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AN ENDLESS TANGLE OF PROBLEMS: AN INTELLECTUAL BIOGRAPHY OF THOMAS FRANKLIN GREEN

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This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Sherry, who put up with my fretting. It is also dedicated to my father, Jerry, whose support helped to make a year of research and writing possible.

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Abstract

This work is an intellectual biography of the philosopher Thomas Franklin Green. It follows his intellectual development beginning in his student years in higher education and concludes with an examination of his final published works. The purpose is both to essay Green's contribution to a particular period in education and to offer a careful analysis of the springs of his work in order to correct common misperceptions of Green as a conservative and a traditionalist.

Preface

This dissertation could have been subtitled "A Biography of a Pragmatist," because a philosopher of education is a general class of scholars whose work may suggest praxis but need not be directly concerned with the relationship of theory to practice. By contrast, a pragmatist is a practical empiricist; her criticism or evaluation or theory sets out from some particular problem found either among the objects of experience or within our social arrangements. She understands that thought, if it is to be fruitful, must connect meaningfully to experience, that it cannot afford to regard the every day with contempt. William James put it pointedly:

> The pragmatic method…is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to anyone if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle.[1]

Thomas Green might have written these words or something very much like them, but I have refrained from announcing him as a pragmatist on the title page for a couple of reasons.

First, Green wished to maintain distance from the ideological conflicts that had Balkanized the landscape of educational studies. He referred to it mockingly as a game of king-on-the-mountain:

> One philosopher would set forth his views about the nature of a good education and what the schools should do, and then he would seek to gain disciples and begin his reign…Among the competing schools, there were realists, pragmatists, idealists…and existentialists. The principals, it seemed to me, were engaged in a kind of ideological war, the aim of which was so ill-defined that it would be difficult to determine when the victory had been won…Being a peaceful man at heart, I was not at all attracted to the enterprise.[2]

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[1] William James and Giles Gunn (Ed.), *Pragmatism and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 25.
[2] Thomas Green, *Work, Leisure, and the American Schools* (New York: Random House, 1968), viii.

While Green wisely avoided getting shelled in an ideological battle, he could not so easily sidestep the fallout. Some of his colleagues in the field, especially the Deweyans, interpreted his cautiousness as a veil concealing anti-progressive views. It probably did little to allay suspicions that he wrote openly of his rootedness in the Reformed Christian tradition. Writing much later, in his preface to *Voices*, Green attempted to restate his position with respect to ideological battle lines:

> [W]ithout exception, to proponents of the various 'ists', 'ites', and 'isms'—modernists, postmodernists, Deweyites, Marxists—I would apply a test of common sense and ask whether their doctrine aides in unwrapping the ordinary, whether it helps in grasping what I and others know to be true in ordinary experience. Some may find here influences of pragmatism in one or another of its various forms. If that is so, it would not surprise me. The resemblance provides no evidence for the truth of what is argued here or elsewhere.[3]

The other reason I have refrained from touting Green as a pragmatist is because of the anachronism that such a claim would constitute. Green came to study philosophy through his mentor, O.K. Bouwsma, who was a Kierkegaardian existentialist and disciple of Wittgenstein's new philosophical method, and he credited another existentialist philosopher, Maxine Greene, as being first among his influences in the philosophical study of education. His own abiding interest in the relationship between personal righteousness and social justice smacks of Kierkegaard. But to call him an existentialist philosopher of education would likewise constitute misnaming; he was equally, profoundly influenced by his reading of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Locke, Hume, and Mill, among others. He was not averse to discovering helpful ideas from any quarter. His reading of philosophy was constructive. So, to the matter of Green's affiliation, one might say, "Don't call him a pragmatist, but he's a pragmatist. Don't

[3] Thomas Green, *Voices: The Educational Formation of Conscience* (Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), x-xi.

call him a Wittgensteinian, but he's a Wittgensteinian. Don't call him a Reformed Christian existentialist, but you get the point."

In the pages that follow, I have narrated Green's career from his undergraduate years to the final, unfinished articulation of his presiding project—a philosophically rigorous understanding of moral education in a pluralistic, democratic society. This is the pragmatic problem that absorbed most of his attention from first to last. If the narrative can be said to pursue a theme, it is how Green single-mindedly and across decades worked toward a unique articulation of moral education as a domain of inquiry distinct from moral philosophy. This separation of moral education from moral philosophy is adumbrated in his earliest published work and given increasingly fuller expression in the 1980s, culminating in the publication of *Voices* in 1999 and in the writing of the unfinished follow-up *Walls*.

In detecting a single project behind the various books and articles written by Green, I am departing from the assessment of his longtime friend and colleague, Dr. Emily Robertson. I am also aware of the tremendous burden that such a departure lays on my narrative. I hope I shall have shown sufficient evidence that Green did indeed have an early and abiding interest in the project, that it motivated much if not most of what he wrote and published. That, in a very real sense, it was always his endgame, however many decades in the making. To take a brief example, in his first book, *Work, Leisure, and the American Schools*, Green defines "human capacities" as "the exercise of judgment, a sense of style, and the practice of a sense of craft."[4] This is strikingly similar to his understanding of self-governance in the much later work *Voices,* and as

[4] Green, *Work*, 37.

readers of that book will know it is the central concept in Green's philosophy of moral education.

The opening chapter will be devoted to Green's undergraduate experience of life at a wartime and postwar university and how the cultural environment of a forward-looking country and an article by O.K. Bouwsma acted as the dual springs of his interest in the philosophical study of education. Particular attention is given to Bouwsma's article, "Jack and Jill on a Log," which I suggest is preliminary to Green's project and remained central to his understanding of what it means to do philosophy of education. Chapters 2 and 3 deal with the development of Green's understanding of the relationship of moral education to public institutions. This is also a time (the middle to late 1960s) of considerable professional success following years of—as Green put it—floundering. Here, he explicitly connects the problems of moral education to the specifically American democratic commitment to social and cultural pluralism. This is an angle on the problem he would pick up forty years later in his unpublished manuscript *Walls*. Again, we have the opportunity to witness Green at work on a single project—a particular aspect of it, anyway—stretched out across decades. In Chapter 3, I also examine the development of "the System," as Green called it, the rational structure within which moral education takes place. This work resulted in what some consider his magnum opus and lasting contribution to Educational Studies, *Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System*. It is the first of a conceptual trilogy, continued in *Voices* and partially concluded in the unfinished *Walls*, in which Green intended to publish his decades of research in the philosophy of moral education. More pointedly, the trilogy succeeds in defining the philosophy of moral education as a domain of

inquiry distinct from moral philosophy. Green's project represented something genuinely new on the intellectual landscape. Chapter 4 unpacks the uniqueness of the project in relation to other works of and projects in moral education.

My aim throughout has been to spark an interest in a philosopher whose work is novel, important, and largely forgotten. If I am also able to convince my readers that pragmatism is a broad enough umbrella to cover even an elder of the Presbyterian Church, then I will regard that as a happy, if concomitant, effect. What gets admitted to pragmatism if Green is admitted will be a broader understanding of democratic pluralism that neither rules out supernatural worldviews—as did John Dewey—nor promotes them—as William James did; will draw freely and creatively from the whole tradition of Western philosophy from the Ancient Greeks to the postmodernists in search of what works for Americans in the here and now; and will be a bit wiser, if warier, of the deliverances of reason. If I am right, then what I have written may be considered an examination of a threefold legacy—of a pragmatist philosopher of education, of a talented Wittgensteinian, and of a Reformed Christian philosopher of the skill and accomplishment, however unacknowledged, of an Alvin Plantinga or a Nicholas Wolterstorff. This is not to say that Green professed any continuity between his work and these three philosophical traditions. He was loath to ally himself in any ideological spats, and this meant concealing or leaving unspoken in his published work any connection to his influences. Nevertheless, there are traces and even explicit statements of influences in his letters and in prefatory material to some of his books. I have attempted to make these connections obvious. If there is anything amiss in my discussion of Green's philosophical legacy, then the mistake is my own. This semi-

conjectural aspect of the work that follows has been a biographical necessity; because I do not believe that a mind in conversation with itself is very interesting I have chosen to compare Green's writings with his most likely influences and philosophical kin.

The description "philosopher of education" is shot through with vagary. For example, it must comprehend Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Dewey, and R.S. Peters, writers as different in their methods, interests, and understanding of education as a guru, a systems analyst, and an epistemologist. Just as we would not feel we had made much headway by describing the latter three as "thinkers," we should perhaps feel more suspicious than we normally do in calling the former three "philosophers of education." Such is the crudeness of our thinking about education. There are two routes to address this problem. We can engage, as many scholars have, in a metadiscourse about the proper scope of the philosophy of education as a field of scholarship, through which we attempt to gain universal or broad assent to some particular definition of education and agreement on methodologies. Evidence of the last century leads one to feel dubious that any such agreement is forthcoming. Another route is to accept someone's claim to being a philosopher of education and to explore what that meant to the individual. This has the advantage of being less tiresome than spinning about in the whirlpool of metadiscourses, and I would like to suggest that large portions of this work should be read as an experiment in "doing" philosophy of education through the writing of biography. In this sense, it is a work that straddles two fields. I do not think a scholarly biography of a philosopher need become less a work of philosophy for its narrative ambitions.

Years in the company of Thomas Green can lead to fruitful discombobulation, and as a result I have experienced an unexpected reversal of what I thought most profound and least interesting in his work. Thus I feel that *work* and *leisure* are not only crucial concepts in education but may in fact be its twin stars, and Green's analysis of these concepts represents one of the most unique and creative contributions both to philosophy and to education. *Work, Leisure, and the American Schools* is a book Wittgenstein or Bouwsma might have written, had they possessed Green's wit and his incomparable ability to bring the insights of several fields to bear on a problem. It was his finest work. The long-term project, getting clear about moral education as its own domain of inquiry, had its original expression in that work. Second to his analysis of work and leisure is a chapter from his book *The Activities of Teaching* titled, "Wonder and the Roots of Motivation." Like the former work, it is a creative departure from the traveled roads of philosophy. It is an exploratory analysis of the use of the word *wonder* that makes clear not only its proper use in education but also its improper neglect. Here, we see the method developed by Wittgenstein and picked up by Bouwsma deployed to its best effect, not merely staking out the boundaries of an idea but pointing to areas of expansion. It is constructive philosophy pointing the way to pragmatic results.

On the other hand, the conceptual trilogy on moral education that some consider his magnum opus suffers from lack of completion. *Predicting* and *Voices* show Green at the height of his powers—they are creative, original, and show an uncanny sense of what is and is not important. Along with his other books, they constitute a master class for anyone interested in applying the tools of philosophical inquiry to the problems of

education in a pluralistic democracy. Tragically, the unfinished manuscript *Walls* was to be a sort of hermeneutic key, connecting the insights of the previous two books to actual students entering the commons from their respective identity groups. Without it, the vision is incomplete. As it stands, *Predicting* and *Voices* can be read fruitfully by students interested in learning how to do philosophy of education or by policymakers who are unconcerned by the problems presented by the competing claims of various normative groups on the identities of American students.

Green disliked late twentieth century literature for its lack of moral seriousness. I share his sentiment and have attempted in the pages that follow to write a narrative that takes seriously the idea that my readers can learn something about themselves by learning about Thomas Green.

Professor Green was born on February 8, 1927 in Lincoln, Nebraska to an educated, Presbyterian family. His father was a civil engineer and his mother a writer who turned her hand to educational biography later in life. His home was visited by some of the leading intellectuals and writers of the Midwest, including Willa Cather and Roscoe Pound. From early on, it seems, his life was pointed in the direction of creativity and the written word, but it was his encounter with one of America's great philosophers, O.K. Bouwsma, at the University of Nebraska that set him on the path to philosophical inquiry.

Chapter 1: Work and Leisure

In the summer of 1964, Thomas Franklin Green arrived in Syracuse, New York, at the end of a twelve-year period of intellectual frustration and academic exile.[1] He brought with him the nearly completed manuscript of what was to become his first large work of philosophy, as yet untitled—an analysis of the concepts of work and leisure.[2] It may have lacked the popular appeal of more exciting philosophical topics published throughout the 1960s, like the existence of God and other minds and the debates over free will and true belief, but what his *topic* lacked in flash *he* made up for in creativity of approach. In fact, Green exhibited a talent for deploying metaphors and constructing insightful thought experiments to rival the very best disciples of Ludwig Wittgenstein, a talent that sometimes drew the ire of his less perspicacious readers. Perhaps most importantly, the manuscript on work and leisure initiated one of the most original contributions by an American to the philosophical problems attending education in a pluralistic society.

It is a seldom-acknowledged fact that very few can, with sufficient time and effort, produce useful ideas about education in a pluralistic society. Typically, the person with ambition to solve such problems cannot pull free of perspective—the problems grow upon approach—and what one thought a molehill turns out to be Mount Everest. The task of sorting through the problems of education in the 1960s was, by

[1] The characterization is Green's own, conveyed in a letter to Gerald Grant dated March 1st, 1976.
[2] He had Chapters II-V in a "primitive and early form" as early as 1965, when they constituted his Robert Jones Lectures in Education (see "Preface" to Thomas F. Green, *Work, Leisure, and the American Schools*. New York: Random House, 1968.). Although the manuscript is older, as we know from Green's own remarks that he discussed the work with David Riesman at a 1964 meeting of the National Council of Churches at Eastern Baptist College, and he talked about it as if it had been a project long in the making with little encouragement from his colleagues at Michigan State. If this is the case, then the manuscript in early forms is perhaps as old as 1959, when Green moved to the Education Faculty at Michigan State. He credited the encounter with Riesman as his primary encouragement for completing the manuscript (in the letter of March first mentioned previously).

mountain standards, gargantuan, but Green possessed the odd combination of ambition and patience that enabled him to scale some important peaks. This is all the more impressive because Green was new to the game and made his entrance during one of the most mercurial periods for public education, before public policy confined itself to the merry-go-round of testing regimes, to more or less standard core subjects, and to compulsory attendance through ten or twelve grades. The question of what it meant to be educated, perennially unsettled, was all the more lively during that period of high-spirited, if inconstant, debate about the purposes of education on a national scale. To this quicksilver controversy, Green would bring a rare talent for cool analysis and a distinctly Presbyterian commitment to democratic pluralism. It would be his singular contribution and his life's work.

But how did a young man from an educated white-collar home, a young man who had studied under the top analytical philosophers in the country and an Ivy League graduate to boot, decide to turn his attention to the philosophical problems of manual labor? An answer to this question begins at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln then winds through years of early disappointment in Rapid City and East Lansing before taking a positive turn in a fateful meeting in Philadelphia.

The University of Nebraska at Lincoln, 1944-49

For twenty years, from the closing act of World War II to Thomas Green's arrival in Syracuse, the United States busied itself with the economic and military aspirations of a growing empire, and at the center of empire stood the public school system. Green was himself a product of this period in higher education, having entered

the University of Nebraska at Lincoln in 1944, when campus life carried on under the shadow of the war, a shadow that had loomed over Green's youth. In many ways, the situation at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln during Green's five years there (1944-1949) was typical of the wave of changes effecting universities around the country. In fact, the environment of the campus and the country's larger social transition from a wartime mood to optimism and prosperity helps illuminate Green's early interest in futurism, an interest which contributed motivation to the writing of his manuscript on work and leisure, and so it will pay dividends to briefly reconstruct the social and cultural environment of the time before moving on.[3]

In the four years preceding his registration at The University of Nebraska, both the university and the country had experienced the highs and lows of the Cornhuskers competition at the 1940 Rose Bowl, the reelection of Franklin Roosevelt—an unpopular president in Nebraska—to his third term and later, in 1944, to his fourth, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Declaration of War, the official presence of the army at the university, and the departure of the R.O.T.C. for the warfront. A native of Lincoln, Green's mood was affected by the uncertainties and insecurities, the local victories and national tragedies, which made headlines at the university and around town.

The University of Nebraska yearbook for 1943-44, the year before Green enrolled, is full of patriotic military imagery. On the bottom right hand corner of the introductory page is a stencil of a woman in plainclothes smiling at a man in uniform, and on the next page is the strong profile of a determined, helmeted soldier. Most sobering is a black and white photo on the editor's page of two female students smiling

[3] The description of the campus setting that follows is largely a reconstruction of information taken from the University of Nebraska Yearbooks for 1944-49.

up at a male student in uniform with his luggage beside him and the caption, "Fall would see the coeds returning, but great and grave adventure lay before the soldier." For all of the bold imagery and captioning, the yearbook was full of repetition of words like *uncertainty*, *tumult*, and *parting*. This was a year of escalating anxieties and doubly so for a young man stepping out into the world of college.

When Green arrived on campus in the fall of 1944, the mood of the place had grown grim. The war effort was in full swing. Many of the female students folded bandages on the weekends, while many of the male students, including Green, joined military fraternities and began their preparation for combat. The trials of enrollment at the University of Nebraska were a perspicacious symbol for the experience of young Americans that year. Freshmen wound their way through a disorienting maze of desks, chalkboards, and folding wooden lawn chairs in the basketball gymnasium. Lincoln natives, like Green, would have been looking around the ordered mess for familiar faces, stopping to speak with a high school friend before heading to yet another table for a second or third round of signing forms.

It was a hot, noisy, and time-consuming affair but one undertaken, in 1944, in a dutiful spirit. In the previous academic year, many of the young men on campus had gone off to the front lines, and their example haunted those just entering the university. It was a year when to be a young man meant to fight the axis powers on the frontlines. Billboards, posters, and news stories presented one narrative for American manhood, and it had little to do with cozying up to campus life and the pleasant company of coeds. And yet, this was just the situation in which Green found himself, with an older brother

fighting and dying at the Battle of the Bulge and himself on the lovely campus of the University of Nebraska.

His concession to the spirit of duty and wartime seriousness was expressed in his pledging to the army fraternity, the Nebraska Alpha chapter of Phi Kappa Psi, but Green was by disposition a cheerful young man who delighted in campus social life. Fortunately for him, despite the tensions and the austerities of wartime, college life still presented a variety of pleasures to appeal to Green's interests, particularly in music and performance. The campus hosted accomplished musicians and singers such as the violinist Erica Morini, Lawrence Tibbit, the lead baritone for the Metropolitan Opera, and pianist and popular humorist Alec Templeton. Green joined the University Singers who performed Handel's "Messiah" to considerable praise and a couple of weeks later gave a Christmas Carol service. A more lasting musical interest for Green was the clarinet, for which he joined the University Orchestra. He devoted his Tuesday nights throughout freshman year to practicing Beethoven, Bach, and Brahms, and when fall rolled around the orchestra gave a public performance as the highlight of the musical season.

The bustle and seriousness of 1944 was followed by a memorial year both on campus and in the Green family, but by 1946 the cultural environment of the country and the university was saturated with talk of the future. With the influx of G.I. Bill students, the university began an ambitious building project that resulted in a new library hall, agronomy building, women's physical education building, fine arts building, student health and pharmacy building, engineering building, auditorium, and classroom building. Like the school, Green himself went through a period of

exploration and rebuilding. He followed up on a burgeoning interest in journalism by working for the school paper, *The Cornhusker*, the local paper, *The Nebraskan*, and the Presbyterian House newsletter, *The Presby Post*. He left the orchestra for the varsity band, playing at all of the football games, and his fraternity, Phi Kappa Psi, won best arrangement in the victory parade following the defeat of arch-rivals Kansas. Green was an officer in his fraternity in 1946, and with the rest of his brothers would sit on the porch each day at lunch and watch passersby. It is tempting to think that here we find the beginnings of his interest in leisure, whiling away the time in the lazy peacefulness of campus life.

Green met two people who would influence his development as a philosopher and scholar during this time at the university. Rosemary would do so through unflinching support, first as his girlfriend and later as his wife, while Oets Kolk (O.K.) Bouwsma introduced him to common language conceptual analysis, a nascent area of philosophical study that he was developing in response to G.E. Moore's analysis of sense-data and Ludwig Wittgenstein's unique work in Cambridge.

Bouwsma was a Reformed Christian philosopher, trained at Calvin College, who like many Reformed Christians in the mid-century discovered a ready alliance between Calvinist theology and analytic philosophy.[4] This alliance had something to do, one would suspect, with the anti-foundationalist tendencies of Calvinism and the modest epistemological ambitions of analytic philosophy. Alvin Plantinga famously drew this parallel in his monumental trilogy on Warrant in epistemology, ultimately arguing that Calvinism's *sensus divinitas* provided warrant for true beliefs. That such a connection

[4] Many notable Reformed Christian philosophers trained in this period come to mind: Alvin Plantinga, Nicholas Wolterstorff, William Alston, Norman Malcolm, and Thomas Green, among others.

between philosophy and theology mattered to Bouwsma, as well, is attested to by his many former students. One such student, Ronald Hustwit, who organized and published portions of Bouwsma's notebooks, wrote that "Christianity oriented Bouwsma's intellectual journey at every point and with respect to the direction of every idea."[5] He taught at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln from 1928 to 1966 and then worked at the University of Texas at Austin until his death on March 1, 1978.

