cookson, 2001, 2003; Matt Carter, 2003 and David Brink, 2003. To make the book up to date I have provided cross references to this rapidly growing body of literature wherever this is relevant. I also have taken out some sections which now strike me as needlessly detailed digressions. In this manner, I omitted in Chapter One a reconstruction of the background of Hegel's *Propaedeutik* and an account of the various hypotheses I ventured regarding the status of the manuscript translation of this work which is kept among Green's papers. In Chapter Two I abridged the exposition of the published account of Green's general metaphysics in *Prolegomena*.

By issuing this updated edition I intend to make the results of my research accessible to a wider audience of scholars so that it can be taken into account in new directions in the interpretation of Green's body of thought.