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NEW STUDIES IN ETHICS

HEGELIAN ETHICS

Hegelian Ethics

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Professor of Logic and Metaphysics, University of Edinburgh

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CONTENTS

<i>Editor's Preface</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Preface</i>	viii
I. INTRODUCTION	i
II. THE TASKS OF ETHICS	6
III. THE SCOPE OF ETHICS	12
IV. ETHICAL FORMALISM	21
V. THE CONTRADICTIONS OF KANTIAN MORALITY	28
VI. VALUE, FACT AND THE MORALITY OF LOVE	35
VII. VALUE, FACT AND CONCRETE ETHICS	40
VIII. CRITIQUE OF CONCRETE ETHICS	49
IX. HEGEL'S MORAL PSYCHOLOGY	59
X. THE BRITISH HEGELIANS	69
XI. CONCLUSION	77
<i>Bibliography</i>	80
<i>Notes</i>	82

EDITOR'S PREFACE

Hegel has been neglected – by British philosophers at any rate – for more than a generation. Part of the reason for this is undoubtedly his notoriously difficult style of writing. Professor Walsh at one point in this study says, 'If only he could have matched the vigour of his thought with skill in self-expression . . .'; and all who have laboured to understand Hegel must have wished at many points that he could have done so. Another reason for Hegel's unpopularity, so far as moral philosophy is concerned at least, is the widespread belief that the most repugnant forms of totalitarianism from which our modern world has suffered, and still suffers, owe their inspiration to him.

Professor Walsh's monograph reintroduces Hegelian ethics to us. With great skill he redeems the vigour of Hegel's thought from the obscurities of its original expression and brings out its main lines very clearly. He also rescues Hegel's view that morality is primarily a social rather than a personal phenomenon from misunderstanding. Showing Hegel's debt to, and divergences from, Kant, he presents an exposition of the former's ethic which is sympathetic but not uncritical.

All students of moral philosophy, and indeed all readers who are interested in ideas which have gone to the shaping of our world, will be grateful for this careful analysis and critique of a thinker whose ethical reflections were original and influential.

University of Exeter

W. D. HUDSON

P R E F A C E

I am grateful to my colleague Professor H. B. Acton for commenting on this essay in typescript, as well as for discussing with me many of the main points of the subject. I should also like to record that I could not have attempted to write about Hegel's ethics even at this length, were it not for the existence of Sir Malcolm Knox's translations, with their admirable explanatory notes.

W. H. W.