Bouwsma's method will sound familiar to anyone who has read Green's work. It was strikingly simple but could yield surprisingly complicated insights. Rather than define a problem from some well-worn philosophical position, e.g. Thomism or Pragmatism, he would ask after the uses of words and then play with them, typically by comparison to the ways the words are used outside of philosophical discussion, until he had arrived at some new statement about or new insight into a problem. For example, he discovers a telling distinction in ethics between broadly ethical language and more narrowly moral language (a distinction which Green makes great use of later):

> Today in ethics I came upon this distinction. When it comes to injunctions like: Be smart; Be honest; it will sometimes make sense to ask why? And the answer may be something like: You'll get on in the world. These may be called counsels of prudence. [These keep the world from breaking you down.]…But there are other commands: "Be merciful," "Be kind," "Be compassionate," "Be charitable." Here to ask: Why? makes no sense at all.[6]

Bouwsma borrowed from Wittgenstein, who he knew personally, the notion of language-games, "reminding himself of how the words of the philosopher work and do not work in those games."[7] This method was meant to bring philosophy down to the earth—to concern philosophers with the mundane world, so to speak—but the method

[5] Hustwit, Ronald E. and J.L. Craft (eds.) *O.K. Bouwsma's Commonplace Book: Remarks on Philosophy and Education*. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 13.
[6] Hustwit and Craft, *O.K. Bouwsma*, 65.
[7] Hustwit and Craft, *O.K. Bouwsma*, xix.

itself involved a tremendous amount of play, especially play with words. In fact, Bouwsma's archived writings at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas are recorded on upwards of 480 legal pads and five reels of microfilm.[8]

Bouwsma's way of doing philosophy required a tremendous amount of patience, including an especially high tolerance for only modest advances on problems. One popular anecdote from his time at the University of Texas in Austin has it that a more classically trained philosophy student, overcome with frustration at a protracted and laborious discussion of the many uses of the word "think," angrily interrupted the class to insist on knowing merely what were the necessary and sufficient conditions of thinking. Bouwsma, with characteristic good grace, gently told the student, "For me, the necessary and sufficient conditions of thinking are a pencil, a tablet and a lapboard."[9] This sort of response to Bouwsma was not unusual. His manner in the classroom has been captured best by Hustwit and Craft:

> His seminars began with time for the student to express what had been troublesome during the week. "What shall we talk about today?" If no one began immediately, Bouwsma waited with patience. There was never a hurry. Students, by contrast, were impatient. "Why does he not lecture? Why does he allow people to go on like that? Why does he not tell us something?" But Bouwsma would not "tell" anyone anything. If he saw that a student wanted information, he would not give in. He waited. If he saw that a student was interested in something, he allowed him to go to wherever that thought led. He waited. If he tried to get there too quickly, he slowed him down. He said in his manner of questioning and the tone he set in discussion: "We have all day. There is no hurry. Learn from what we are failing to accomplish." Patience.[10]

[8] Hustwit and Craft, *O.K. Bouwsma*, ix.
[9] Pincoffs, Edmund L. (chairman), Edwin B. Allaire and Aloysius Martinich. "In Memoriam: O.K. Bouwsma," retrieved 1/10/2015 from The University of Texas website: http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/2000-2001/memorials/SCANNED/bouwsma.pdf
[10] Hustwit and Craft, *O.K. Bouwsma*, 15.

For Bouwsma, philosophy was "an activity, not a body of doctrine."[11] It was a matter of untangling the language with which philosophers articulate problems, of making the familiar strange, and of seeing a problem in a new and more constructive way. However, philosophy was not something that produced new knowledge, per se. It could produce insight into what is already known or, in its popular critical form, it could expose ignorance masquerading as knowledge. But it was not the sort of discipline that should aspire to accomplish more than "dabbling"—inspired dabbling, perhaps, but still only dabbling. Making this very point, Bouwsma once compared doing philosophy to rearranging the books in a library.[12] To view the task this way requires that the philosopher adopt a humble outlook regarding her own work. That sounds well and good, but the question arises as to how a philosopher can practice epistemic humility when confronted with a pressing practical concern, such as those one finds in education. Fortunately, Bouwsma was working on educational problems the very year Thomas Green began his undergraduate studies at the university, and so we can see to some degree his answer to that question—an answer in which we glimpse the springs of Green's own future scholarly project.

Bouwsma's most explicit statement of his educational philosophy is found in an article published in 1944 for *Prairie Schooner* titled, "Jack and Jill on a Log."[13] It marks his first published foray into practical philosophy, having published previously almost solely on the metaphysical problem of universals. Universals are properties that individuals "have" in common. The question philosophers have been asking and answering in various ways is how properties are "had." So, for example, one might

[11] Pincoffs, et al., "In Memoriam."
[12] Hustwit and Craft, *O.K. Bouwsma's*, 121.
[13] O.K. Bouwsma, "Jack and Jill on a Log." Prairie Schooner, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Summer 1944), pp. 112-12

notice that the red property of an apple is precisely the same red found in a paint can. A realist says that the two instances of red are really one thing, the property "redness," shared between two individuals (the apple and the paint). A nominalist, on the other hand, would give some version of the answer that "redness" exists only in our minds. That it is not a property of individual objects but rather of ideas we have about the objects of our perception. The difference between the realists and nominalists has enormous implications for how we think about the universe. If the realists are correct that there are mind-independent properties, like redness (the property of all particular reds), chairness (the property of all particular chairs), or doghood (the property of all particular dogs), then the fundamental nature of the universe cannot be reducible to matter and energy. There must be some realm, like a spiritual realm or a Platonic realm of forms, where properties can be said to exist. This is an attractive possibility for philosophers who are not atheists, as it provides a positive argument against atheistic materialism. However, if the nominalists are correct, a materialist universe does not follow necessarily but an argument against it is taken away. This is why so many theistic philosophers have devoted a considerable amount of energy to defending some form of realism with respect to universals. The problem is one of the oldest in philosophy and one that Bouwsma applies in an interesting way to his thinking about education.

He does not drop his interest in metaphysics; rather, he brings metaphysical considerations into contact with the practical problem of what to do about educating children. It is against this backdrop of his work in metaphysics that Bouwsma hits upon the notion that any philosophical inquiry into education must spring from one of many

possible anthropological assumptions. That is, behind all philosophical speculation about what to teach children stands some more or less specific idea, some first principle, about what kind of thing a human being is. From this it may be inferred that the philosophy of education is the critical examination of the ideologies at back of educational theories, curricula, and practices. This same idea is echoed in the opening pages of Green's book, *Work, Leisure, and the American Schools*: "Each such model of humanity, fully explicated, would yield its corresponding style of education. Education would then become more vocational, more professional, more classical, more religious, more practical, or whatever—depending on the particular blend of excellence implicit in one's ideology of man."[14]

Bouwsma published his article during Green's freshman year at the University of Nebraska, and it is tempting to imagine the young Thomas hunkered over a copy in the popular student commons reading intently as his friends talked about the war effort and the coeds. Whatever the case, it is clear that in one way or another he benefited from his professor's insights about education. Bouwsma treated his classes as a philosopher's workshop, and saw teaching as something with which both the student and the professor should be engaged. He once wrote of himself,

> If I am a fairly good teacher, this is not at all because I am sharp, clear headed, well informed, and so on. I have had students who are ever so much more intelligent than I. I think it is because I am and continue to be in step with the students I teach, not a step behind and perhaps only a step ahead. Under these conditions, these students and I can understand one another. We can discuss…[w]e are to share our confusions so that we should work together to share a state of clarity.[15]

[14] Green, *Work, Leisure*, 5.
[15] Hustwit and Craft, *O.K. Bouwsma*, 177.

There can be little doubt that his ideas about education, still fresh on his mind, were common points of discussion in Green's first year or two of coursework.

So what did Bouwsma say exactly in his famous article? First, he begins by stating what he takes to be the least controversial claim about education—that it must have something to do with knowledge. He then quickly moves on to deconstructing the commonly held idea that education is principally a matter of acquiring culturally valuable or interesting information. Rather, he argues that "[b]y knowledge we come to enjoy the design, the sweeping plans, upon the outlines of which the world is made."[16] Most interestingly, Bouwsma says something that Green picks up on and writes quite elegantly about twenty-five years later: "Knowledge is born in wonder, and may end in reverence."[17] These are not the sentiments of a particular religious dogma, per se, but they are premised upon some faith in the meaningfulness of the order found in the universe. This is significant for a couple of reasons. Bouwsma's understanding of knowledge anticipates later philosophies of situatedness, such as Alastair MacIntyre's rival versions of moral inquiry,[18] Charles Taylor's hermeneutic of the unarticulated background,[19] and various postmodern narrativity theories.[20] This separated Bouwsma, and I would argue Green, from the strongly Kantian analytic philosophers of the early to middle twentieth century. The elder philosopher seemed to be fully cognizant of the

[16] Bouwsma, "Jack and Jill," 114.
[17] Bouwsma, "Jack and Jill," 114. This is the idea at the heart of one of Green's best works, his chapter titled, "Wonder and the Roots of Motivation."
[18] Alastair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1991).
[19] Taylor articulates this theory across a number of well-known works, the most important of which are, in my opinion: Charles Taylor, *The Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); and Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap of Harvard University Press, 2006).
[20] I will just mention the popular poststructuralist thinkers whose work serves as the pillars of narrativity theories: Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, and Immanuel Levinas.

division of worldviews even in philosophy. Rebuffing Turgenev's arch-cynic, Bazarov, who called nature a workshop, "not a temple," Bouwsma protests:

> nature, if not a temple, is at least not nothing but a workshop. Nor is it simply a great stone upon which men are to grind their minds. Nature is dumb, but we may know enough to see that if it could speak, it would not speak of ready cash or of love on the sly. It might echo the words of the psalmist: I too am 'fearfully and wonderfully made.'[21]

While for Bouwsma this is the third and most important form of knowledge, he also sketched out two other uses of the word having to do with sharpening the wits and solving problems. He clearly felt that this was the central issue for philosophers of education—if we did not distinguish between these uses of the word *knowledge* then we were unlikely to know what to do for Jack and Jill. This understanding of the divide between worldviews and the implicit rejection of a universal rationality to which all reasonable people might assent, was a unique insight into the springs of conflict in various educational theories. Furthermore, Bouwsma's situated understanding of knowledge is important also because it gave Green a model for thinking philosophically from a theistic perspective—a point of view that characterized his work throughout his career.

Late into the writing of his manuscript on work and leisure, Green would come back to Bouwsma's understanding of the philosophy of education as the critical examination of ideologies but with a change in focus. Instead of latching onto the idea that it was a philosopher's job to get straight his or her own conception of knowledge before proceeding, Green thought that one's view of knowledge was one piece of an ideology that should be sifted for what did and did not work. So, whereas Bouwsma considered getting hold of the proper understanding of knowledge to be the key move in

[21] Bouwsma, "Jack and Jill," 115.

a constructing a helpful theory of education, Green thought it more important to show which beliefs about knowledge (whether true or false) were more useful—which had greater pedagogical value or were more adequate given some social need. This is Green the pragmatist, asking "what precisely are the constituents of our beliefs, as well as whether and in what respects they are either functional or dysfunctional in relation to our world and therefore in relation to the process of growing up into our world."[22] On this point, and on many others, he took a pragmatic turn that distinguished his own approach to philosophy from that of his mentor.

Nevertheless, Bouwsma's influence is felt in the technique employed by Green, as well as in his understanding of what it means to do philosophy. Like his mentor, Green saw the philosopher's work as "[t]he art of reminding, exposing and curing" requiring "a detailed examination of numerous uses of ordinary words in ordinary contexts," in order to draw "the limits of the uses and...showing that and how traditional philosophers unwittingly exceed the limits."[23] This is the lesson he learned fully over his five years spent in the small, stuffy but lively classrooms of the University of Nebraska.

A question lingers over this period of Green's education. What made this new way of conceiving the philosophical enterprise so attractive to Bouwsma and his students? In asking the question this way, I mean to gesture in the direction of a social and cultural structure in which anyone living in the university system of the time would find him- or herself situated. The picture of postwar America is a familiar one. On the one hand, it was a time of celebration for the millions of American servicemen who

[22] Green, *Work, Leisure*, 7.
[23] Pincoffs et al., "In Memoriam."

were reunited with their loved ones. There were the well-known street parades, the baby boom, the economic emergence from the dustbowl—especially relevant to a place like Nebraska—which made the G.I. Bill and record enrollments possible. While flushing toilets, central heating, and electricity were not yet ubiquitous experiences for Americans, by 1945 the country was unequivocally a global economic superpower and well on its way to ultramodernity. Spirits were undeniably high.

Unfortunately, the light mood did not last long. At home, postwar inflation led to massive waves of workers' strikes for higher wages, there was a housing shortage due to the baby boom, and Soviet antagonism created fresh anxieties about the security of the future. These anxieties were exacerbated by Stalin's "iron curtain," which fueled the development of what would later be called the military-industrial complex in the United States. Over the next few years, the tensions that rode beneath the surface of American optimism were justified in changes overseas—changes for the worse, in the eyes of many Americans. By 1949, Mao Zedong won control of China for the Communist Party following a violent civil war, the developed and developing world split between NATO and Warsaw Pact factions, and relations with soviet countries steadily worsened due to spying.

In 1948, the year before the creation of NATO, American Elizabeth Bentley's testimony to extensive spying on behalf of the Soviet Union was made public, implicating upwards of 140 American government employees as spies. Bentley, formerly of Ithaca where Green would make his home for a few years, was in many ways a model American woman. She had done her undergraduate work at Vassar, been a graduate student at Columbia, and received a fellowship to study abroad in Italy

during the fascist uprising. Her family was respectable, her image clean. So it came as a shock to the country to learn that someone like her was capable of spying for the arch-nemesis of the United States. The fear generated by the revelation of her spying led a couple of years later to Senator McCarthy's Red Scare.

The decade stretching from the middle 1940s to the middle 1950s was perhaps the most uncertain time since the years immediately leading up to the Civil War. Although there was no public debate about what it meant to be an American, there was plenty of fear that one might not be able to trust the American next door, and this problem was compounded by the firm belief that there was one way only to live a fully human life—by buying into the American dream. What to do with the parts of the world, and the people at home, who seemed to hold such disparate views on what it meant to be human, to be fulfilled?

Bouwsma, who had a strong grasp on this period of uncertainty, led his students back to the most fundamental question driving any educational enterprise: what kind of thing is Jack or Jill? Of course, he had an answer in mind. His method was Socratic elenchus, meant to guide them to a particular understanding—that the best way to conceive of Jack and Jill was as Judeo-Christian creatures, made in the image of God to steward his creation. There were some advantages to setting out from such a starting point. Most importantly for a philosopher, it provided the educational theorist with a firm metaphysical basis for those humane values that had driven the public school movement. If Jack and Jill were made in the image of God, then their value was unimpeachable (or inalienable, in the words of Thomas Jefferson). The educational

theorist need look no further for a reason to allocate massive amounts of money, resources, and time on their intellectual and moral development. They were worth it.

This belief in the innate value of children was quickly being put on the backburner as the fears that drove the military-industrial complex led education policymakers to adopt a factory model of education that, in effect, devalued the young. As a result, the spirit of humane values that motivated the public school movement was quickly, if silently, replaced by the belief that children should be useful if they are to be valuable. This was the decade that initiated the notion that children and youth were, in a frightening bit of newspeak, our nation's "most precious natural resource."[24]

Green allied himself with Bouwsma's Judeo-Christian vision of human worth, which by the 1960s had not kept pace with new philosophical vocabularies, themselves largely a product of a military-industrial grammar. It is perhaps why he was often seen as someone living out of touch with new ideas (who reads Aquinas in a college of education?). Nevertheless, as his narrative develops, it would be useful to think of him as someone who sought relentlessly to bring this older—and what he thought perfectly valid—way of thinking of human beings to bear on the problems of education in a world that had moved on from the vision of Christian humanism that had given birth to public education.

The Move to Cornell, 1949-1952

By 1949, Green had shown enough promise in philosophy to merit Bouwsma shepherding him to Cornell to study under his former student, the Wittgenstein scholar

[24] Thomas Green, "Response to the Presidential Address." *Education Theory*, Vol. 17 (1967), 289-294.

Norman Malcolm.[25] Malcolm had been hired in 1947 by the Cornell philosophy department and was able, through intense persistence and some good luck, to convince Wittgenstein to make a secret trip to Cornell.[26] He told no one, per Wittgenstein's request. The meeting would have a profound and lasting effect on Green.

Ithaca was then and is today a relatively small town nestled in a picturesque part of central western New York, situated in a lush green valley at the south end of Lake Cayuga. Like Lincoln, Ithaca sported a good deal of nineteenth century architecture, but unlike the flat Midwestern town, it was surrounded by rolling hills. The 1,166 mile drive from Lincoln to Ithaca would take Green and his young wife Rosemary through Chicago and Cleveland, on into the green country of Amish Pennsylvania and finally into the hot green Finger Lakes region of New York. It was an exciting drive and an exciting time to be on the road. After all, this was one of the listless, postwar years memorialized by Jack Kerouac in his novel *On the Road*. It was a time to see and be seen on the great highways of America and to lose yourself in the uncertainty of the present. Green was as susceptible as the rest of his generation to the excitement and formlessness of the future, but he was not yet lost, not quite a member of the beat generation. A bright future lay ahead of him at Cornell. A degree from an Ivy League institution meant a secure future; it meant a professorship or entry into a prestigious law school. It afforded him a measure of certainty not granted to all twenty-somethings in the late 1940s. Of course, he had no way of knowing that one of the greatest

[25] Bouwsma and Green went to Cornell, in fact, during the same summer; Bouwsma to meet Wittgenstein and Green to begin his doctoral work.
[26] Malcolm was persistent possibly to the point of annoyance, but Wittgenstein's sister, who was living on the east coast, ultimately sealed the trip to America.

philosophers of the time would be meeting him in Ithaca, or that his experience of the next three years would seriously confound his sense of security.

The summer of 1949 was unusually hot in New York. Despite this, Wittgenstein was unusually active, taking long walks either by himself or with Malcolm and his graduate students and engaging in his characteristically intense philosophical discussions.[27] In this way, at least, Wittgenstein fit in well with the Cornell philosophy department, where the teaching had a reputation for being "intimidating and the atmosphere authoritarian."[28] It was also the top philosophy department in the country for analytic philosophy, particularly in the study of Wittgenstein's method. There, Green studied not just under Norman Malcolm and Max Black but also Gregory Vlastos, who revolutionized the study of classical Greek philosophy by applying Wittgensteinian rigor to his analyses of Plato's dialogues. His classmates included the celebrated novelist and philosopher, William H. Gass, John O. Nelson, and William Kennick, who went on to become a widely respected Amherst professor. It was a talented circle of philosophers and students for the inexperienced Midwesterner, and a wild induction into the world of Wittgenstein's philosophy.

If Green had learned, under the auspices of Bouwsma, to look at philosophy as a way of unveiling meaning through wordplay, then he learned from Wittgenstein how to ground a philosophical investigation in plain observations. William Kennick provides an illustration from what must have been one of Green's first evenings with the philosophy department. Gregory Vlastos had presented a paper in defense of Kant's

[27] Trevor Pinch and Richard Swedberg, "Wittgenstein's Trip to Ithaca in 1949: on the importance of details," *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory* (2012), 4.
[28] Pinch and Swedberg, "Wittgenstein," 6.

notion that *ought* implies *can*. When Vlastos finished with an impressive performance, Black asked Wittgenstein if he would care to address the argument:

> Wittgenstein put his head down on the table and stayed in that position for what seemed to be a week. He then raised his head and said (in almost these very words: I took notes): 'A nurse says to me, "swallow this tube, please" [rumor had it that Wittgenstein was having some tests run to see whether he had stomach cancer.] "I can't". "But you have to do it; otherwise they can't run the tests". "I can't". "But you really ought to, you know". "Yes, but I can't". That was it. Does 'ought' imply 'can'? Is 'I ought to but I can't' contradictory? No.[29]

The simplicity of his rejoinder was disarming for a room of philosophers and philosophy graduate students trained in the never-ending wordplay of traditional analytic philosophy. This is illustrative of an elegant touch to Wittgenstein's philosophical investigations that Bouwsma never quite matched, though he came close from time to time. It is the same elegance found in the best moments of Green's work.[30]

During Green's three years at Cornell, Malcolm worked on a paper developed from his talks with Wittgenstein titled, "Knowledge and Belief," published in 1952.[31] This was part and parcel of the epistemological turn in midcentury philosophy, but it was also a sort of muddled attempt at applying Wittgenstein's insight that the distinctions found within ordinary language were where the real philosophical battles should take place. In reality, Malcolm's work looks quite a lot like the "model language" project of the positivists, which Wittgenstein so adamantly rejected. Green

[29] Pinch and Swedberg, "Witgenstein," 11.
[30] Some examples: the thought experiment with which he begins *Work, Leisure, and the American Schools*; his idea that governance (as self-reflexive judgment on matters of importance) is the central concern of moral education; and the metaphor of walls and commons in his examination of moral pluralism.
[31] Pinch and Swedberg, "Wittgenstein," 8.

appears to have understood the shortcomings of Malcolm's project. By all indications, he was bored by it.

Green had learned from Bouwsma the situatedness of philosophical inquiry and had therefore learned to see philosophy as the rational criticism of ideology—of one's own and others' ideological commitments.[32] Malcolm was moving the game to a new playing field, treating the situatedness of philosophy as a matter foremost of language games, per Wittgenstein. Green's and Malcolm's understandings of philosophy diverged. To acknowledge the importance of language games is wise, but to limit the scope of inquiry to language was to miss the point, namely that language existed in service to some particular ideological program. Something like this formulation of the difference between them must have been bothering Green during his years with Malcolm, because nothing he wrote after his time at Cornell reflected even the slightest interest in Malcolm's philosophical concerns.

Perhaps it was symptomatic of a deeper disaffection from the Wittgenstein crowd that Green was unmoved by endless debates over common-sense and ordinary language. In the best times it is often difficult to feel the importance of in-house philosophical debates, but in 1950 war broke out with North Korea over the ever present, if long-distant, threat of the expansion of communism. Green, in the middle of his doctoral work, would sit out another war. It is easy to imagine that all parties in the Green family would be pleased, having lost one son in Europe, but someone as sensitive to existential questions as Green could not help but be affected by a nagging sense that what he was about in the classrooms of Cornell did not really matter. Perhaps this is

[32] See, or example, Green, *Work, Leisure*, 6.

why he was already plotting his exit from the professional practice of philosophy through entry into law school.

To make matters worse, for his dissertation Malcolm had Green pick at a supposed false move in Thomas Reid's common sense philosophy—a research project he hoped would help his own critique of G.E. Moore. Titled, *Thomas Reid's Theory of Sensation and Perception*, the dissertation is a joyless read, flat in tone, and without the slightest sense of the author's interest in his subject. It is also unlike anything else published by Green, whose philosophical work is notable for its warmth, deep interest, and amusement. But it would sound a false note to leave the impression that Green and Malcolm were at odds with each other. Green saw the importance of philosophy differently; or rather he thought the important problems lay elsewhere than in the minutia of longstanding scholarly arguments. Several former students recall that Green would speak warmly of going through Wittgenstein's Blue and Brown books with his mentor, and it is significant that his philosophical differences with Malcolm, however broad, went largely unexpressed. He played the dutiful student, and that is what we have left from this period in his life: a dutiful, if dull, dissertation.

First Jobs and Early Disappointment, 1952-1964

In 1952, following graduation Green and Rosemary relocated with some reluctance to Rapid City, South Dakota, for a position as an English and Humanities instructor at the newly endowed South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. If Green were going to law school, then he would need to work and save for a few years, and while the school did not pay well enough for him to support his family, it was the

only job on offer. It had been rechristened in the last decade from the shorter name, South Dakota School of Mines, in acknowledgment of the expansion of the school into "new areas of science and technology."[33] In any case, it was not the sort of place where one would expect to find a philosopher.

Rapid City was no metropolitan area, though it was the second largest city in South Dakota, situated at the west end of the state not far from the notorious saloon town of Deadwood. In 1952, travellers might stop in at Rapid City on their way to nearby Mount Rushmore, but if they planned their vacation trip to coincide with May twenty-third of that year then they were in for a nasty surprise. Rapid City flooded, and not for the first or last time.[34] While the flood damage would have dried up by the time the Greens arrived in the last leg of summer, it could not have been heartening to know that their future home was a subject of disaster relief for the federal government.[35] Pictures taken immediately after the flood show a barren landscape dotted by a few trees with houses and buildings immersed in a great puddle of mud.[36]

Green could not be said to have settled into his work as an English instructor. The position fell far short of the expectations of a Cornell philosophy graduate, and the poor pay weighed on him. He had to take up other part-time jobs—one in a reptile zoo and another as a door-to-door salesman of baby chairs—as well as a considerable amount of debt, to make ends meet. His troubles were far from unique for new scholars

[33] "University History" from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology website: http://www.sdsmt.edu/About/University-History/ Last retrieved on 1/27/2015.
[34] Neil Ericksen, "A Tale of Two Cities: Flood History and the Prophetic Past of Rapid City, South Dakota." *Economic Geography*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Oct, 1975), 307.
[35] Ericksen, "A Tale," 307.
[36] There are four such pictures archived at the U.S. Geological Survey website: http://sd.water.usgs.gov/projects/FloodHistory/1951-1960/photos.html. Last retrieved 1/28/2015.

in the early 1950's. Green wrote of the experience to his friend and fellow philosopher Maxine Greene in a letter dated July 8, 1977:

> I think I know something of the anger and frustration that you sense. Perhaps you will remember that I had quite the same experience myself some years ago. I was unemployed as an educator—at least in anything that resembled what I had expected and worked for years to achieve. And so, for some five years—and with a family—I was unable to find any kind of position that was even a decent approximation of what I had prepared to do. The impact of that experience—which equally bore upon the lives of many of my fellow students—was devastating. For me it led to hospitalization, a rather thorough collapse, and partial, but temporary paralysis. For others that I knew, it led to other forms of psychic ruin—two suicides, one murder, and three cases of total personal ruin. I have never yet had a position for which I was "properly trained". And it took nearly fifteen years, after I finally did locate a post, before we were able to get anywhere near out of debt.

He toyed with the thought of entering the ministry for the Presbyterian Church, but "recoiled from ecclesiastical duties, and was repelled by what, at the time, seemed to [him] the terrible timidity of the Church."[37] Was this cryptic remark a reference to the Church's slowness at coming round to the civil rights movement? It is hard to say. He did, however, begin to think seriously of taking on the responsibilities of an elder—a lay position of some seriousness within the Presbyterian polity. The First Presbyterian Church on Kansas Street had just completed its new building months before the Greens arrived in Rapid City, and it drew professors and instructors from the colleges. But this was not the typically progressive Presbyterian Church that Green, who had only lived in major university towns, felt at home in. Rapid City was then a deeply conservative place, and Green was by comparison a fancy Ivy League outsider with liberal views.

Without social, professional, and to a surprising degree physical comfort, Green found himself overworked and stressed to the point of serious illness. After his hospitalization, he and Rosemary began taking vacations to his parents' cabin in

[37] From a letter written to "Gerry" (Gerald Grant) dated March 1st, 1976.

Minnesota as a way to escape the drudgery and debt into which they had fallen, but this did little to ameliorate their situation while they remained in Rapid City. They were renters who subsidized their income with credit while raising a young family.

During his many trips to Minnesota to convalesce, Green had slowly begun to articulate his thoughts about the "leisure society" and on educational concepts like *teaching, acting,* and *behaving* at the kitchen table of his parents' cabin. From these early swipes at what would become the manuscript on work and leisure, he finally pieced together the humble beginnings of a research program. There is no way to know what his research looked like at this point. Whatever he was up to, he had clearly been reading the futurists with a critical eye and had been able to convince the recruiting committee at Michigan State that he possessed some potential. When the offer came, in the late spring of 1955, he and Rosemary packed up their few belongings as quickly as they could and left the muddy landscape of Rapid City behind them forever.

The move to East Lansing was welcome, despite whatever reservations Green had about continuing to teach outside of a philosophy department. For starters, East Lansing was an established Midwestern college town, much like his hometown of Lincoln, and it was considerably closer to his parents' cabin, which had become a refuge and spiritual retreat for him. And while Michigan State brought him on as a Humanities professor, the truth was that Green still had not figured out for himself what it meant to do philosophy. A few more years in the wilderness—this time a considerably greener wilderness—might not be so bad.

He set to the task of proving himself capable of holding a paying professorship, but publishing proved to be an uphill battle for him. His research program had not yet

crystallized, and he was not the sort of person who could churn out articles on subjects he cared little about. After a three year long dry spell, and under pressure to publish something, he hastily scribbled an article with the uninspired title, "A Humanities Teacher Looks at Engineering Education" for the *Journal of Engineering Education*. Green thought it so forgettable that, in a CV composed several years later, he had not bothered to remember the volume or number of the issue in which it had been published. It would be another five years before he published anything else, and it is tempting to see this gap as indicative of Green's own moral seriousness with regard to his work.

In 1955, Michigan State had officially become a university, changing its name in July of that year to Michigan State University of Agriculture and Applied Science.[38] It was the original land grant college in the United Stated and had been able to draw some considerable talent to its faculty. Among his colleagues was the famed existential psychologist, Erich Fromm, who was at Michigan State for part of two years that Green was there. In a letter to Gerald Grant dated March 1, 1976, Green recalls:

> I sat on the fringes of many discussions with him, and listened with a certain ambivalence and even fear, but also fascination. I don't suppose that I exchanged more than five words with him, but I listened to him for hours on end. I think that my timidity was partly an expression of my own rather dismal sense of personal failure.

Green's tenure at Michigan State overlapped with Fromm's from 1957 to 1961. He was either mistaken in his remembrance of the years they shared or Fromm enjoyed a couple of sabbatical leaves during his time at Michigan State. In any event, Green was a humanities professor for two of those years, but in 1959 he took a position with

[38] "University History" from "MSU Facts" on the Michigan State University website: https://www.msu.edu/about/thisismsu/facts.html. Last retrieved on 1/28/2015.

the university as an assistant professor of education. It is clear from these and other remarks about his time at Michigan State that the move to education was not the cure for what ailed him:

> Up to that time, I too, was convinced that I was a failure, unable to support my family, unable to get a job "in philosophy"—whatever that means—unable to find a way to law school, unable to master the "methods of research"—whatever that means—unable to convince anyone of importance at Michigan State that I might be able to do something worthwhile (there were exceptions), and, in general, I felt terribly "boxed in", totally inadequate, and a rather complete failure.[39]

It must be noted that he speaks here of a *sense* of complete failure, but these years cannot have been a complete wash. After all, his scratchings on work and leisure, so far written as a kind of response to Sebastian De Grazia's classical, conservative book, *Of Time, Work, and Leisure*, had begun to look something like a manuscript, enough so that he could submit his work for a Senior Research Fellowship at Princeton Theological Seminary—a fellowship which he received and for which he took a much needed sabbatical leave during the 1962-63 school year to work on his manuscript. And it should not be overlooked that, alongside his complaints about this period in his life, he alludes to a *time*, to a turning point in his sense of self. This was his meeting with acclaimed sociologist David Riesman.

Green had been looking outside of his profession for a sense of purpose, for his life's work, and he found it in religious life. Living in a long-established college town, he was able to settle somewhat more comfortably into his local church community, Eastminster Presbyterian—a stylish church designed in the Michigan Modern style by famed architect Alan Dow. This is where he moved into a leadership role in his religious community as an elder but more importantly as a synodal representative to the

[39] Letter to Gerry dated March 1, 1976.

National Council of Churches (NCC), an organization embroiled in the civil rights movement. During his sabbatical year in 1963, Green attended a fateful meeting of the NCC at Eastern Baptist College in Philadelphia. David Riesman, who had risen to fame with the publication of his landmark work in sociology, *The Lonely Crowd*, was there as a Jewish participant.

Green and Riesman hit it off. Though he did not know it at the time, Riesman had been a close acquaintance of his Michigan State colleague, Erich Fromm, and was perhaps drawn to Green because of the association.[40] Whatever the case, the meeting was nothing short of life changing for Green:

> You are aware, of course, how much [Riesman] has influenced my own life. He was the first person, of any prominence, who took pains to listen to what I thought, first at a small meeting assembled by the National Council of Churches at a small college outside Philadelphia…but then he encouraged me to send him the early manuscript of the book on work. I sent it to him fearfully, and his response—a letter of some eight pages—was, and remains, the most perceptive, helpful and supportive response that I have ever received…That letter did more than anything up till then to lift me from periodic despair for myself into a fresh resolve to persevere and a new kind of understanding for others.[41]

The letter is unfortunately lost to time, and all that remains of it are a few remarks in a single correspondence. What is known is that Riesman put Green in touch with other people, scholars who could help fill in the gaps in his project (for example, noted anthropologist Dorothy Lee) and set Green in a direction that clarified his argument's mainline by distinguishing between self-disclosure and self-discovery, telling Green they run on separate tracks. "I remember sitting on a bench in the kitchen of my parents' cabin in Minnesota all one afternoon writing five pages until I thought I had

[40] Letter to Gerry dated March 1, 1976. I'm engaging in a bit of speculation on this point, but not wildly. Riesman sought out Fromm to learn more about psychoanalysis, and it is fair to assume his natural motives for befriending the young Green were mixed with professional interest.
[41] Letter to Gerry dated March 1, 1976.

that thought in hand."[42] He also suggested to Green the key to his whole project—getting at a distinction between work and labor. Riesman told him that "[m]ost of us are not heroic enough to be always at our work…It is our work that redeems our jobs, but our jobs that give needed structure to our lives and sustain us in our work."[43]

In Riesman, Green had found the intellectual camaraderie and the mentoring that had been missing from his early career. In an eight page letter, now lost, Riesman inspired in Green a vision for his future as a scholar. Writing to Gerald Grant about the letter, Green says, "I cannot tell you with what elation I received that letter, what a burst of energy it unleashed, and, oddly enough, how it added to the calm patience needed to finish the thing started. I felt so much less a failure!!!"[44] He was most drawn to Riesman's epistemic humility:

> He said to me when I last saw him in Cambridge that he was "tone deaf" to philosophy. I have thought about that a lot, and in so far as I understand what he means, I think I share that attitude, that reluctance, to some extent. I think it is a reluctance, in the face of so many complexities, to offer pretense to a kind of omniscience. In religious terms, it is a turning away from idolatry in favor of a serious attention to the different forms of flesh and blood, a favoring of biography over the study of social history in the grand sense – or perhaps, better said, a blending of those two.[45]

Green described him as a first-rate scholar who did not bring a theory that explained everything to each case, but rather allowed the theory to grow out of the observance and interpretation of facts. His attention to the nuances of context was, to Green's mind, quite impressive and relatively rare for a sociologist of his time:

> "Philosophy often seems to deal with the general and the abstract as though it would never condescend to the mundane details of life. Yet, on the other hand, it can get nowhere unless it rests upon the particular. The philosophic task is to

[42] Letter to Gerry dated March 1, 1976.
[43] Letter to Gerry dated March 1, 1976.
[44] Letter to Gerry dated March 1, 1976.
[45] Letter to Gerry dated March1, 1976.

> find the general *in* the particular and pronounce it in ways that illumine, ways that make it recognizable to others, and that is what Riesman has always been good at.
>
> "I know that the texts of philosophy – it is, unlike sociology, a textual discipline –seem often to traverse only the airey [sic] heights of pure rationality. It is as though they never descend to the world we all live in – even philosophers, if they would only admit it…Yet, anyone who has ever tried to teach the *meaning* of those texts – instead of trying merely to make point by point a demonstration of his own brilliance – will discover that the only way to do it is to *show* how the texts illuminate the particular experiences of human beings.
>
> "That is why I often think of Riesman as I think of Wittgenstein. He, you know, insisted always on examples – and context. The point, it seems to me, is often lost on modern "pyrotechnicians", like [J.L.] Austin, who seem to think that nothing more is needed than examples. Wittgenstein, in considering the nature of language, once observed, "Dogs never tell lies," and then he adds, "And it is not because they are so honest."[46]

Through the letter from Riesman and in subsequent interactions, Green came to clarify his own position on the "disciplines." That is, the mastery of a discipline meant to Green that one learns to *use* the disciplines in service to thought, rather than seeing the disciplines as intellectual ends toward which thought is mastered.

> The academic disciplines are important not because we are to "advance the discipline" but because the disciplines are helpful in promoting what is good in human life. Each one is incomplete and in itself, therefore, of no importance whatever, but if one masters one, then another, and lives within a third, their joint effect is more likely to be of human worth.[47]

The consequence of such a shift in thinking brought Green to the periphery of a kind of pragmatism. One does not study philosophy in order to become a philosopher, to see the world in terms of a philosophical system; rather, one studies philosophy to have the tools of philosophical inquiry at one's disposal when confronted with a problem or intellectual difficulty. In Kantian language, the disciplines are not the ends of education but the means to an end, namely problem solving. To become a

[46] Letter to Gerry dated March 1, 1976.
[47] Letter to Gerry dated March 1, 1976.

philosopher would be, on this view, far too limiting with respect to the problems of education, which are not reducible to one or another philosophical category (e.g. epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, et al.). In fact, when Green announces in the opening chapter of *WLAS* that the philosophy of education must be the philosophical study of ideology, he is declaring the limits of philosophical inquiry into education by subtly invoking the need to bring other disciplines to bear on the matter, such as sociology, history, and anthropology. A "philosopher" of education cannot work in as constrained a way as academic philosophers; he or she must be a master of many disciplines and slave to none.

The extent to which this realization amounts to a paradigm shift for Green is a matter of some ambiguity. On the one hand, his entire philosophical education had been conducted under the auspices of some of the most noteworthy analytic and post-analytic philosophers of the twentieth century; men who conceived the philosophical enterprise as rightfully absorbed with the abstract problems of epistemology and ontology. To these, a philosopher must concern himself with the objects of thought, not with the messy mundane problems that arise when one begins to consider how various thoughts play out on a cluttered field of practice. They ask brazenly, if only implicitly, *What has Athens to do with Horace Mann?* On the other hand, Green's concern for practical problems and lack of passion for abstract arguments was longstanding. His Master's work at the University of Nebraska had been in political philosophy, and his most abstract analytical work, his dissertation, had clearly been written in a tone of indifference toward its subject matter.

What does philosophical method mean for philosopher who does not believe in the construction of philosophical systems? Most importantly, for Green, it means that philosophy is nothing other than the activity of rational criticism, and in the special case of education, it means the rational criticism of the ideologies that underwrite every vision of education (cf. *WLAS* 6). There's a note of irony here for anyone familiar with Green's (undeserved) reputation as a crypto-conservative.

It is hard to know whether Green encountered Durkheim's thought before or after Riesman, whether he had come across the father of sociology previously and been encouraged by Riesman to return to him with renewed interest, or whether he had already developed a strong interest in Durkheim's functionalism by the time he met Riesman. Whatever the case, Green was by the mid-1960s convinced of the real value of the functionalist perspective for understanding institutional and social change. He said of Riesman's functionalism, that his "sense of the tenuous condition of society and the long time and tortuous path that change and civilization take have always been to me features of his thought that are worth dwelling on again and again."[48]

Green credited this functionalist perspective of Riesman's for his own "rebellious attitude" towards revisionist historians and critical theorists in education. It was not, to Green's mind, a matter of choosing one prescription for change over another, but rather rejecting a prescription for how to change institutions (critical theory) because it did not realistically deal with how institutional life actually unfolds (functionalism). It is this perspective that riled many of his colleagues in Educational Studies and set him up for accusations that he was *prescribing* outdated institutional

[48] Letter to Gerry dated March 1, 1976.

values in the face of a great deal of suffering by minorities and women. This is the main criticism that would haunt his next major work on "the system."

It is difficult, without the original letter, to say more about why the meeting with Riesman had the impact it did on Green. Perhaps he was simply starved for validation by an established scholar and Riesman came along at just the right moment with the kindness and attentiveness the younger scholar craved. Riesman certainly fit the pattern—fit the type—of scholar Green was drawn to; like Bouwsma and Malcolm, he displayed, In Green's words, "an impeccable attention to fact (accompanied by a remarkable capacity to see it), a reluctant issuance in generalization, and a downright avoidance of anything resembling doctrine—except in methodology."[49] He might have been describing his previous two mentors. Interestingly, he might also have been describing his future self from the perspective of his students.

In the following two years, Green experienced a new level of productivity. Thanks to a much needed sabbatical year and to the impetus he had received from Riesman, the manuscript was taking a definite shape; it was far enough along that Green was able to present all but the first and last chapter of the completed version for the Robert Jones Lecture in Education at the Austin Theological Seminary in January of 1965. This is getting ahead of the narrative. First, there is the offer to come aboard at Syracuse in a tenure-track position. It is the offer he had been waiting for a decade to receive.

[49] Letter to Gerry dated March 1, 1976.

Chapter 2: Syracuse and Success

In 1964, Syracuse University hired Green to create an Educational Studies program that would draw together various departments. He may have had little by way of publications to show for his time at Michigan State, but he had added four important experiences to his resume that likely appealed to the search committee. One was the research fellowship at Princeton Theological Seminary, and another was a stint, in 1960, as the United States delegate to the World Conference on Teaching and Theology at the University of Strasbourg. Although Syracuse was not officially a Methodist university, it had a strong Protestant identity, and the search committee would likely see that a scholar such as Green—one concerned with the relationship between his own Protestantism and public education—would fit well with the culture of the school. During the spring of 1964, Green would also have been able to tell the search committee that he was engaged in two lectureships: one, as the current Provost Lecturer at Michigan State, lecturing on the topic, "Teaching, A Model of the Political Process"; and the other, as guest lecturer to the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., where his talk was titled, "The Americanization of Conflict: Some Cultural Assumptions."

So, in the summer of 1964, the Greens moved again, although this time the move was a happy one. They knew the area well, having lived just an hour south of Syracuse for several years, and both were pleased to be out of the miserable situation at Michigan State. In addition to the serenity of the green hills of Syracuse, they discovered a fair bit of excitement. On August fifth, shortly after they arrived in town, President Lyndon Johnson made his famous speech, "Remarks on the Communist

Problem in Southeast Asia," at Syracuse University. It has been called the speech that launched the Vietnam War.[1] Aside from the flurry of activity surrounding Johnson's visit, Syracuse was a quiet community that summer—a natural, peaceful small university community of the sort that largely vanished in the following decades of economic expansion.

The manuscript on work and leisure was nearing completion. Green had developed key analyses of work, job, and calling, and was developing an argument about vocation that would put him at odds with his own Calvinist tradition. Dorothy Lee had supplied Green with "key comments" on diurnal time, a centrally important piece in his analysis of work and leisure.[2] And through his work with the National Council of Churches he was made known to the selection committee for the prestigious Robert F. Jones Lecture in Christian Education at the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Austin, Texas. He received his invitation to deliver the lecture during this first year at Syracuse. It was a tremendous way to cap off his first year of academic success.

The Robert F. Jones Lecture was created in honor of Robert Franklin Jones, a Presbyterian minister active in education in Texas, who was also a participant in the National Council of Churches at the same time as Green. It had become a widely regarded forum for theologians, philosophers, and educated Christian clergymen to try out ideas for reforming Christian religious education. The lecture topics cast a fairly

[1] From "The American Presidency Project" website: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26419. Last retrieved on 2/01/2015.

[2] Green quotes from a letter from Dorothy Lee on page 50 of *Work, Leisure*: "Greeks 'pass' the time; they do not save or accumulate or use it…It is distasteful to Greeks to organize their activities according to external limits; they are therefore either early or late, if a time is set at all…To arrive to dinner on time is an insult, as if you came just for the food…Visitors, asking how far it is to the next village, find that 'five minutes' may mean half an hour or two hours, but they find that the answer 'a cigarette away' does provide reasonably accurate measure."

wide net. In 1953, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary had hosted James Smart, whose lecture was published as *The Teaching Ministry of the Church: An Examination of the Basic Principals of Christian Education*; and several years after Green, in 1978, Carl Ellis Nelson published his lecture under the title, *Don't Let Your Conscience be Your Guide.* Of all the lectures, wide in scope though they were, none could match Green's for near irrelevance to the immediate practical concerns of religious education. His is by far the most philosophical, the most general in potential application, of the lectures. Most importantly, it allowed Green to try his manuscript with a large audience consisting of few if any philosophers, a crucial test for Green's pragmatic interest in speaking to practitioners as well as specialists.

It is clear from correspondences about this time that the manuscript now consisted of all but the first and last chapter of *Work, Leisure, and the American Schools*. This means that the manuscript read out at the lecture included the chapters on work and labor, time and leisure, work and job, and work and the quest for potency. Interestingly, the manuscript would have been without the final chapter, which dealt most directly with the impact of his investigation on public education. It would also have been without his opening chapter, which supplied his definition of the philosophy of education. So, what went with him to Austin was a fascinating conceptual analysis of work and leisure as it applied to the Protestant Christian debate about the relationship between jobs and callings.

Given his recent work with the PCUSA General Convention and the World Conference on Teaching and Theology, it may be reasonable to conclude that Green's primary interest at this point was not *public* education—that he tacked on the opening

and closing chapters concerning public education as an afterthought. There may be something to this. After all, in 1964 churches and synagogues were still the privileged sites for explicit moral instruction, and Green was clearly interested in moral education; but a second lecture, delivered the following year, shows Green already deep into an investigation of moral education in a pluralistic, democratic polity.

The J. Richard Street Lecture, 1966

In the summer session of 1966, Green was tapped to deliver the J. Richard Street Lecture in Education. The lectureship was established in honor of the founder of the teacher's college at Syracuse University, and its purpose was to create a forum for students, professors, and the public that would explore cutting edge ideas in education.

Green's lecture, titled, "Education and Pluralism: Ideal and Reality," is interesting because it is an early sketch of the argument he was developing in his final, unpublished work *Walls* some thirty years later, in the late 1990s. It is also of interest in that it shows Green at work on moral education from quite a different angle than we find in *Work, Leisure, and the American Schools.* Both the J. Richard Street lecture and the manuscript on work and leisure are concerned with the cultural environment in which moral education unfolds—the former with the way a value, such as pluralism, is embedded in social structures and the latter with the way ideologies of work are embedded in social structures. This would remain Green's modus operandi for the remainder of his career, seeking to understand a problem from more than one angle.

The lecture is equal parts conceptual analysis—of *pluralism* as it applies to education—and historical analysis of American democratic pluralism as a political

philosophy. He sets out to draw attention to the important fact that, in a social world, pluralism may be an ideal or a reality, a constellation of values or a social structure. As a value, pluralism is more at home in Anglo-American democracy than in the French-Continental tradition—an important point of contrast for Green's investigation. The French style of democracy is characterized as prizing equality over liberty, unity over difference, whereas the Anglo-American style prizes liberty above all, and therefore difference over unity, freedom over equality. This is why, in France, it is common to find legislation which, to Americans, would seem anti-Democratic but in actuality supports a form of democracy oriented toward a unified, and egalitarian, culture.[3]

According to Green, what we find in the United States is a more pluralistic polity, one that supports the freedom of local and private associations, even privileging them over egalitarian concerns. Consequently, to prevail politically in the United States it is not necessary to prevail ideologically, as would be the case in a more egalitarian democratic polity. Americans secure freedoms through politics, Europeans secure assent; and so politics in America does not become ideological in the profound sense in which it does in continental Europe. This, anyway, is the picture Green paints of pluralism as a democratic value in his lecture.

In America, this means that pluralism as a value is about freedom of association, and this includes an implicit assumption—distinctly American—that local and private associations do not threaten the unity of the polis. This assumption entails several important beliefs about association. First, that freedom of association must extend both to groups and to individuals; individuals must be allowed to choose their associations freely and to dissociate just as freely. Second, it entails that diversity is good. After all,

[3] A recent example would be the banning of headscarves in French state schools.

this is what is meant by the claim that the polis is not threatened by a proliferation of private associations; yet, this cannot be all that is meant. If diversity is good (and not merely tolerable), then contact between groups is both good and necessary. Third, and finally, the idea that diversity is good assumes that diversity must be maintained throughout contact between associations, that contact should not be a process of "saming" the other. It is good to have different ways of life in contact and competition with one another.

That is to speak only of pluralism as an American democratic value, which leaves the greater part of his lecture to examine what it means to call pluralism a social reality. This is the most important part of his task, for if the ideal of pluralism is to be realized in education—and it is his argument that it should be—then it is necessary to understand how pluralism as a value is embedded in social structures. What follows is Green's characteristically astute interdisciplinarity, bringing the insights of sociology to bear upon a philosophical investigation:

> Now one of the fundamental ways of viewing education, perhaps the most fundamental way, is to see it not simply as formal schooling but as a process by which (1) one generation seeks to transmit its culture to the next, (2) induct the young into adult social roles, and (3) help them to develop their own self-identity through membership in some historical group and through participational roles in some contemporary association. In other words, education is primarily the process of cultural transmission, socialization, and developing participational and historical identity. Education does not require formal schooling. It is, if anything, education in highly specialized societies which requires it. I wish then to examine pluralism in relation to these fundamental social functions of education.[4]

His argument turns upon two sets of sociological distinctions. The first is the distinction between primary and secondary associations, the former being "intimate,

[4] Thomas Green, *Education and Pluralism: Ideal and Reality*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press (1966), 12.

face-to-face, personal, and informal relations with others" that "engage the whole personality," the latter being "casual, frequently functional, and usually not face-to-face," that do not engage the "whole personality."[5] The second set of distinctions involves types of pluralistic social structures that Green breaks up into *insular pluralism*, *halfway pluralism*, and *structural assimilation*. The argument that follows is, in a nutshell, that regardless of the particular social structure in play, the educational problems remain the same: cultural transmission, socialization, and the development of an historic identity. It is this third part, the development of historic identity, that grew complicated as our society moved from insular pluralism to structural assimilation.

Green's J. Richard Street lecture deserves close biographical attention for a couple of reasons. It contains his first published formulation of the process of education—an understanding of what education is about that Green sticks to, word for word, for the remainder of his career; and it is also the first published work in which Green presents the primary predicament of moral education—the difficulty, in an assimilation society, of forming an identity rooted in a particular historical group—as the central problem of contemporary American education. The "solution" to the problem has its practical expression in what Green dubs *the principle of concern* and *the principle of indifference*. The principle of concern states that "nothing that people care very strongly about can be introduced into the public schools as a topic of study unless the strongly held opinions concerning it approach unanimity."[6] The principle of indifference is its corollary. Namely, "anything can be introduced as a topic of study in the public schools provided it is a matter about which nobody cares a great deal or is

[5] Green, *Education and Pluralism*, 12.
[6] Green, *Education and Pluralism*, 31.

widely believed to have no practical consequences."[7] Taken together, this formulation of the problem of education in a pluralistic society constitutes a genuinely new insight that Green had been straining towards for years, and it is his first unique contribution to pragmatic thought about the problems of public education.

The connection between the two completed manuscripts—*Work, Lesiure, and the American Schools* and *Educational Pluralism: Ideal and Reality*—can be located in Green's early concerns about moral formation in a pluralistic and technocratic society. It is tempting to hazard a second connection, one without direct documentary testimony but possessing, nevertheless, reasonably compelling circumstantial evidence, between Green's work and the contemporaneously composed essays of Harvey Cox that were published in 1965 as *The Secular City*.[8] Cox had been at work on *The Secular City* at Andover Newton Theological School during the 1963-64 school year, and he had been running in the same large circles as Green.[9] They had both been reading Riesman, had both met him—Cox eventually became a sort of colleague through Harvard Divinity School in 1965, and both, in their respective chapters on *work* and *job* had drawn heavily on Alan Richardson's book, *The Biblical Doctrine of Work*. Compare, for example, this quote from Richardson as found in Cox's book with the following statement by Green in *Work, Leisure*:

> The Bible knows no instance of man's being called to an earthly profession or trade by God. St. Paul, for example, is called to be an apostle; he is not called to be a tentmaker…We cannot with propriety speak of God's calling a man to be an engineer or a doctor or a schoolmaster.[10]

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[7] Green, *Education and Pluralism*, 31.
[8] Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: New Revised Edition*. New York: The Macmillan Company (1965).
[9] From a biographical page on Pennsylvania authors at the Pennsylvania State University website: http://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/bios/Cox__Harvey.html. Last retrieved 2/5/2015. The "large circles" to which I refer are the National Council of Churches and the Ivy League Seminary scene, where unpublished manuscripts often circulate freely among faculty.
[10] Cox, *Secular City*, 164.

And in Green:

> Nowhere [in the New Testament] is there the idea of a man being "called" to be a teacher, an engineer, a physician, or a fisherman or to fill any other occupation in the secular order of things. Paul was not called to be a tentmaker; that was simply his job, his method of making a living.[11]

This may well have amounted to an incidental connection between scholars working on similar tracks with similar reading material at hand. That is likely all this amounts to, but it is nonetheless valuable to see Green at this point in his career articulating a problem that others in the Protestant tradition are likewise attempting to address, but without an eye to public education. Green's genius was to see how a dilemma in religious education—the secularization of work—pertained to a more comprehensive, important change in the mission of the public schools. If, as Green and Cox argued, work and job were understood as distinct enterprises—in contradiction to the "Protestant Ethic" that viewed them as one and the same—then educators and schools should take a double approach to their students. On the one hand, they would need to prepare them for a specific job, as schools do now; but on the other hand, they would encourage their students to think separately about what their life's *work* might be. This latter sense of work lines up with the old notion of a "calling."

At this point, the final pieces of Green's presiding project were falling into place, and he had a sense, finally, of the range of problems that would hold his attention for the remainder of his career. He had a *work* to do.

[11] Green, *Work, Leisure*, 93.

Educational Policy Research Center, 1967-69

Green had hit the ground running at Syracuse. In his first two years, between 1965 and 1967, he had managed to complete his manuscript on work and leisure during a talk at the New School for Social Research,[12] had been a guest lecturer at the Up-State Medical Center and at the Danforth Annual National Workshop on Liberal Education, had delivered the J. Richard Street lecture, had developed new courses for the nascent Educational Studies department, and had marshaled several of his colleagues from colleges across the university to create an interdisciplinary think-tank, the Educational Policy Research Center.

The EPRC was Green's brainchild, having grown out of his engagement with the futurists for his manuscript on work and leisure. In the 1967-68 school year, the center was little more than an organized forum for select members of the faculty, a sort of coordinated series of brainstorming sessions intended to feel out who could contribute what and how. By the following year, 1968-69, the members of the EPRC were able to compose a detailed 203-page report about their work, prepared under contract with the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.[13]

The report has Green's fingerprints all over it. There are the three major areas of concern—staffing, defining a specific research program, and development of methods for futures studies in educational policy, but it is the last one that smacks most of Green's continuing interests in the heuristic value of futures studies. It was his idea to bring in Robert J. Wolfson to work with the Institute for the Future, with whom the

[12] Green, *Work, Leisure*, ix.
[13] Thomas F. Green, "Report of Activities and Accomplishments: March 1, 1968 to February 28, 1969. Final Report." Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Research Corp. (28 February 1969). ERIC ED050433.

EPRC subcontracted.[14] Perhaps most importantly, it shows Green himself at work on the next phase of his project to define the enterprise of moral education in the public schools, that having to deal with the rational structure of the educational system.

In 1967, The U.S. Office of Education had tasked the EPRC with focusing on several questions, the most important for Green being the question of "alternative sets of social and organizational arrangements that might characterize the schools of the future and the issues attendant upon changes in those arrangements."[15] The second most important question, given Green's research interests "asked for an analysis of the possible effects of new instructional systems upon the social design of schools, the patterns of social life surrounding the schools, and other impacts on society that will require policy consideration in the future."[16] The questions were far too unwieldy for research purposes, but by 1968, Green, along with the Research Panel of the EPRC, had developed a methodology for addressing them.

As a matter of perspicuous timing, systems analysis had produced two new methods that had not yet been tried on matters of educational policy. One was the Delphi method and the other a cross-impact matrix for identifying the determining forces of a work environment. Both were nascent tools in futures studies, and Green was aware of being on the vanguard of something important for the future of educational policy research:

> In the first place, Delphi has been used in the past primarily with respect to technological forecasting. It has not been extensively used with respect to so-called "soft" areas of social phenomena. It seems clear to us, however, that the

[14] Green, "Report of Activities," 2.
[15] Green, "Report of Activities," 2.
[16] Green, "Report of Activities," 2.

> difficulties must be directly confronted if the device is to be used extensively in areas of concern to the Educational Policy Research Center.[17]

One of the prime difficulties in the use of the Delphi methods for educational policy forecasting that he mentions is how to formulate judgments concerning events in the hurly-burly of social change. Technological forecasting, for which the Delphi method was invented, was relatively simple by comparison; it involved making predictions about the invention and development of technologies, not about their implementation in and repercussions for society. The crucial difference is one of specificity. An invention of some piece of technology occurs at a specific moment in time; it can be formulated as an event. In order to deal with social processes using the Delphi method, it would therefore be necessary to formulate them as events.

> [T]hough a process may extend over a very large span of time and therefore cannot be said to occur at any particular point, nonetheless it may reach a certain size or a particular configuration at a specific point in time. Various Delphi studies can be constructed dealing with broad social processes or social trends provided we attach to them appropriate social indicators or indices which are signs or evidences of stages that can occur at a specific point in time. This technique is currently being adopted by the Center in a social Delphi developed in conjunction with the Institute for the Future. This Delphi study deals with social changes in twelve major sectors of concern to the Center, and to each sector of change there are attached certain interesting indicators or descriptors of a specific state of affairs.[18]

This adaptation of the Delphi method to educational research is a brilliant but little known episode from Green's career. Previous uses of the Delphi method were able to render expert opinions about goal- and mission-drift in colleges of education, but before Green the method had little or no predictive value.[19]

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[17] Green, "Report of Activities," 42.
[18] Green, "Report of Activities," 43.
[19] Frederick R. Cyphert and Walter L. Gant, "The Delphi Technique: A Tool for Collecting Opinions in Teacher Education." U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (1969) ERIC ED042691

Two important chapters grew out of his use of the Delphi method at the EPRC, "The Shifting Context of Educational Planning" and "The Dismal Future of Equal Educational Opportunity," both written between 1968 and 1969 and published in his 1971 monograph titled *Educational Planning in Perspective*. In the former, Green argues that the basic assumptions driving educational policy had changed; due to new research in the social sciences, it was no longer possible to take for granted the idea that economic growth was "a necessary condition for the advancement of human welfare," and because the public investment in the schools had expected a return in economic growth, the very enterprise of formal, government sponsored schooling had been called into question.[20] To make matters more complicated for educational planning, not only economic growth but also the democratization of education had been called into question because of "increased inequities in the distribution of occupational opportunity and income."[21] The problem with such criticisms is that they cut away at the pillars of public education: economic growth and democratization. It was therefore incumbent upon educational planners and policymakers to develop a new sensitivity of attention to the social meaning of demographic changes, to shifts in culture; her craft must become "more akin to pedagogy and less related to research," in the sense that she will need to "learn from the public and instruct the politician."[22]

In the latter chapter, the target of Green's analysis is the goal of equal educational opportunity, which he describes as politically inevitable but without a

[20] Thomas Green, *Educational Planning in Perspective: Forecasting and Policymaking*. Surrey, England: IPC Business Press Limited (1971), 6.
[21] Green, *Educational Planning*, 7.
[22] Green, *Educational Planning,* 8.

plausible political solution.[23] The chapter is as challenging to read today as it would have been in 1968 when he first composed it, primarily because of the cost-benefit analysis he applies to an issue freighted with moral significance. It is the sort of move that made Green look like the archconservative he most assuredly was not. Ironically, this is Green at his most pragmatic, acknowledging the importance of a problem while asking after the practicality of proposed solutions to it. The main difficulty for policy formation is that the equal distribution of educational benefits, which Green terms the *benefits view*, requires a school system that is "immensely powerful relative to those other institutions, such as the family, that constitute the environment for learning in the early years."[24] He found this to be a doubtful prospect. If there were to be a pedagogy developed and resources marshaled for increased educational benefits, then Green believed that the advantaged class—more skillful in the assembling of resources—would be the one to claim those benefits, though they were intended for the disadvantaged: "It would not be surprising, for example, to discover that the mere promulgation and dissemination of the idea of giving children a 'head-start' was accompanied by a rapid increase in early-childhood education among the advantaged groups of American society."[25] To control the pattern of change so that the disadvantaged benefited from such a policy, it would be necessary to institute political measures that would bar the middle and upper classes from taking advantage of those benefits. Likewise, in order to secure benefits for the disadvantaged the schools would have to become total institutions, a dubious prospect for American culture.[26] His

[23] Green, *Educational Planning*, 24.
[24] Green, *Educational Planning*, 33.
[25] Green, *Educational Planning,* 34.
[26] Green, *Educational Planning,* 34.

conclusion was in the title of the chapter, that the future of equal educational opportunity looked bleak.

It is easy for someone in the twenty-first century to find Green's conclusion quaint and rather obvious, but the situation in the middle to late 1960s was very different. He stood at the beginning of the era of national educational policymaking, when outcomes were uncertain and hopes were high. Few people were as astute as Green about the direction the schools had begun to take in the middle of the decade. It was the Johnson Administration that, in the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, made the federalization of education significantly more than a relationship of financial suasion between the federal government and state schools. It treated the schools as unnecessary middle men, cutting them out of primary considerations for funding, and instead granted schools categorical aid based on those students who were living in poverty. More than any federal legislation that came before, the ESEA was a "hearts and minds" law aimed at improving the lot of disenfranchised, poor students. It also opened the door to future federal interventions in all aspects of public education.[27] Naturally, there were benefits and drawbacks to such interventions. On the one hand, the federal government under Lyndon Johnson was able to exert pressure on the schools in the South to desegregate, but on the other hand there was and continues to be an increase in categorical demands made by the federal government without a parallel increase in funding.

Whatever else one might say about the evolution of the push and pull between federalization and local control of education, it must be said that the 1960s produced a

[27] Patrick McGuinn and Frederick Hess, "Freedom from Ignorance? The Great Society and the Evolution of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965." Taken 5/10/2012 from: users.drew.edu/pmcguinn/publications/**ESEA**%20and%20Great%20Society... · DOC file

hybrid system of public education that had little semblance to a liberal enterprise. From the necessities of war to the needs of a newly enfranchised African-American community, the allure of subjects deemed valuable to the military and industrial aspirations of the federal government remained the focus of federal reform efforts. If there was a weakness to Green's systems analysis approach to the study of policy, it could be found in its ideological aloofness. The EPRC did not produce criticisms of implicit curricula. It was perhaps one area in policy research where Green exercised too much optimism.

Guggenheim Fellowship and *Work, Leisure* Published, 1968-70

During the 1968 school year, Green was gearing up for a much-deserved sabbatical, but it would not be a period of rest and recreation. He managed to secure not only a Guggenheim fellowship but also an Alfred North Whitehead fellowship through Harvard's College of Education. The Whitehead fellowship was awarded to education professionals—administrators, professors, high school teachers—in order to use university resources "to carry out independent research studies."[28] Green proposed to study "Education and the Transmission of Moral Ideals." It was to mark a transition from the specific interests that drove the manuscript on work and leisure to a new phase of research that confronted in a more direct way the problem of moral education. It will be best, before proceeding into this new phase of his work, to say a bit about the final version of the manuscript on work and leisure in its published form.

Work, Leisure, and the American Schools was, as with all of Green's subsequent books, developed out of a series of projects over the course of several years: lecture

[28] Staff Writer, "Saltonstall Will Chair Whitehead Fellowship" in *The Harvard Crimson*. April 16, 1968.

series, seminars, correspondences with scholars in other fields, prestigious fellowships, work with government agencies and addresses to professional organizations. He was never one to work in isolation from the broader intellectual life of the scholarly universe. The same could undoubtedly be said of many works of scholarship, but it is nevertheless true that few scholars then or now came as close as Green to recognizing the Deweyan ideal of thinking as a social activity.

It remains an important book if for no other reason than out of a biographical interest in Green's intellectual development, because in the preface and opening chapter one finds an overview of his early understanding of the philosophy of education. More particularly, these eleven pages disclose in summary fashion clues to more than a decade of reading and reflection on what it means "to think philosophically about education."[29] Those clues inevitably lead to Green's readings of John Dewey, from whom he derived the idea that education may be a necessity of human existence but the schools are not. That is certainly not to say that the schools are unnecessary in contemporary American society. Green did not believe that any more than John Dewey, but it *is* to say that "[w]ithin a particular society—our own, for example—a system of schools may become as indispensible as education itself."[30] And this is so not because schools are necessary to education but rather that the complex demands of our society require education to be "carried out institutionally—that is, consciously,

[29] Green, *Work, Leisure*, vii.
[30] Green, *Work, Leisure*, 4.

deliberately, and over long and sustained periods of time."[31] It is a close restatement of Dewey's own view in the opening pages of *Democracy and Education.*[32]

There is also a happy concurrence of thought between Bouwsma and Dewey on the role of ideological critique in the philosophy of education, in that both took it to be central to the enterprise. No doubt Green would have picked up on this quickly, and yet it is Dewey who gave the thought a more explicit treatment and he who is echoed in the statement of Green that whenever education becomes a conscious activity it invokes the necessity of choice, and those choices will reflect a particular view of human nature.[33]

The influence of Dewey on Green's thought at this point does not mean that *WLAS* should be seen as a Deweyan book. In style—in the use of creative thought experiments and clarity of conceptual analysis, it bears closer affinities to Wittgenstein or Bouwsma. If anything, the mission of the book and the process of its composition are Deweyan. Take, for example, the emphasis Green places on the heuristic value of his analysis over its truth value, the latter being the primary concern of Wittgenstein and Bouwsma:

> It can happen, after all, that the world will change in such a way that those beliefs that have served well in the past will no longer suffice. There are occasions when it is not enough for men to believe what they have received out of their history as true; for in some respects at least, what they believe to be true may in fact be quite irrelevant…From time to time, therefore, men are called upon to change their minds and to change them precisely with regard to those beliefs and ideals that they have been most disposed to take for granted. Thus,

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[31] Green, *Work, Leisure*, 4.

[32] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*. New York: Free Press, Reprint Edition (1997), 7-8: "But as civilization advances, the gap between the capacities of the young and the concerns of adults widens. Learning by direct sharing in the pursuits of grown-ups becomes increasingly difficult except in the case of the less advanced occupations. Much of what adults do is so remote in space and in meaning that playful imitation is less and less adequate to reproduce its spirit. Ability to share effectively in adult activities thus depends upon a prior training given with this end in view. Intentional agencies—schools—and explicit material—studies—are devised. The task of teaching certain things is delegated to a special group of persons."

[33] Green, *Work, Leisure*, 4.

> the task of "making a case" begins by patiently examining and reconstructing our beliefs, not in total disregard for the measure of their truth, nor yet in abject servitude to some ideal of truth, but with our sites set firmly on what is functionally adequate to believe.[34]

No reader of Dewey could miss the reference to the *reconstruction* of beliefs in light of their social adequacy, and no critic of Dewey will overlook Green's enduring regard for the truth of a belief. What Green leaves us in the introduction to *WLAS* is a broad-minded pragmatism that can encompass both religious insights and change, and it is a work that reflects his vision—a work that, with trembling hands, grasps at both ideas. The result is a carefully written book, a book respectful of the history of the ideas it handles, but at the same time it did not aim to establish firm objective principles from which to derive durable educational truths (or Truths).

I had said before that the book would be important *if for no other reason* than the richness of clues to Green's early reading in the philosophy of education, but there are of course other reasons for studying *WLAS*, even for advocating the book's place among the canon of works in the field. For starters, it presents a profound philosophical treatment of time as it bears on educational thought—a treatment that remains without parallel in the field. His insight that leisure, in a contemporary American context, is defined through categories of work (e.g. as "free time") led him to reject writers such as Sebastian de Grazia and Joseph Pieper who invoke classical—and therefore irrelevant—notions of leisure (unrelated to clock-time) in their criticisms of contemporary education.[35] On the other hand, it led him to embrace a fruitful and too long neglected distinction for educational planning between job and calling, between finding a job and finding a work, that described the former as a way of earning one's keep and the latter

[34] Green, *Work, Leisure*, 8.
[35] Green, *Work, Leisure*, 64-74.

as an activity that invested life with meaning.[36] This move had the further effect of diminishing the moral import of modern vocational life, of attacking the Calvinist conflation of "calling" and "job." For Green, and in spite of his Calvinism, moral importance is found in a person's work, not in a job. This is not, in his hands, a prescription for the way things *should* be but rather a more accurate description of the way things in fact *are*. Nevertheless, he did seem to regard it as happy news for some people in certain jobs:

> The point of the distinction…is altogether different: it is that in a leisure society, and indeed in contemporary America, there are many jobs that need doing, which need not and ought not be viewed as a calling for a "heavy investment of identity." To speak of a job as a "mere method of providing for material needs" is one way to express this point.[37]

The problem of leisure connects to his larger project, that of defining the sphere of moral education. As his explication of the meaning of work makes clear, moral education requires an arena for consequential action, a place obviously other than one's job, but he leaves the exploration of such an arena for a later work. In 1968, the manuscript was off to the publishers, and Green was making preparations for a year at Harvard for a new leg of his professional life.

Green had happy memories of the year at Harvard, calling it a time of "[t]otal freedom to work and write." His only regret about the year was having little contact with Harvard students. Writing twelve years later to Patricia Graham, the new dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, to propose another year there to work on what would become *Voices: The Educational Formation of Conscience*, Green expressed the hope that he might teach while at Harvard. But in 1969 and 1970, he

[36] Green, *Work, Leisure*, 79.
[37] Green, *Work, Leisure*, 109.

would spend his time in fruitful isolation, aside from the occasional discussion with faculty.[38] He took frequent trips between Syracuse and Cambridge for his work with the EPRC, and the result of such a busy sabbatical was a couple of papers expressing new lines of thought and a lengthy report for the work of the EPRC. While at Harvard, he wrote and published a short article on the history of education, "Post-Secondary Education: 1970-1990" and a longer piece titled, "Education and Schooling in Post-Industrial America: Some Directions for Policy," for a panel on Science and Technology to be delivered during the second session of the United States Congress. It may have been a wildly productive period, but it was hardly unmatched in his career though certainly the first of its kind. However that may be, the year he returned to work at Syracuse, the 1970-1971 school year, was even more productive.

Activities of Teaching, 1970-1971

In 1970, Green returned to work at Syracuse where he continued his three-quarters time responsibilities with the EPRC, this time as Co-Director to allow for a busy year, and took up a role as consultant to the newly formed OECD in Paris, France. His work with the Country Planning Program of the OECD was accomplished through his acquaintance with Beresford Hayward, because of whom he was able "to meet with and learn from the major educational planners of the OECD countries."[39] He had also agreed, albeit reluctantly at first, to write a work on the philosophy of education with the proviso to the publisher that the book would not be written as an overview of a field

[38] In a letter to Patricia A. Graham dated March 6, 1982.
[39] Thomas Green, *Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System*. Troy, NY: Educator's International Press, Inc. (1980), xiv.

of inquiry, a prospect he ranked "at the bottom of the world's lesser needs."[40] The book was titled *The Activities of Teaching*, and it is significant because it lays bare Green's process; whether an act of vulnerability or of unusual confidence, it is a courtesy that few philosophers have extended to their readers.

As with *WLAS*, Green presented an important snapshot of his thoughts on the philosophy of education in his introduction. An important part of this glimpse into his opinion of the philosophy of education can be found in a comment he made about why he refused to write a traditional sort of textbook, a genre of writing that he regarded as "everything that philosophy is not." After all, a traditional textbook is "coldly objective and never personal, supremely confident and never admittedly inadequate or puzzling." Philosophical thinking, on the other hand, is "always incomplete, usually tentative, never impersonal, full of false starts and blind alleys, replete with admissions of puzzlement, and almost always partisan."[41] Here it should be noted that this is *one* way to describe the philosophical enterprise, a way that grows out of Green's longstanding and Wittgensteinian conviction that philosophy is "an activity and not a subject, something to do rather than something to study."[42]

If a book that introduces students to the philosophy of education cannot be a traditional textbook, then one might reasonably be led to ask what Green thought of a course in the philosophy of education. He had a ready answer. It is "an exercise in seduction, aimed at leading students, whether they realize it or not, to formulate their questions with more precision and answer them with a more complete grasp of their

[40] Thomas Green, *The Activities of Teaching*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company (1971), ix.
[41] Green, *Activities*, ix.
[42] Green, *Activities*, ix.

tentativeness."[43] Correspondingly, reading *The Activities of Teaching* was to be construed as a sort of apprenticeship in philosophy, something akin to watching the master at work in his workshop and emulating him until one's head was wrapped around the work.

While *Activities* is indeed an introduction to thinking philosophically about education, it is limited in regard to method and content; it explores only the analytic method and examines only epistemological problems. This is by design. Originally, Green intended to write a trilogy of introductory books on how to think philosophically about education, beginning with the study of epistemological problems in education, moving on to the problems of social philosophy that arise when examining the institutional structure of education, and ending with a phenomenological and anthropological study of the problems that grow from the internal experiences of students and teachers.[44] Sadly, he only wrote the first book.

It should also be said that Green began this planned trilogy with conceptual analysis not because he thought it the privileged mode of philosophy but because it was, in his estimation, the easiest to learn with the broadest possible application. It was simply the "skill in making distinctions."[45] More specifically, it is skill in recognizing the most relevant distinctions and then thinking about the distinctions themselves. As Green himself put it, "The important truth is not that the analytic task is reflective, but that it is reflexive. It is thinking turned back upon itself. It is thinking about thinking."[46]

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[43] Green, *Activities*, x.
[44] Green, *Activities*, x-xi.
[45] Green, *Activities*, 203.
[46] Green, *Activities*, 203.

One important consequence of this way of conceiving the philosophical task is to view philosophy as a method rather than a doctrine. The upside of this view is the "almost unlimited expansion" of philosophical interests; analytic treatment can be made of virtually any concept.[47]

> The restrictive focus of analysis on method rather than doctrine thus proves not to be a narrow limitation at all. It is simply the manifestation of an underlying commitment to be specific. It is not philosophical analysis that is sometimes barren and inconsequential so much as it is philosophical analysts. The analytic approach to philosophy is as broad and inclusive as the imagination of the analyst can make it. It is made sterile only by infertile minds.[48]

If Green justified the analytic method on the grounds that it made way for the broadest range of interests, he remained nevertheless clear that the data of analysis were found in the mundane. Philosophy, in whatever mode conceived, is reflection on human experience, and therefore "its data are always concrete and specific."[49] It examines particular experiences, particular thoughts, feelings, and actions, had by particular individuals. And so, he concludes, "[i]f we wish to understand the full breadth and depth of human experience, then a careful attention to language is strategic, because it is there that human beings make most explicit the form and content of their thoughts."[50] It is an impressive sales pitch.

An assumption follows from the view that philosophy must attend to concrete phenomena and language; namely, that philosophical analysis must proceed through the successful deployment of examples. It is not that examples are needed to illustrate a point, but rather that an investigation of examples *is* the object of philosophical study. He offers four types of examples (though there are more): model or paradigmatic cases,

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[47] Green, *Activities,* 204-205.
[48] Green, *Activities*, 205.
[49] Green, *Activities*, 205.
[50] Green, *Activities*, 205-206.

contrary cases, borderline cases, and invented cases.[51] The development of model cases is "very nearly the first step in analysis," but invented cases are the most profitable; the best way to understand the importance of a concept is to imagine a world without it.[52] This was the method Green employed to remarkable effect in *WLAS*.

It is interesting to think that Green, just eight years earlier, had complained of having no sense of proper philosophical method and no vision of a work to perform, and yet, by 1971 he was able to produce what is undoubtedly one of the most candid and helpful introductions to doing analytic philosophy of education. *Activities* is not the product of a mind at a loss. In fact, it announces a new intellectual superstar for a field in its prime and a coming two decades of fecundity that have rarely been matched by another philosopher working in any field of practical inquiry.

A word about what this transition period looked like. Green capped off the 1970-71 school year with a paper read for the EPRC titled, "Redistribution of Educational Goods," and a few months later saw the publication both of *Educational Planning in Perspective* and *Activities of Teaching*. He ended his consultancy with the OECD in 1971, but his reputation for practical wisdom had grown so that he was hired, in 1972, as a consultant for the development of a new planned community under the auspices of HUD called Gananda, New York. He continued, over the next few years, to publish articles about problems that had occupied him in his work at the EPRC, mostly on the matter of equal educational opportunity.[53] But there was also, between 1971 and

[51] Green, *Activities*, 207.
[52] Green, *Activities*, 208.
[53] Thomas Green, "Equal Educational Opportunity: The Durable Injustice, " *Proceedings*. The Philosophy of Education Society (1972); Thomas Green, "The Challenge to Meritocracy," *Liberal Education. The Liberal Arts: Death or Transfiguration*. Papers from the 58th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Colleges (May 1972).

1978, a shift in attention to the curriculum of higher education, as well as a continuing interest in the problem of work and leisure.[54] During this period Green was elected to the position of president of the Philosophy of Education Society in the 1975-76 school year, a job that he found exhausting and yielding few rewards for the effort.

Throughout the nine year period following publication of *Activities* and *Educational Planning*, between 1971 and 1980, Green had accepted a number of important roles outside of Syracuse University, had published twenty-four articles, had managed to fulfill his teaching responsibilities at Syracuse, and served as Director and founder, starting in 1978, of its Educational Studies program. Some of these roles will be touched on in greater detail in the next chapter. Most significantly, this was a period in which Green had been quietly developing his project on moral education, sketching out early ideas for what would become his landmark paper, "The Formation of Conscience in an Age of Technology," as well as his next, and some would say most important, book, *Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System*. All of this will be gone over in greater detail later, but I want to convey the tenacity with which Green held onto this project despite the constant demands on his time during this period. It was a characteristic of his career that he could hold problems in mind for decades, patiently turning them over for new insights. For example, in 1978, when Green was in the thick of research for *Predicting*, he returned to the decade old problems of work and leisure, this time in a restatement published as a chapter in a monograph, "Career

[54] See his bibliography below for specific publications, but a representative example of his combined interest in these areas can be found in: Thomas Green, "The Undergraduate College and the World of Work," *New Directions for Higher Education*, Number 9 (Spring 1975).

Education and the Pathologies of Work."[55] It is largely a restatement, in miniature, of *WLAS*, with an addendum on the one-way structural relationship between workplace arrangements and educational policy. It deserves comment here not only because it shows Green patiently chipping away at a single set of problems over a long period of time, but also because of a revealing comment Green makes about educational policy that sheds some light on how he felt about his work with the EPRC:

> Education has never proved to be a very useful policy instrument for the transformation of basic social institutions. One reason is that its effects are too indirect and too long in appearing for it to be a very effective force in changing basic institutions over the short- and middle-range periods within which educational policy is likely to be framed and sustained.[56]

Here, perhaps more clearly than anywhere else, we find the greatest divergence between Green and Dewey. Dewey was an unbridled optimist, a near delusional meliorist who believed that education could change every social institution for the better. Green's time entrenched in education policy—at the EPRC, the OECD, and the NIE—led him to feel otherwise. But it was his disaffection from policy that led Green back to full-time work on his main project, a new understanding of moral education. That journey is the subject of Chapter Three.

[55] Thomas Green, "Career Education and the Pathologies of Work," in *Ethics and Educational Policy*. Published as a volume of the International Library of the Philosophy of Education. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul (1978), 211-222.
[56] Green, "Career Education," 219.

Chapter 3: The System

The 1976 to 1977 school year was busy for Green, despite being a sabbatical year, but the flurry of activities actually kicked off in the spring semester leading up to his sabbatical leave. Having made a name for himself in Educational Studies through the publication of two well-received books, he now found that requests for his attention came from all sides. In April of 1976, the Philadelphia-based group, Research for Better Schools, Inc., under contract with the National Institute of Education, asked Green for a critique of a paper for a scholarly conference called "Planning for Moral/Citizenship Education." [1] The full request was for Green's help "developing recommendations" for the intersection of moral and citizenship education, to which end the paper critique was a first step. He had been on an "extensive trip" to the west coast when the letter arrived at his office in Syracuse, and so he was not able to formulate a reply until 21 days later. He made a provisional acceptance of the offer to write a critique for a paper by University of British Columbia scholar, Jerrold Coombs. He would gladly write it within the time frame suggested by the letter, but he would not be attending the conference.[2]

It is difficult to say why Green did not, at first, feel tempted to attend the conference in Philadelphia on June fourth through the sixth, especially as the host organization was affiliated with the N.I.E., with whom he was actively courting a professional relationship,[3] because their work was directly pertinent to Green's research; but his busy travel schedule and his father's illness likely played some part in

[1] Letter dated April 12, 1976.
[2] Letter to Russell A. Hill dated April 28, 1976.
[3] Letter to Corrine Rieder dated May 21, 1976.

the initial decision to forego attendance. And then there was Russell Hill's closing remark that the committee had been "rigorously selective" in selecting invitees, and it had to help that the Resource Panel for the Planning for Moral Citizenship Education included Lawrence Kohlberg. In any event, between April 28th and May 4th, Green had a change of heart.

This would be the first concrete step Green took toward participation with the N.I.E., and it would be followed, a few weeks later, by the more formal acceptance of a fellowship at the Institute. He had gone to D.C. to visit in the middle of May and informed Corrine Rieder by letter that he was coming back for yet another visit at the end of the month.[4] His letter was, in fact, a follow-up on things discussed during that meeting. During his fellowship with the NIE, Green planned a debate on career education and its relation to liberal studies as a part of his contribution to the NIE's evaluation, a debate that would bring to light the political and moral arguments behind the work of the NIE. It is quite feasible that this was a sign that his new work on "the system" had everything to do with moral and political arguments first put forward in the earlier book on *work* and *leisure*. Thus, we might regard his work on "the system" as connective tissue holding his early concern over liberal education together with his later work on the formation of conscience.

Green asked to be placed with the Office of Planning and Budget, an executive office within the N.I.E., because it would enable him to work among the broadest range of offices within the institute. At the same time, he was anxious not to be connected too closely with the power structure of the office, which would have placed him in a perceived supervisory position over the groups with which he wished to work. He felt

[4] Letter to Corrine Rieder dated May 21, 1976.

that such a position would hamper the free exchange of ideas with members of other offices. He also felt that, logically, this would place a priority among his proposed activities at the N.I.E., which he identified as long-range planning, moral and civic education, the principles of education and work, and job mobility.[5]

Financing this sabbatical leave proved to be trickier than before. Green was in New York for a meeting on June thirtieth to ask for money from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF). The traffic was the heaviest he had ever experienced in the city and the sidewalks more crowded than he could remember them being. This was a period of growth for Manhattan, when new blood took advantage of cheap rents and an explosion of cultural life in the city. In a letter to Franklin "Chris" Camwell of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Green apologized for a late change in schedule. The meeting was to have been on July first. It was moved back for reasons Green does not relate, but it probably had to do with his meeting with Corrine Rieder of the N.I.E. Whatever the case, he does apologize for inconveniencing Chris, whom he wished to query regarding possible funding from RBF to pay for the work of his graduate assistant, Dan Tobin, on his "system" project. Whether he was successful or not was never explicitly disclosed in his correspondences of the period, but Tobin's salary came instead from the Lilly Endowment.[6]

The Kettering Foundation and the Lilly Endowment came through, and Green was able to bring aboard two assistants to help with data gathering and creating graphs. The first part of his work required Green to gain an insider's understanding of the primary policymaking institution in the United States, which would be accomplished in

[5] Letter to Corrine Rieder dated May 21, 1976.
[6] Also, they are notably absent from his acknowledgments in *Predicting*, though the Kettering Foundation and the Lilly Endowment are thanked for providing grants for the accomplishment of the work.

Washington with the N.I.E. Wasting no time, Green proposed an itinerary that would permit him to work in Pompey from September to December, taking one trip a month to D.C. where he would stay for three to five days, and then he would reverse his work and living situation sometime in January to last until May 15th, the end of his salary period for Syracuse. The point of his commuting plans was to enable him to spend the majority of the early part of the sabbatical year working on "the system."

While he began work in earnest on the system, he kept up a busy professional schedule, especially regarding opportunities to work on policy matters. For example, for his work with the Education Testing Service (ETS), Green travelled to Washington, D.C. for July twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth to interview John Porter and Robert Andringa. Then, from August tenth through the seventeenth, he headed to East Lansing to interview Keith Goldhammer, from there to Ann Arbor for Wilbur Cohen, and then finally to Minneapolis for John Davis. Due to his growing reputation, Green was extended and accepted an invitation travel to Hamilton, New York to serve as speaker for Colgate University's Summer Session Commencement on Sunday, August eighth. He was asked to speak on "Public Goods and Pivate Good: An American Problem." For the following month, Green accepted an invitation from Robert L. Belknap[7] to address a Thursday Seminar, the "General Education Seminar," a popular forum for addressing matters of pressing educational importance that drew large audiences and speakers of repute. The forums were put together by the University Committee on General Education at Columbia and held in the Kellogg Conference Center, Room 1501, in the International Affairs building. The topic for the Fall session was "Liberalism and Liberal Education," and Green was asked to speak on "The American

[7] Letter to Robert Belknap dated June 9, 1976.

Theory of Liberal Education" at the second meeting of the forum. The invitation coincided with his upcoming sabbatical leave from Syracuse, so he gladly accepted.

Finally, in October, Green was invited to be a discussant for a panel at a conference on *Metaphor and Thought* at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champagne, a conference sponsored by the N.I.E. to be held between September twenty-sixth and twenty-ninth of 1977. A number of aspects of the conference appealed to Green: its interdisciplinary approach and its affiliation with the N.I.E., not to mention that its keynote speaker was his former mentor at Cornell, Max Black. Other speakers were his former Cornell classmate, the novelist and philosopher William Gass, the well-known Reformed philosopher William Alston, the philosopher of artificial intelligence John Searle, the famous cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner, and Thomas Kuhn, known for his book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. It would be for Green an unparalleled company of thinkers.[8]

Durkheim's Influence

Before going into a description of the system, it will be worthwhile to examine the primary influences that led Green to thinking about the rational structure of the educational system, and there is none more important than Emile Durkheim, whom Green had been reading since the early days of the manuscript on work and leisure.

Durkheim was the father of sociology, a scholar who almost seemed to say that psychology asked the wrong questions, who shifted the unit of analysis from the *individual* to the *member*. He was best known for his sociological studies of suicide and the division of labor, but it was his book titled *Moral Education* that clued Green to the

[8] Letter from The Center for the Study of Reading and Cognition dated October 26, 1976.

fact that there were certain enduring structural features of the moral environment. In fact, Green's claim at the heart of his investigation—that there are durable rational structures that constitute "the educational system"—can be viewed, fairly accurately, as analogous to Durkheim's idea that there is a common moral reality behind the various, particular systems of belief and practice. As Durkheim put it:

> We must seek, in the very heart of religious conceptions, those moral realities that are, as it were, lost and dissimulated in it. We must disengage them, find out what they consist of, determine their proper nature, and express them in rational language. In a word, we must discover the rational substitutes for those religious notions that for a long time have served as the vehicle for the most essential moral ideas.[9]

Likewise, Green felt that the educational system would benefit from a rational account, so that its behavior and "inherent processes, may become intelligible in a way that is *independent* of differences of economic and political ideology."[10] That is not to say his intention is to sanitize education of the manifold irrational and *a*rational motivations of maximally interested stakeholders. Throughout the book and elsewhere in his published work Green acknowledges that individuals come to the educational system with certain ideological commitments, and he understands that those commitments influence their expectations of the system. The point he makes in his work on "the system" is simply that, whatever the stakeholders' ideological commitments, the policy choices they support will be conditioned by and affirm the rational structure of the system: the need for schools and colleges, the relationship of those schools and colleges through some medium of exchange, and their arrangement through some principles of sequence. His purpose is sociological as much as philosophical, bringing together the insights of

[9] Emile Durkheim, *Moral Education*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc. (2002), 9.
[10] Thomas Green, *Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System.* Classics in Education. Troy, NY: Educator's International Press (1997), xvii.

functionalism and interaction theory to unmask the influence of social structures on our education policymaking, of which more momentarily.

Somewhere, amid the bustle and seriousness of his scholarly successes, Green found the time and, in the libraries of Harvard, the peace and quiet to develop his thoughts on the system. For many, this would become his magnum opus.

The System, 1979-1980

In many ways, Green's first published work as Margaret Slocum Professor of Education at Syracuse, a work on "the system," was destined for some measure of controversy. It was born from it, after all. Green had started preliminary work on "the system" back in early 1970, in a time when Syracuse University was rocked by violent student protest. The "Syracuse Eight," a group of eight talented black football players, famously boycotted playing football until the university agreed to address its own institutionalized racist practices. Their protest drew the nation's attention, as well as the attention of political agitators on both the right and the left, who came to the campus and stoked the fires of student discontent.[11] The most famous agitator was Tommy Tongyai, popularly known as "Tommy the Traveler," a salesman who infiltrated college campuses across Western New York in order to expose the group Students for a Democratic Society (S.D.S.) as communists.[12] He arrived at Syracuse shortly after relations between conservative and progressive student groups hit a fever pitch in April,

[11] From *Syracuse University Archives*: http://archives.syr.edu/collections/alumni/sua_syracuse_8.htm Last retrieved on 2/28/2015.
[12] Warren Huntington Smith Library at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, "MATERIALS ON THE TOMMY THE TRAVELER INCIDENT, 1970-1975: A FINDING AID SC.51": https://library.hws.edu/archives/findingaids/findingaid.cfm?name=tommy Last retrieved on 2/28/2015.

and in no time the campus bookstore was in flames and windows were broken around campus. Despite the violent disagreement between the groups, they were in strong agreement over where to place the blame: it was *the system*.[13]

In the opening pages of *Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System,* Green offered his first explicit statement in a published work regarding his presiding project on moral education. He had in mind a two-pronged approach, first laying out the rational form of the educational system and then following up, in a planned second work (which would become *Voices*), with an exploration of the moral foundations of the educational system. But his task in the present work is:

> [T]o give an account of that rationality so that the behavior of the system, its inherent processes, may become intelligible in a way that is *independent* of differences in political and economic ideology. It follows that the account of the system given in these pages is a formal account. It deals with the rational form, structure, and behavior of the system, but it makes no reference to its educational content.[14]

This idea—that the form of the system contributed significantly to its intelligibility—is what caused the most forceful critical responses to the book, but before examining a representative criticism from sociologist Margaret Archer it will be necessary to say a little about the complex investigation Green presents in his book.

He begins with a disarmingly bold proposal, that there is indeed a global phenomenon called "the educational system," that it emerged out of social forces peculiar to the twentieth century, and that, though there are many instantiations of educational systems, it is the same reality in each that we point to with the phrase "the

[13] Michael A. Oliker, "Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System by Thomas F. Green, D.P. Ericson, R.H. Seidman." *Journal of Thought*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 1983), 118.
[14] Green, *Predicting*, xvii.

educational system."[15] The system therefore encompasses many types of school, public and private, as well as what are now referred to as career or vocational-technical schools. There are obvious important variations in these assorted institutions. The *system* is "precisely what doesn't change in the established arrangements of educational institutions and in the reiterated arguments that guide their behavior."[16] Consequently, the object of his investigation is to identify the stabilities, the "fundamental realities," that cannot "be touched by so crude an instrument for change and control as public policy."[17]

Part of the criticism of Green's project stems from his belief that there is a fundamental structural reality to the system that follows its own structural logic, quite apart from the ideological commitments of the stakeholders within the various educational institutions. Such a claim, if true, puts a significant damper on institutional meliorists; whatever changes are fought for must ultimately abide by a durable structural logic over which stakeholders have no control. Such an understanding of the logic of the system led Green to express serious doubts about the future of equal educational opportunity,[18] and he seemed to be well aware of the potential for crippling cynicism to take hold of the person who studies educational policy too closely:

> The sustained and scholarly pursuit of such counter-questions has extraordinary consequences. It certainly heightens one's sense of irony. But anyone with a boundless taste for irony will appear perverse to others. I drew some satisfaction from the principle that whatever you think the future will be like, I will show you why it won't happen that way, or, if it does, then why it shouldn't. It is hard to prevent such practiced skepticism from lapsing into an unbecoming kind of automatic cynicism.[19]

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[15] Green, *Predicting*, xviii.
[16] Green, *Predicting*, xix.
[17] Green, *Predicting*, xix.
[18] Green, *Educational Planning*, 24.
[19] Green, *Predicting*, xviii.

The durability of the system's structure was therefore to be a kind of anchor; while it constrained the range of changes that could affect the system it also made the continuing existence of an educational system possible. That, at least, was his thinking.

In addition to his conception of the structural logic of the system, some critics took exception to Green's methodology. It was not enough for Green to simply notice that some features of formal education did not change; he had to test the observation against something, and that something was the "quite ordinary and commonsense conception of the educational system."[20] The question that naturally follows is who's commonsense? The persuasiveness of Green's investigation could have hinged on how he answered that question, but instead of focusing long on the question of whose perspective, he proposes for his readers' consideration three properties of the system found in common discourse:

> All that we require, by way of definition, is to consult the conception and we shall discover that it refers (1) to a set of schools and colleges, (2) related by a medium of exchange, and (3) arranged by some principles of sequence. The best we can say, at the outset, is that "the system" is a social structure and, at the same time, a kind of social process the rationality of which is heavily circumscribed by that structure.[21]

If his idea that the system was driven in some measure by its own logic generated a fair bit of contention, then Green only managed to intensify the controversy by the qualification that the rationality of the system was "heavily circumscribed" by the logic of the structure.

The assumption of the rationality of the system leads him to adopt, in addition to the method of common language analysis, the method of practical rationality. To say

[20] Green, *Predicting*, xx.
[21] Green, *Predicting*, xx.

that the system is rational is simply to acknowledge that it is "guided by rational arguments."[22] It is important to note what this claim is not. Green is not saying that all stakeholders arrive at their positions on educational policy through rational deliberation, as if parents, administrators, and legislators hold policy development meetings to run cost-benefits analyses on ideas for the schools. He means only that, when it comes time to propose policy for the schools, the stakeholders—regardless of how they arrived at their positions—will offer reasons in support of their proposals. This is what it means, for Green, to call the system fundamentally rational, and it is on this basis that he invokes the method of practical rationality.

What is the method of practical rationality? In short, it involves treating the behavior of the system as the outcome of rational arguments. The task is twofold. Green must articulate the observed behaviors of the system as a series of directives or commands, e.g. "expand the system" and "prepare all students for the workplace." Then he must state the premises of the argument.

> Those premises may consist of social beliefs, general principles, and even judgments about the relative worth of different things. We do not care whether those premises are true or whether the principles they express are good. We are concerned only to make explicit the rules, beliefs, or principles that are required as premises in the system so that its observed behavior becomes rationally intelligible.[23]

The key is to understand that the premises will be the rational arguments for the system's behavior, and that, though they explain the behavior, they do not explain it causally. In other words, they explain *why* a command or directive came about (i.e. because this argument or that was accepted by the stakeholders as issuing in a particular directive), but they do not offer a conditional logic whereby a conclusion will follow

[22] Green, *Predicting*, xx.
[23] Green, *Predicting*, xxi.

necessarily from valid premises. His critics' failure to grasp the distinction between a practical argument and a causal argument led many of them to decry his hunt for "a logic" of the system, a sort of clockwork mechanism wound up according to tightly defined relations of logical necessity. Such a project is far from the one a perspicacious reader finds within the pages of *Predicting*.

So much for method, a word now needs to be said about the content of the system. The most important, and perhaps most obvious, observation is that the system, because it has a structure, will feature primary and derivative elements. The primary elements are (a) a system of schools, (b) related through a medium of exchange, and (c) arranged on some principle of sequence. Derivative elements are things such as a size (which may change), some arrangement for social control, and a distribution of resources, benefits, and educational attributes. He arrives at these "parts" of the structure through careful observation of the system's behavior, but in a sense these are only the horizontal features of the system. There are also hierarchical principles by which the system functions, principles that might be called the vertical features of the system.[24] Green identifies these principles as *The Hierarchies of Downward Drift of Learning, The Self-Regulating Hierarchies of the System as Employer,* and *The Hierarchies of Status*.

Critics took exception to nearly every step of his investigation. One critic, Margaret Archer, wrote an especially detailed critique of the book, one that was

[24] For a helpful summary observation of the horizontal and vertical features of the system see: Green, *Predicting*, 53.

intended to be, at least for half of Green's investigation, a devastating criticism.[25] It will be illuminating to quickly examine her response.

Archer's primary target is Green's claim that there is "a logic" to the system, although what she means by the expression does not accord with what he meant when he spoke of the rationality of the system. For example, she takes Green to mean that *abstract* interests drive the system, although she appears to misconstrue his claim to mean that the rather concrete interests of abstract entities—such as *the State*—drive the system to the exclusion of the interests of concrete entities, e.g. particular parents of particular students in particular schools. Thus, Archer:

> To deal only with abstract interests (and their derivatives) prevents interests from; (a) ever being seen as *vested interests* in a *particular structure*, that is firmly anchored in time and space and conditioned by that specific educational reality, and (b) as elements whose *results* depend exclusively upon *interaction* taking place in that *context*.[26]

But this is very nearly to claim that Green cannot (indeed, no one can) speak intelligibly about *schools* at all, that whatever one says about *schools* must remain confined to the interests and interest groups peculiar to some particular school; and yet such a position is tantamount to the claim that there can be nothing universal about the interests of parents, administrators, and legislators who are confronted with the same task—to educate the young in a technologically complex mass society. It is tantamount to the claim that there can be no logic of systemic goals and that the interactions of individuals are not themselves conditioned by systemic logic. Put in more concrete terms, terms Green uses in his book, it is as if Archer is claiming that the hierarchies of status—a horizontal feature of the system's *structure*—play either no role or an insignificant role

[25] Margaret Archer, "On Predicting the Behaviour of the Educational System," *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1981): 211-219.
[26] Archer, "On Predicting," 213.

in particular parents' motivation to enroll their children in Advanced Placement classes. But this is absurd on the face of it. The existence of and belief in the efficacy of colleges is the primary motivator for any parent to put a child in Advanced Placement coursework. Archer's criticism seems to have it that one must look elsewhere for the *real* explanation of the behaviors of maximally interested participants in the schools. Surely, this is either a misunderstanding of Green's investigation (he talks at length about particular interests)[27] or it is an expression of a Romantic belief that persons living within systems are free from the influence of the system's structural logic.

Perhaps the real sticking point for Green's critics has to do with where the rationality of the system *comes from*, so to speak. Archer is clear that the system receives its (context specific) rationality from the outcomes of agents interacting within the system.[28] In fact, it is fair to say that she sees the system itself as an emergent property of interaction and explanatorily reducible to just that. Correspondingly, she accuses Green of projecting "trends into laws," as he presumably does in his discussion of the hierarchical principles of organization.[29] Archer sets out to prove that Green has misidentified trends as laws by citing an instance—within the early mid-twentieth century French school system—wherein growth at the lower end did not lead to expansion at the top. Her example is hugely problematic, because the system in France

[27] For example, when discussing the distribution of educational benefits (p. 39), Green uses the concrete and particular problems facing the "Blue Ribbon Commission" in New York State; when discussing the distribution of educationally relevant attributes (p. 49), he couches the problem in relation to literacy levels among poorer children; and when discussing the principle of uniform growth (p. 66-67), he does so using concrete, particular model cases. In short, there are myriad examples of Green connecting the logic of the system's structure to the concrete reality of experiences within that structure. There is no sense in which the book is spinning abstractions.
[28] Archer, "On Predicting," 214.
[29] Archer, "On Predicting," 214.

not only *has* grown in the decades since Green's book, but it grew in precisely the ways his theory predicted such an instantiation of the system *would* grow.[30]

The thrust of Archer's—and indeed most of the critics'—misunderstanding of the system follows from her own mischaracterization of Green's investigation as a search for laws and abstract interests that explain the behavior of the system. It would be more accurate to say that Green examines actual behaviors of the system and then seeks out the rational arguments that explain those behaviors—not in a law-like way, but rather in a way that makes sense of the pattern of behaviors that obtains in the instantiation of the system. It is the scientific-theoretical task of constructing models that render some particular, complex phenomenon intelligible. Some of the arguments that his method uncovers will employ false premises, and some will not. That does not concern him, as his interests here and always are descriptive and pragmatic.

A look at one more point might make this a bit clearer. At one point, Archer charges Green explicitly with digging for logically necessary (i.e. law-like) rules governing the *growth* of the education system:

> When there is an over-supply of the educated, that is *prima facie* grounds for no growth, Green argues that the tendency of the system will, on the contrary, be to expand or to raise its qualifications or both. This is undoubtedly what the profession would like to see, but continued expansion depends upon their convincing the polity to increase the number of positions…or convincing external interest groups in health, industry or the prisons of their need for the 'qualified'. Neither group *necessarily* is convinced…which is why we need to

[30] The French system has become one of the most unified, centralized systems in the world, with the students moving from primary into secondary education uniformly. The growth of the system can be characterized as uniform even though *lycée* students may move into different tracks, because (a) their respective tracks observe the same principle of sequence. Namely, that when a student on one or the other track has completed n level, that will be sufficient grounds for inferring that he or she has completed level n-1 but insufficient grounds for concluding that he or she will complete level $n + 1$; and (b) the differentiation of programs (or tracks) is only intelligible if it is a single system that is experiencing differentiation, i.e. the tracks are a differentiation within the *lycée* system; they do not amount to the creation of two systems.

> address interaction rather than assuming simply that the 'practical argument of the system' is always victorious.[31]

Nothing about this description of Green's project would merit Green's approval. Where he writes about the principle of uniform growth, he does so through the investigation of various models that propose different sets of conditions. If X happens then Y likely follows. Specifically, Green argues that *only in* a society that holds to the principle of educational efficacy will universal attainment at *n* produce strong pressures for expansion. In a society that *does not* hold to the principle of educational efficacy, *nothing* follows from the fact of an over-supply of the educated. The logic here is conditional, situated in a specific state of affairs. Archer is unwittingly proposing a separate model, call it model 'B'—a society in which the principle of educational efficacy does not obtain—and arguing that Green's model 'A' condition does not hold for it. Green would be free to agree that the conditions of model 'B' are such that education policy decisions about growth would not be made on the basis of reasons given by stakeholders in model 'A.' Nowhere does Green simply assume that the practical rationality of the system is monolithic (he says the opposite, frequently),[32] nor does he argue that the structures are logically necessary but rather durable, common to all schools within the system, and the product of reasons (good, bad, and otherwise) offered by stakeholders. That is what he means when he calls the system "rational."

This is not to say that there was nothing to Archer's criticism. In fact, it is part of a larger debate within sociology about the value of a functionalist account of the

[31] Archer, "On Predicting," 214-215.
[32] In a letter to Harold Noah dated February 17, 1982, he speaks, rather of *similarities* in "the way that expansion of secondary education, over the decade, was diffused." In his letter to Noah, he was relating how he came upon the notion of uniform growth after examining a decade's worth of data on OECD countries for the 1970 OECD conference on educational growth.

relationship between schools and societies—an account that is premised upon the notion that the survival of the system is always a legitimate aim of the system. The problem of this approach to the study of the social structures that comprise the education system is that it can be undertaken without any reference whatsoever to the power relations that may give rise to them. At worst, the functionalist approach to sociological investigation can serve to intentionally mask those power relations. This is a worthwhile objection and one that should be considered by anyone involved in sociological study, but there is reason to believe that Green anticipated and met such an objection. For one, Green offers an account of the system that, while drawing upon the insights of sociology, is philosophical rather than sociological, and is therefore concerned with picking out the universal features of the system. Indeed, it would be hard to say how, for example, the aim of "emptying the nursery" or using schools and colleges connected by a medium of exchange might be viewed as peculiar to some particular power structure. It would appear to describe an education system in any political or economic situation, whether Western capitalist or communist. While he does argue that the system will distribute educational benefits according to its own structural logic, he nowhere claims that the distribution of benefits will only follow the structural logic of the system. In fact, he says early on that "[i]t is well enough to say that the interests of parents are maximal rather than minimal and individual rather than aggregate, and that they seek the best possible for their children rather than the minimum necessary."[33] And yet, the question of his research is one of formulating policy with regard to educational benefits, which requires that he think about what goals are and are not feasible *from the perspective of the state*.

[33] Green, *Predicting*, 29.

Ultimately, readers were sharply divided over the virtues of the book.[34] It is hard to resist the impression that, had his more critical readers retained the idea that this book was, in its totality, one leg of a larger project on moral education, they might have avoided some of the more egregious misreadings.[35] As announced in the opening pages, it was a formal account of the system with a promissory note for the composition of a second work that would broach the issue of the content of education. The question it sought to answer was fairly straightforward: why does the system seem so impervious to change?

> The answer in *Predicting*, crudely put, was that the system, as we have come to know it, answers fairly well to human basics of such simplicity that to depart very substantially from its arrangements would be to attempt something like a reformation of human nature itself. Those basics we framed in such simplicities as "learning takes time," "it takes twelve months to get a year older," "every society must empty the nursery and none can be entirely indifferent to how it is done." How such simplicities shape the foundations of the educational system is just what the composition of *Predicting* was designed to show.[36]

Where Green saw structure, his critics saw an unorganized mess of ideological conflict, and such a divergence of views may have as much to do with disposition as facts on the ground. Green was someone who saw design in the world, and he carried that vision

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[34] For positive critical appraisals, see: William H. Weber, III, "Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System by Thomas F. Green." *The Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Jul.-Aug. 1981), 437-439; and Jeanne Pietig, "Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System by Thomas F. Green, David P. Ericson, Robert H. Seidman." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, Vol. 3, No. 6 (Nov. - Dec., 1981), 83-84. For a negative appraisal, aside from that discussed in Archer, see: Michael A. Oliker, "Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System by Thomas F. Green, D.P. Ericson, R.H. Seidman." *Journal of Thought*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 1983), 118-124. It should be noted that Oliker's analysis is premised upon a misunderstanding that Green was attempting a Transcendental Argument in his book, but I commend it because his is another example of an instructive misunderstanding.

[35] One glaring exception is James E. McClellan's letter-review in which he, puzzlingly, took direct issue with the unseen second volume. In fact, McClellan's early draft response was full of personal attacks on Green's character as well as such dignified and reflective criticisms as "horeshit" and bizarre references to Green's "silly grins.," from a letter to Hugh Petrie dated Feb. 17, 1981. See also: James E. McClellan, "Review of Thomas F. Green, prepared with the assistance of David P. Ericson and Robert H. Seidman, Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System (Syracuse: the University Press, 1980) 320 pp." *Educational Theory*, Vol. 30, Issue 4 (Feb. 1980), 353-366.

[36] Green, *Predicting*, xi.

into his next leg of the project—to demonstrate how a conscience is formed within the social structure of the educational system.

Voices and the Continuing Influence of Durkheim, 1982-1999

Things did not slow down after publication of *Predicting*. Green had agreed to be the General Program Chairman for the AERA Annual Meeting in 1982, primarily for the opportunity to work alongside his friend, AERA president Maxine Greene. Of their many accomplishments, they co-authored a profoundly important statement on the role of qualitative inquiry in educational policy formation:

> Our belief is that education, educational research, and educational practice, however technically successful in forming a public, however guided by scientific insight, is dangerous and puts us all at risk if it is uninformed by the arts, by literature, and by attentiveness to the kind of social memory that is being framed. Policy research, for example, uninformed by The Federalist Papers, by the words of Shakespeare and Abraham Lincoln, is rootless research whatever its excellence by scientific standards.[37]

His relationship with Greene was one of the most fruitful and intellectually fulfilling of his career. By the time of their partnering up for the AERA their friendship had already spanned more than twenty years. He once wrote to a young acquaintance that Greene had been the major influence in his professional life, especially in his choice to make the study of education his life's work: "She has been my teacher, my inspiration, and my model for a long time. Also, oddly enough, my most difficult critic."[38] The pleasure of friendship was reciprocated by Greene, who a few months after their AERA collaboration had ended wrote Green to tell him that she missed him and to suggest they come up with some new project to work on together.

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[37] Maxine Greene and Thomas F. Green, "1982 Annual Meeting Program." *Educational Researcher,* Vol. 11, No. 2 (Feb., 1982), 19-20

[38] Letter to Sari Knopp Bilkin dated January 29, 1982.

A future project would have to be put on hold. Green had just been elected to the National Academy of Education, in section I, and he was quickly enlisted to help create an agenda for the academy going forward. He had also been asked, along with Gerald Grant, to organize an educational program for school leaders in upstate New York.[39] All of this happened in the midst of what turned out to be an unsuccessful run for the New York Board of Regents.

At school, Green's teaching revolved around three areas of interest. He taught courses on moral education through a reading of classical texts, especially Aristotle's *Ethics*. He also taught a course on the vocabulary of the social sciences that examined the philosophical problems inhering in it, and then there was a new faculty course that had been entrusted to him for some time. Of these, the courses on moral education are of most interest to his ongoing project. It was in these courses that he hammered out an outline for the main themes he would tackle in his manuscript. Perhaps most valuable was his reading, with his students, the commentaries of classical philosopher Terrence Irwin, who pointed out the craft analogy in the thought of Plato and Aristotle. This ancient analogy between virtue and skillfulness drove his understanding of the formation of conscience as encompassing matters of prudence in addition to more traditional moral problems.

He was also reading the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus, who proffered a belief in eternal strife between the one and the many, the "bow and the lyre," a tension of opposites. Green, characteristically concerned to connect his philosophical reading to the messy experiences of the everyday, seized upon the marginally abstruse Heraclitean opposition between "upwards" and "downwards" as an opportunity to think

[39] Letter to Gerald Grant dated May 17, 1982.

about the tension in thought between generalities and those particulars that seem ever intent on foiling them.[40] He puts the matter thus, "Principles framed or applied without attention to cases are dangerous, and cases are fruitless to even entertain if we do not learn from them."[41] The observation is prologue to a discussion of a paper by Maxine Greene, who focuses on the particular, and Kieran Egan, whose object is the general, in a sort of Janus-faced meditation on Social Studies education. The purpose of the paper is less interesting than a few of the particular observations made by Green, observations that give a glimpse into the development of Green's work on conscience.

For example, Green points out that the very idea of the "use" of history, as voiced by J.H. Plumb, is grounded firmly in Enlightenment, and specifically utilitarian, rationality. This is not merely to nitpick at language. One can imagine asking after the use of history in a more traditional political community, say Greek Orthodox or a Plains Indian Nation, and straightway the strangeness of the question should be apparent. The matter of the educational "uses" of history is discoverable in an Enlightenment society because the conscience of such individuals can find value only in utility.[42] This is Green as the expositor of moral education as formation of conscience. He goes on:

> I think that the creation of a sense of social membership or identity is the first aim of education wherever it occurs and that Plumb's view of the nature of historical scholarship, though acceptable for historian-observers of society, will not serve well as a model for the education of participants…Even becoming a philosopher is substantially a task of socialization. It means entering the historic parade of courageous thinkers, adopting severe standards of craft and relevance, acquiring the shared values and intellectual habits of the great exemplars of the tradition revealed in texts. It may be that one of the aims of socialization is to make persons more alike. But that seems to me a good thing, on the whole. Partly, what allows us to have symphony orchestras is that musicians are

[40] Thomas F. Green, "Social Studies and the American Dream: Responsive Notes." *Curriculum Inquiry*, Vol. 14, No. 3, Autumn (1984), 327.
[41] Green, "Social Studies," 328.
[42] Green, "Social Studies," 334.

> socialized to certain shared standards of critical judgment and values. But I do not see this as an obstacle to their education or as anything opposed to their education. Nor does their socialization, if it is complete, condemn them to play every riff in endless repetition. Indeed, among the standards of performance that they are socialized to are included those that encourage thoughtful innovation. We should not forget that even Dewey often spoke of the "habits of intelligence," and there are those in ordinary life from whom we learn to expect the unexpected.[43]

In this brief passage are adumbrated the voices of conscience as craft, memory, and imagination. Most significantly, it hints at an idea not yet fully formed but ultimately to become crucial to Green's exposition of the voices of conscience, and that is the idea that the voice of memory and imagination is orthogonal to the other voices of conscience. As Green says in *Voices*, "[T]he voice of memory and imagination does not stand simply as another voice beside these others. Memory and imagination provide a distinctive voice *within* the domains of craft, membership, and sacrifice."[44] In fact, he claims no less than that the formation of conscience is "largely a project in the reconstitution of memory."[45] And yet the thought is not quite fully grasped in 1983, when Green writes this thoughtful response to his colleagues. In order to arrive at its full articulation, he would take another sabbatical leave from Syracuse.

For the 1983-84 school year, Green not only took a sabbatical but fully intended to complete his manuscript on conscience. The manuscript was not to be completed for fifteen more years, but it did so happen that, during this sabbatical year, Green was asked to deliver the 1984 John Dewey Lecture, and for that he wrote what would be published as "The Formation of Conscience in an Age of Technology." It amounted to just one small but key part of the investigation into moral education, the opening shot,

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[43] Green, "Social Studies," 335.
[44] Green, *Voices: The Educational Formation of Conscience.* Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press (1999), 102.
[45] Green, *Voices*, 103.

as it were, in which he suggests that the expression "moral education" should be displaced by the more accurate and more expansive phrase "formation of conscience."[46] Because it is a crucial move in his project on moral education, it will be necessary to quote from his article at some length:

> [T]here is something in favor of speaking about the formation of conscience rather than moral education. It is a simple fact that each of us has the capacity to judge our own conduct and even to stand in judgment on what we discern to be the composition of our own affections. The point I want to stress about this experience is not that it involves judgment of moral approval or disapproval but simply that it is judgment that *each of us makes in his or her own case*. In short, it is reflexive judgment. Furthermore, it is judgment always accompanied by certain emotions that, if not exactly the same, are nevertheless like the moral emotions. I can feel guilt, shame, or embarrassment at a job poorly done, and these are the same feelings that I have when viewing some moral failure of mine. This capacity of ours to be judge, each in his own case, is all that I mean by conscience.

The distinction between the formation of conscience and moral education is one that makes an important difference; it amounts to saying that moral education, insofar as its aim is public life, must include matters that are not traditionally moral, such as prudential concerns. It must teach the young to feel the normative importance of showing up to work on time, of voting conscientiously, of performing a task with skill, and so forth. All of these activities are "subject to the commentary of conscience."[47]

Green also proposes in the article that conscience speaks to us in different voices, as when it speaks to us of what is "wise, foolish, or skillful,"[48] as in the conscience of craft; of our affections, as in the conscience of membership; of duty, "even against our inclinations,"[49] as in the conscience of sacrifice; and also of memory

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[46] Thomas F. Green, "The Formation of Conscience in an Age of Technology." *American Journal of Education*, Vol. 94, No. 1 (Nov., 1985), 3.
[47] Green, "The Formation," 3.
[48] Green, "The Formation," 3.
[49] Green, "The Formation," 4.

and imagination. These are the five voices, five expressions of conscience, existing "side-by-side," as it were, without any particular horizontal development, contrary to Kohlberg and his ilk. Green tends to give priority to the voice of craft, because our society is such that has produced a "technical conscience," one that prizes skillfulness above sincerity and fears the accusation of ineptitude over dishonesty. This tendency in his article (and later in his book) to depict the moral culture of twentieth century America with categories of thought related to work has its springs in his earliest writings. It was, after all, the central thesis of *WLAS*. So, while Green does not put forward a theory of moral development based on his voices of conscience, there is some sense clearly that the voice of craft presides over the development of the other four.

Green's investigation of conscience may be grounded in the realities of a work-centric technological society, but the emphasis on the "craft analogy" in moral development comes from ancient Greece. He says as much in his article. The Greek view, in short, is that every kind of thing possesses an excellence: shoes, tables, watches, human beings, etc. The moral sense of excellence is then clearly captured by the notion of skillfulness. A table is excellent when it is skillfully made, a watch when it keeps time, shoes when they stand up to wear, and a human being when he or she navigates the complex skills required of a life lived well. Green's observation of the connection between ancient Greek moral thought and our present day categories of thought was not particularly original; Alasdair MacIntyre had already written several popular philosophical works drawing that connection.[50] Green's original contribution consisted in two things: (a) the focus on moral education as the formation of conscience, and (b) the elaboration of the voices of conscience.

[50] Alastair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*. Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press (1981).

The article was widely acclaimed.[51] One scholar called it "critical in the late-20th century turn from seeing morality as a special arena of life to understanding "conscience of craft" as the foundation of professional ethics for all."[52] Its publication also marked a period of slowing down for Green, with no publications coming from him for two years. He had been struggling with lung disease and needed a reprieve both from the demands of work and of travel. Even so, he could not turn down the prestige of a Fulbright Lectureship in Kyoto, Japan in July of 1985.

On returning home to Pompey, New York, he took up gardening with a renewed passion. He and Rosemary had kept beautiful gardens around their property, both floral and vegetable, and it is tempting to think that the activity of gardening furnished Green, a child of Depression-era Nebraska, with some key insights into craft and memory. Whatever the case, a year of recreation and gardening had born fruit: when he finally did publish again—four articles in 1987 and 1988—he had clearly been thinking about the formation of conscience from a virtue ethical point of view. These included articles on the excellences of professional scholars, on virtue and prudence, and on moral education—all areas touched upon in his work on the formation of conscience.[53]

It is around this time that Green clearly articulates what he sees as the difference between moral philosophy and a philosophy of moral education. In a paper written in

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[51] See particularly: James M. Giarelli, "Education, Excellence, and the Formation of a Public: A Response to Green." *American Journal of Education*, Vol. 94, No. 1 (Nov., 1985), pp. 33-38;
[52] Craig A. Cunningham, "Tom Green, In Memoriam." *Education Policy Blog*: http://educationpolicyblog.blogspot.com/2006/12/tom-green-in-memoriam.html. Last retrieved 2/28/2015.
[53] See, Thomas F. Green, "On Seeing the Point and Knowing the Risks: Ethics in the Academic Community." *Journal of Thought, 22* (1987), 12-15; Thomas F. Green, "The Economy of Virtue and the Primacy of Prudence." *American Journal of Education*, Vol. 96, No. 2, February (1988), 127-42; Thomas F. Green, "On Moral Learning." *Philosophy of Education: Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society, 44* (1988), 109-123; and Thomas F. Green, "A Tale of Two Controversies: Comment." *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science, 23* (1988), 341-346.

1987 and published in the 1988 Philosophy of Education Yearbook titled "On Moral Education," he proposes three ways that a philosophy of moral education diverges from moral philosophy: (a) it has different aims, (b) it has a different starting point, and (c) it emerges from different interests.[54] Traditionally understood, morality attached a special notion of obligation to certain ethical ideas, so that, for example, showing kindness to strangers was regarded as moral in some places whereas, in those same places, doing a job to the best of one's ability was not so regarded. Yet both, being kind and doing one's work skillfully (as opposed to negligently), are doubtless ethical notions. Failure to do the former habitually might lead one to expect a future in hell; failure to do the latter habitually and one might expect to end up unemployed. The idea, on traditional morality, is that there is a duty to be observed, whereas the relationship between agent and performance of a merely ethical action may not rise above contractual obligation.

The problem became suddenly obvious to Green. Moral education must, if it is to prepare the young for a good life, take account of ethical notions that lie outside the purview of traditional moral philosophy. A sound moral education must ask the broader question, "How ought one to live?" The answer to that question must include some non-moral matters, such as prudential concerns, e.g. learning the courtesy of being on time, of listening to others, of expressing oneself politely, and generally avoiding a life of folly. This means that the ethical considerations of a philosophy of moral education should be broader than those of moral philosophy, and unlike the general aims of moral philosophy, they will be rooted in the workaday realities of specific social roles, jobs, stations, offices, and so forth. In order to accommodate this broader understanding of

[54] Thomas F. Green, "On Moral Learning." *Philosophy of Education: Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society, 44* (1988), 109-123.

morality found in moral education, Green suggests a vocabulary that can readily entertain prudential concerns, and for that he shifting the language of moral education from moral philosophy to the formation of conscience and its different voices. By conscience, Green means simply the capacity to make reflexive judgments on one's own behavior. At this point, he had worked out his theory in these two key papers, Green's road was clear. He had only to fill out the image in its minute particulars.

Another way to say what was happening in Green's research is to characterize it as a closing in on the fundamental point of his decades-long inquiry. His scholarly publications, which had cast a wide net within the study of moral education, focused more narrowly on the formation of conscience. However, within that narrow focus Green developed the complexity of his investigation. For example, from the publication of the article to the final version of the manuscript that would come to be called, *Voices: The Educational Formation of Conscience*, Green had expanded his inquiry to include the role of conscience in the public aims of education, a move that led him to some unique statements about norm acquisition. Perhaps the most important point he makes is "that the formation of conscience occurs by the acquisition of norms."[55]

For this point, Green returned to Durkheim, but as with his other intellectual influences, e.g. Alasdair MacIntyre and John Dewey, he did not merely borrow ideas but extended the analysis into new areas. Durkheim, a functionalist, argued that a society must bring students into the moral community through a series of imperatives, i.e. *norms*, delivered through the school. The primary obstacle to such *normation* resides in the fact that children do not come to the schools as blank slates, and so the

[55] Thomas F. Green, *Voices: The Educational Formation of Conscience.* Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press (1999).

crucial question arises—for the functionalist—as to just how accessible the student is to the state of mind the schools wish to stimulate in him or her. The educational task is clear: to cultivate the dispositions favorable to *normation*, such as a child's innate desire for regularity and the appreciation of the authority of moral rules that grow from his or her habitual nature and suggestibility. This, of course, raises the problem of coercion that plagues much of the educational theory of the early twentieth century, but Durkheim, in appealing to the innate dispositions of the student, is actually theorizing a way around physical coercion while yet holding to a deterministic role for the schools in the formation of a public. This goes back to the functionalist perspective that an individual within a system necessarily will be subject to the rational structure of the system, so what matters is not *whether* the individual will undergo normation but whether the norms to which he or she is subject work to build or destroy public life.

Durkheim stood at the apex of the Golden Age of the public school movement in France, a figure comparable in time to John Dewey in the U.S. and bearing certain affinities with him.[56] Institutional melioration, in the totalizing sense held out by Dewey and Durkheim, looked less plausible by the midcentury. Indeed, Green had no illusions about the romance of the public school movement; it had played out and, as he put it in the opening pages of *Voices*, "is now in that fading-away in which all romances end."[57] Thus:

> Faced with such a prospect, we must be at the difficult business of building once again a public commitment to education in the commons, but this time out of a deeper understanding of the mutual need of sect and commons. The sect, on the one hand, offers the moral resources that the commons needs but by itself cannot

[56] In fact, Durkheim's last work was on the connections between his own work and that of certain American Pragmatists: Emile Durkheim, *Pragmatism and Sociology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1983).
[57] Green, *Voices*, xii.

> provide; the commons, on the other hand, affords the protection of all partial communities and views of life, so that the fevers always provoked when such advocates meet nose to nose and toe to toe may be cooled and kept at a distance.[58]

Though Green traffics in the language of functionalism, he is clearly here making a concession to the insights of postmodern philosophies of difference and Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophies of situatedness. The neutral space of the commons is not the appropriate sphere for the development of conscience, because there is no universal, rational morality to which all reasonable people might give assent. Such a conception of the commons is a product of mistaken notions of rationality handed down to us from Enlightenment rationalism.

What does Green keep and what leave out from Durkheim's understanding of education? The short answer is that he keeps the idea that the commons is a moral sphere, but unlike Durkheim he does not believe it capable of generating deep moral identities due to its commitment to neutrality. For Durkheim, reason is always up for debate, but morality cannot be. For Green, both reason and morality can be up for debate, but what cannot be is the commitment to discovering public language in which to debate our moral differences. In other words, unlike Durkheim Green's project "is neither evangelical nor foundational."[59]

Despite Green's differences with Durkheim, the similarity between the two is highlighted in their shared understanding of norms. Speaking of the experience of norms, Durkheim wrote that "the individual controls himself only if he feels himself controlled, only if he confronts moral forces which he respects and on which he dare not

[58] Green, *Voices*, xii.
[59] Green, *Voices*, 30.

encroach."[60] Likewise, for Green, norms prescribe how individuals should or ought to behave. They do not describe how individuals in fact behave. Yet, even on this point, Green departs from Durkheim in the particulars. For Green, the same norm may be more restrictive in one setting than in another, such as one that informs cooperation. For example, cooperative behavior within the family might easily be construed as cheating in a school environment.[61] As Green is quick to point out, in real life people in fact do understand the boundaries of most norms in practice, that learning these boundaries, acquiring judgment with respect to one's norms, goes hand in hand with norm acquisition.[62] Durkheim, on the other hand, regarded norms as above critical judgment. In fact, he felt that once an individual's judgment encroaches on the full force of the norm, the norm is already dead.

This difference leads to different conceptions of conscience. For Green, it is defined as "reflexive judgment about things that matter,"[63] whereas for Durkheim the voice of morality is Society writ large, a sort of ideal toward which the moral efforts of a particular society are pointed. Green's treatment of moral development is a more nuanced approach,[64] a balancing act between the agency of the individual and the social structures that verify the individual's belief about the worth of things, his or her *values*. This point, central to his decades long project on moral education, was to receive a fuller development in the companion books to *Voices*, a work titled *Walls. Walls* was to show how a conscience forged in the sect could enter into the commons, indeed speaking the language of the commons, with integrity. This would be a book to draw

[60] Durkheim, *Moral Education*, 193.
[61] Green, *Voices*, 44.
[62] Green, *Voices*, 47.
[63] Green, *Voices*, 21.
[64] In fact, Durkheim's treatment of morality is totalitarian, Green's is critical and interactionist.

together the insights of his previous investigations into work, the distribution of goods via the educational system, and the development of a technical conscience. If successful, it would have shown how an individual could address the philosophical problems inhering in education while speaking from the experience of his or her own membership in a specific, sectarian community of identity. It would not only have rounded off but served as a hermeneutic key to his decades long investigation into moral education in a pluralistic, democratic society. The fact that this work was not even halfway to completion constitutes one of the great losses for the philosophy of education in the twentieth century.

Chapter 4: Thomas Green in Conclusion

Thomas Franklin Green was one of the most accomplished philosophers of education of the middle to late twentieth century. He was a Guggenheim fellow, a Whitehead fellow at Harvard University, a fellow at the National Institute of Education, and president of the Philosophy of Education Society. Nevertheless, he has been little written about or referenced in the work of other educational philosophers and theorists. There was no *festschrift* on the occasion of his retirement, and no societies have formed to further the unique work he began on moral formation, policy studies, or the conceptual analysis of teaching. The purpose of the present work has been, on the one hand, to fill the gap in the literature and, on the other, to help explain why Thomas Green has been largely forgotten by educational philosophy.

Broadly put, the previous chapters have examined the relation of the work of Professor Green to key philosophers and theorists of education across four decades. When first conceived, this project was slightly different, an assessment of Professor Green's contribution to philosophy with specific attention given to his impact upon the philosophy of education as a scholarly field. This seemed the natural approach. After all, Professor Green was mentored by two of the most influential analytic philosophers of the mid-twentieth century, receiving his doctorate in Philosophy from Cornell. All of his published work, though focused upon educational problems, was concerned with the distinctly philosophical problems of moral education. Furthermore, he had been a John Dewey lecturer, a DeGarmo lecturer, president of the Philosophy of Education Society, a senior research fellow at Princeton Theological Seminary where he worked on matters of religious education, etc. In short, it struck me as being both the natural and logical

choice to assay the importance of Professor Green's body of work to the analytic philosophy of education, and so the original plan of the inquiry would focus on the heuristic value of his ideas with respect to that field.

During the earliest stage of my research, it was readily apparent that stating the importance of Professor Green's work was itself intensely problematic. If the importance of scholarly work refers to its relevance, its potential usefulness and value, then his body of work is of the highest rank. However, there is another sense of importance used with greater currency indicating consequence, esteem, and reach. In the history of ideas, this latter sense of importance has to do with the breadth of an idea's reception, and in this regard the importance of Professor Green's work is a matter of some ambiguity. Here I am not referring to the innate quality of the work but rather to how that work has been judged and whether or not it has been put to use by those in his field. Professor Green was not unaware of the lukewarm and sometimes hostile responses his work provoked in others. Anger and disinterest were staple responses to his published work to the end of his career. It may even be said that at the height of his influence among Washington bureaucrats he was little more than Merlin offering counsel to a deaf Round Table.

To speak of importance in the latter sense is not to assess his contribution itself any more than one might assess a gift on account of its use or neglect by its recipient. The quality of the offering matters. Professor Green's contribution to the philosophy of education consisted in redefining moral education as both the acquisition of social norms, understood in a particular way, and as a conversation between the voices of conscience. Both prongs of his philosophy of moral education grew from entirely

unique analyses of norm acquisition, the proper role of prudence in moral education, and the meaning of conscience. As a result, he managed to define the philosophy of moral education as a domain of inquiry distinct from moral philosophy and consequently left us with the most extensive philosophical analysis of the formation of conscience ever committed to print. Were this enough to gauge the importance of his work, then this inquiry might have been a straightforward affair. In the history of ideas, only a lucky few can claim to have defined a sphere for philosophical inquiry and fewer still whose ideas have the potential to impact the ways we initiate the young into society.

I have resolved to set aside the question of importance understood in the former sense as indicating the intrinsic, heuristic value of an idea. I have no doubts as to the importance, so construed, of Professor Green's work. The real puzzle regards the uniqueness of his vision, the peculiarity of the historical moment that created the possibility of such a vision, and the fading felt urgency of his project among education professionals. In other words, it is the fact of his discovery of the philosophy of moral education, its springs and its reception, that have served as the subject of the present inquiry.

A biography of Thomas Green has not only been warranted by the extraordinary quality of his work but has, in terms of literary form, the advantage of illustrating how the balance in an abiding tension in American educational thought shifted in the wake of postwar uncertainties. That shift began in the 1940s and continued into the twenty-first century, occasioned in part by changing cultural attitudes toward race and gender that fueled the civil rights movement and in part by the (related) incursion of the federal

government into the affairs of local schools, for which Green attempted the role of sage counsel. Whereas the causes of these changing attitudes are many and complex, they had to do in no small part with the growing religious, ethnic, and racial pluralism of the United States. One important outcome of such a radical change in social thought and social practice was a growing suspicion toward claims of moral absolutes. This cultural backdrop goes far toward explaining the fact that Thomas Green's influence upon educational policy is modest when compared to figures such as Horace Mann, John Dewey, or Edward Thorndike; this period in educational thought has not been amenable to discussions of moral education, however creative or potentially important. Nevertheless, Thomas Green's work, concerned as it was to situate the moral insights of Aristotelian ethics within a distinctly American narrative of growing suspicions toward moral absolutes in the public sphere, presents the most accurate description of the contemporary problem of moral education in the United States.

Professor Green's vision culminated in his last published work, *Voices: The Educational Formation of Conscience*, in which he crafted a nuanced philosophy of moral education that defined conscience as reflexive judgment (i.e. judgments one makes upon oneself) regarding matters of importance. He suggested that conscience speaks in not one voice but many, each of which develops differently in different people, and those voices swell and fade in ways that are peculiar to the person. Rather than mere cacophony, these peculiar fluctuations in the voices of conscience can be explained by looking at the moral membership(s) of the individual, by examining the beliefs of the moral communities to which the individual (whether consciously or not) belongs. The novelty of Professor Green's theory is that it acknowledges, in concert

with sociology, that an individual belongs to more than one moral community, that he or she is shaped differently by each and in ways that have little obvious relationship to traditional understandings of "moral" development. To complicate matters, he also proposed that a tension between the voices of one's consciously identified moral community (say, the Episcopal Church) and the voices of conscience inherited from one's various other moral communities, e.g. school, teen culture, socioeconomic class, etc., must be mediated by a strong model of the moral life. Without the moral model, the person feels lost in a crippling sense of lawlessness or *anomia*.

Students may come to high school with a strong conscious identification with a religious community and if that religious community views public schools with suspicion then the *voice of membership*, which booms, "I am a fundamentalist Christian and the schools are our enemies," will drown out the *voice of craft*, which squeaks out, "It is embarrassing for a sixteen year old to be unable to form letters properly." Green does not suggest an easy fix for the problem, only a way to diagnose it. In fact, I think it fair to say that Green would have considered it possibly too late for such a student to willingly acquire habits from a public school teacher. What the struggling student needs is a member of his community of identity, a person he looks to as a model of adulthood, to teach him that his handwriting is important. In Green's last, unpublished and unfinished, book *Walls* he seemed to be on the verge of suggesting that religious communities be allowed either to enter the public schools unfettered or that the law should permit public financing of private religious schools.

Two Misconceptions

Part of the purpose of this intellectual biography has been to dispel two common misconceptions about Thomas Green—that his writings ranged over a number of disparate topics related only as educational phenomena, and that he was a crypto-conservative traditionalist working to justify the system. To the former, the fact that his various writings constituted a single project is nowhere revealed more explicitly than in a letter Green wrote in 1982 to his friend, Samuel Halperin, who had been the architect of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and, as director of the Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship, co-wrote an important report arguing for the need to expand educational opportunity to the poor.[1] Halperin had written Green to request that he send some of his published works to a friend tasked with developing educational policy in Israel, and in the course of the request he expressed some dismay at what he felt was a creatively frustrating sabbatical year in Jerusalem. Picking up on Green's language, he expressed the hope that he might find a "calling" and not merely more work to keep him busy.[2] The first part of Green's response reflects his faithfulness both to the earlier and to the later formulation of his project:

> You say the sabbatical has come to "the painful stage." I know exactly what you mean! But getting INTO that stage is what a sabbatical is supposed to do; and recognizing it as a stage is what makes the pain redemptive and testifies that the person who has the sabbatical is the kind who deserves it…
>
> Although I do – still I think I needn't – pray that you "find a calling," not merely a job. The calling is surely, by now transparent, isn't it? --- Enlarge the domain of freedom, increase the spread of opportunity, serve the cause of civic decency,

[1] I mention Halperin's accomplishments here only to lay the context for Green's response quoted below. See: Adam Bernstein, "Samuel Halperin, Educational Leader, Dies at 83," *The Washington Post*, May 9, 2014. Website: http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/samuel-halperin-dies-at-83-education-policy-leader/2014/05/09/1369ac30-d794-11e3-95d3-3bcd77cd4e11_story.html. Last retrieved on 3/21/2015.

[2] Letter from Samuel Halperin to Thomas Green dated May 25, 1982.

> enlightenment, peace between human beings, home-coming, roots, memory, and so forth.

In this, one can hear Green's earlier rejection of Martin Luther's identification of work and job in his first book, *WLAS*.[3] More telling, perhaps, is that he immediately connects the identification of calling and *work* with the formation of conscience—specifically with roots and memory, two terms that are central to his notion of *the conscience of memory and imagination* first found in his 1984 article "The Formation of Conscience" and later in his book *Voices*.[4]

It is tempting to read the comments that follow in the context of his next three books, connecting the insights from his work on the activities of teaching to educational planning and policymaking, as if Green's intention is to provide a snapshot of his project for Halperin's friend, who will doubtless read the letter:[5]

> Somewhere in this mélange of planning and leadership there lies the combination of polity, skill, and persuasion that will make for the career that you so evidently display. What mix of virtue, principle, or aim is required I do not know. But I know that my own "work" is to find out and to state it.[6]

Thus he draws a direct line between planning and policymaking to moral formation, and resolves both in his understanding of a "work" that he has been at. There is also some reason to believe Green directed these remarks in part to Halperin's unnamed friend; he requests two lines later that he and his friend interpret the work he will send along (presumably an early draft of *Voices*) as provisional. Before saying more, however, he

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[3] Green, *Work, Leisure*, 78-79.
[4] Green, *Voices*, 101-121.
[5] In fact, Green shared the letter with others, notably "Jerry" or "Jenny," from a letter dated August 20, 1982. The recipient was clearly a colleague who thanked Green for sending him/her the letter to Sam Halperin: "The letter to Sam Halperin was both penetrating and moving. It gave me insight into your own work and expresses what is at the heart of scholarship with such splendid economy."
[6] Letter to Samuel Halperin dated July 10, 1982.

wants to be clear about a final major piece of his "work" on the philosophy of moral education—the role of statistics, which was crucial to "the System":

> I believe that ideals matter! That is to say, their achievement matters. Thus, my own work is grounded always—though I have nowhere stated it—in the idea that if our ideals matter, then the data matter provided they describe the degree to which our ideals are realized.
>
> And this point is relevant to understanding a personal proclivity. I have always thought that teaching, like writing, is a form of conversation. Thus, I am no good at preparing syllabi, reading lists, and the like. On the one hand, I like to turn to the data—census reports, histories, OECD reports, government documents and the like. It is altogether pretty dull reading unless one goes to it with the idea that the numbers mask the transformation of particular lives when aggregated for whole societies.[7]

These remarks fall admittedly short of a systematic overview of his project. Nevertheless—and sufficient for the claim that there *is* a single project—he clearly treats his earliest thinking on "work" as if it is connected seamlessly to his middle work on teaching, on planning and policy, on "the System" and his later, more explicitly moral work in *Voices* and *Walls*. This observation receives some teeth from the fact that early formulations of moral formation found in *WLAS* are present in everything else he wrote. Green was, by his own admission to Halperin, engaged in "a work." It is also interesting to note the continuing influence of his old mentor, O.K. Bouwsma, in Green's understanding of what it means to teach a class. Further evidence, perhaps, of a man disposed to stick to his earliest inclinations.

To the latter claim—that Green was an apologist for the system—some words have already been said in the previous chapter. Much of this misconception is grounded in a misunderstanding of Durkheim's functionalism, which is all too commonly viewed as totalitarian and conformist by people who have not bothered to read him. But this

[7] Letter to Samuel Halperin dated July 10, 1982.

understanding of Durkheim must have been far from Green, who remarked in the same letter to Halperin, "Planners run the risk of being among those that Durkheim described as willing to do good to everyone—even those who do not want it done to them." Nor did Green subscribe to any notion of a fixed cannon of literature, as was practically mandatory among so-called conservatives working in education, such as Mortimer Adler, Robert Hutchins, Alan Bennett, and the like. In answer to a question about a canon of literature that might help develop the thoughtful educational planner, Green provides a nuanced answer:

> The answer, of course, is that there is such a body of material. But, in my case, it draws heavily upon the classics of philosophy—Plato, Aristotle. But also from the Biblical material, from a rather standard body of English and French philosophy of the enlightenment, and from the history of economic thought. It is this tradition that I take to be at the heart of conversation always in my writing and my teaching.
>
> But this tradition I speak of, though foundational, is not a fixed thing. I am reminded, on the one hand, of a statement of Karl Barth in one of his sermons—that one should preach always with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. Taken literally, such an injunction makes for awkward gestures, but the intent is right—the one part timeless and the other incredibly temporal. Which goes in which hand, I do not know.[8]

In fact, Green's "floating foundationalism" is closely akin to the view of knowledge espoused by pragmatist C.S. Peirce, who argued that, over time, knowledge was amenable to some measure of fixity within a community of knowers while always in some sense revisable.[9] Such a view points to the mentality of a cautious iconoclast rather than to the sentiments of a conservative traditionalist. It speaks of the boy who sat on his family's roof in Lincoln with his feet in the gutter, a comical portent of the iconoclastic tendencies of later life. And yet, there may be more to the idea that Green

[8] Letter to Samuel Halperin dated July 10, 1982.
[9] Charles S. Pierce, "The Fixation of Belief." *Popular Science Monthly,* 12, November (1877), 1-15.

was by disposition iconoclastic than mere jest. For example, one of his two favorite novels from his boyhood was the folksy, deeply democratic *Parnassus on Wheels*, by Christopher Morley, a book he held in high esteem even to the end of his life. A telling monologue-style manifesto delivered by one of the main characters, Roger Mifflin, speaks directly to an early, pragmatic sensibility in Green:

> "The world is full of great writers about literature," [Mifflin] said, "but they're all selfish and aristocratic. Addison, Lamb, Hazlitt, Emerson, Lowell—take any you choose—they all conceive the love of books as a rare and perfect mystery for the few—a thing of secluded study where they can sit alone at night with a candle, and a cigar, and a glass of port on the table and a spaniel on the hearthrug…The mandarins of culture—what do they teach the common folk to read? It's no good writing down lists of books for farmers and compiling five foot shelves; you've got to go out and visit the people yourself…"[10]

Is each of these points cumulative evidence for a single philosophical project driven by a pragmatic, iconoclastic sensibility? When taken together with a close reading of his body of work, the answer is a straightforward *yes*, but for many of his colleagues, who were understandably too busy with their own projects to study his carefully, the evidence would appear to be more than circumstantial but admittedly less than definitive.

Green and the Academic Community

In order to unravel this last claim about the reception of his work among his peers, it will be necessary to devote some space to the importance of his friends and colleagues in academe. Green put it best in the opening pages of *Predicting*:

> The unremitting loneliness of composition is made bearable and becomes possible to endure only by the continuing encouragement and interest and by the unbridled criticism and shared reflections of colleagues. And so, with the passage of time, one's indebtedness grows, extending to larger circles, including

[10] Christopher Morley, *Parnassus on Wheels*. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company (1917), 67.

> more persons than can be listed. Such indebtedness not only widens, but also deepens and is transformed from debt to gratitude. And from gratitude it often ripens into a kind of kinship seldom found outside the academic community.[11]

The sentiment expressed here was not merely lip service. Green's relationship to the academic community was largely, from his point of view, constructive. He sought to learn from others, and as a consequence he disliked writing reviews of others' work because it required him to judge the flaws of their work publicly.[12] When he did offer criticism of another's work, it was often wrapped in humorousness, as when he wrote to a correspondent, "I am awed by anyone who would try to "apply" Rawls to anything."[13]

His interlocutors were not always equally loath to offer judgment on the shortcomings of his work. The tone and content of these reviews runs the gamut from fair to vicious. For an example of the former, in what is really a level review of *Voices*, Joseph Dunne points out that Green's analysis "bears much more on the requirements of being morally well formed than on the problems of moral formation."[14] This is an apt criticism that, however graciously put, throws cold water on Green's ambition to carve out a unique niche for the philosophy of moral education—in fact, it amounts to the claim that he is doing nothing other than moral philosophy. Of course, whether this judgment holds for his larger project is far less certain; much depends upon Green's intentions regarding the content of the companion volume, *Walls*, which was left incomplete. Dunne's criticism may have been devastating, at least with regard to one important claim of *Voices,* but taken all in all it was gently put forward. There were

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[11] Green, *Predicting*, xiii.
[12] Letter to Alan Mabe dated June 18, 1976. Mabe was the Chairman of the Editorial Committee for *Social Theory and Practice*.
[13] Letter to Ernest R. House dated April 8, 1976.
[14] Joseph Dunne, "Reviewed Work: *Voices: The Educational Formation of Conscience* by Thomas F. Green." *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No. 204, July (2001), 414-417.

more far more cutting criticisms than this. Victor Worsford, in an exhaustive exercise in missing the point of Green's paper, "Values: Linguistic Conjecture, Constructive Venture," first mocks him for using the expression "slovenly educational discourse" to refer to the common running together of beliefs, virtues, hopes, aspirations, and public goods under the expression *having values*. He then proceeds to show how slovenly Green's own treatment of the topic has been, although he clearly misunderstood all of the principal points of Green's paper. Taken all in all, the response is an obnoxious combination of clueless and condescending.[15]

It was not the harshest response to a work of Green's. In 1981, after publication of *Predicting*, another philosopher of education and close colleague, Jim McClellan, wrote a draft review of the book which contained a good deal of personal insult. To his credit, Green responded both to McClellan and to the editor of *Education Theory*, Hugh Petrie, with characteristic grace. First, to Petrie, he complains that the review is off the mark, even in its more serious moments, but in addition to the serious aims the review is full of jabs:

> But what, I am afraid, offends me is the fact that he includes personal matters that would be appropriate for a letter, but not a letter written for print.
>
> I allude not only to the fact that "nonsense" is as good a word as "horseshit", and better in print, but the fact that he also alludes to such things as "silly grins" and caveats and so-called personal aspirations of mine, as in the last paragraph…in these matters Jim crosses the border into matters that he does not understand…[16]

Green's response to McClellan is even more measured, and could serve as a model of response in similar situations:

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[15] Victor L. Worsford, "Green's Objectivity: A Stance for Today?" *Philosophy of Education: Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society, 49* (1994), 76-78.
[16] Letter to Hugh Petrie dated February 17, 1981.

> A quick note – not well thought out – but pondered for a very long time. Whether the quality of your letter as review is good or bad, does not bother me much, as I have said in my note to Hugh Petrie.
>
> But I am bothered terribly by the personal allusions you make, most of which insofar as I understand myself (none of us does completely) are just plain wrong, and I think offensive…if I ever had any aspirations to be an educational statesman, then that passed long ago…
>
> But the point is this. I write to you as a friend whom I dearly love. I admit that I do not fully understand the perspectives that you adopt, but I always learn from you. Your honesty is glaringly present, but it comes on also as foolish imprudence and a lack of respect for others – at least that is the way others are likely to view it. Although as I say, I do not understand your thought, I think I come closer, than you come to understanding the nature of my deepest motivations. Again, I say, I do not think that any of us can see ourselves just as others see us. But we have got to consider that fact whenever it surfaces and surprises us.[17]

He closes by admitting that he may simply be trying to protect himself, but he does not think that a serious possibility, and signs the letter "With durable affection and love." There is another letter, dated three weeks later, in which Green indicates a mending of fences between McClellan and him.[18]

To discover Green's affection for the scholarly community, one need not turn to how he handled moments of conflict. There is an abundance of quieter moments, times when his endorsements of colleagues or referrals of graduate students for positions, brief letters of encouragement and condolence, went beyond the usual bounds of professional courtesy. An excellent example of Green's care for his colleagues, both at Syracuse and elsewhere in academe, can be found in a letter of response to a Dean of a prominent school of education who elicited Green's opinion about the promotion of a member of the college's faculty. Green begins by remarking that the request greatly bothers him. He then goes on to explain in detail why:

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[17] Letter to Jim McClellan dated February 17, 1981.
[18] Letter to Hugh Petrie dated March 9, 1981.

> Neither do I know whether this request comes originally from him, from the committee itself or from you personally—whether it is extended to me in particular in order to routinely satisfy a requisite of law and custom or whether it is an earnest request for my views.
>
> But aside from these difficulties, the point is that if E--- were to personally invite my comments on his work in progress, then I could address my response to him as a contribution to his work. That would constitute the most decent exchange in the best tradition of the academic community. He would then be free to share that "communal" exchange with anyone. If he decided to share it with the committee, then the committee would get the independent judgment it seeks. But, as far as I know, E--- has never asked for my consultation, advice, or assistance in his work.[19]

He goes on to mention the reasons why E--- would not have sought his input, as he worked outside Green's areas of expertise. He then offers three pages of advice to the Dean on how best to proceed with an evaluation, given his own reading of the faculty member's CV. He urges the committee to consider more heavily the candidate's potential to contribute a scholarly project to the academic community, deemphasizing the importance of his previously published papers. He mentions again the examples of David Riesman and himself as faculty who would never have received tenure had their committees focused primarily on their publications:

> I know, with absolute assurance, that had I been subject to the kinds of standards that I suspect the committee will entertain in the case of E---, then I would have spent the last twenty seven years in the personnel office of White Rogers—a company long engaged in the manufacture of heavy industrial equipment and last week reported in the New York Times to be filing Chapter 11 bankruptcy. That is one measure of the irony I detect in your request.

He ended his letter by assuring the Dean that he would send along a copy of it to E---, while formally declining his request to offer commentary to the committee. As he says in his letter, he wanted nothing to do with that particular institutional process.

[19] Letter to C. Wayne Gordon dated July 21, 1982.

Green's faculty archive is full of similar letters, resisting the bureaucratization of higher education, sometimes forcefully, many times on behalf of other scholars. And yet, this was a side of Green that many of his colleagues never saw up close. An earthy, Depression-era Presbyterian, he greatly disliked the image of philosopher as guru or revolutionary, but he had also counted himself a friend of and to some extent simpatico with such revolutionary philosophers as Paolo Freire and Maxine Greene. Green was not out of sympathy with the twentieth century.

Final Years

In lieu of the time-honored festschrift, Green has been the subject of several insightful obituaries, memorials to a man who never quite enjoyed the notoriety of his mentors (nor of some of his former classmates), but who touched the lives of those who knew him and those who read his work. In these, one discovers a man who was sometimes "blunt but not cordial,"[20] was at other times deeply, personally concerned about the welfare if his students, was quick to lend beloved books, of which there were many, but was not a "book lover" in the vulgar sense—he held high standards as a reader. A childhood spent in Depression-era Nebraska formed in him a love of gardening and a passion for yard work, and the chatty sociability of his Midwestern childhood home made him a willing communicator:

> His discussions of college and graduate school moved from his growing sweet corn to make money at a roadside stand to working with legendary figures like Max Black and Wittgenstein when he was at Cornell to Rosemary and his family. Tom loved Rosemary deeply and spoke frequently and fondly of his children. Tom could be a difficult human being to have as a husband or father,

[20] Tom Mauhs-Pugh, "Memories of Tom Green." Education Policy Blog website: http://educationpolicyblog.blogspot.com/2006/12/tom-green-in-memoriam.html Last retrieved: 03/27/2015.

> and, at some level, he knew that. We didn't dwell with introspection or analysis on his family or youth, it wasn't that kind of relationship, nor do I think Tom was that kind of a person. He told stories, and those stories, often brief, touched on centers of wonder in his life: the green of plant life, his wife and family, and his life-long love affair with words, moral philosophy, and the relationship between education and a moral life.[21]

By at least two separate accounts, Green had fallen out with contemporary literature. He felt that the authors of the middle to late twentieth century had failed to grapple in a serious or insightful way with moral questions, but he was also open to being challenged. When one acquaintance said something about reading novels that he thought profound, he thanked her for reconciling him to literature "with tears in his eyes."[22] This love for people, an open-hearted gratitude, was a staple of his life. A former student and friend shared an illustrative and colorful anecdote of this characteristic of Green:

> Tom had convinced me to submit something I'd written to a conference at Widener University. The paper was accepted. Tom was also delivering a paper and he told me we could drive from Syracuse together. I had an infant daughter at the time and hadn't been getting much sleep. The day before we left I got the flue and spent twenty-four hours getting closely acquainted with the porcelain fixtures in our apartment. So, I hadn't slept more than a few hours in the past several days, hadn't eaten in the past twenty-four, and was dehydrated when Tom honked his horn early on the appointed morning. It was one of the scariest rides of my life. Tom carried on, mostly solo, a multi-hour disquisition on something or other while I kept warning him to return to our lane, watch out for this or that obstacle, brake, and the like. I didn't dare fall asleep. Tom seemed contentedly oblivious or fearless. Then, at Widener, when I got up to give my presentation, Tom left the room. Afterwards, I asked him what had happened. He said watching me present made him too nervous, he couldn't bear it. A colleague confirmed that he had spent the session in the hallway listening at the door. I drove on the way home.[23]

Green spoke often and tenderly of his boyhood in Nebraska, especially in the last years of his life at Nottingham Senior Living Center. Perhaps most tellingly, the

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[21] Maughs-Pugh, "Memories."
[22] Eileen E. Schell, "Memories."
[23] Maughs-Pugh, "Memories."

philosopher who wrote so eloquently of the sense of wonder at the heart of education impressed others even in his last years by the simple, visceral joy he could take in hearing another's life stories.[24] He also loved to share his favorite memories of the intellectual circle of his parents, which included his mother's girlhood friend Willa Cather, and he spoke lovingly of his mother's biographical works about prairie educators. Once or twice he even spoke of the brother he lost to the Battle of the Bulge in the closing days of WWII. Sometimes he talked about Max Black and Norman Malcolm, or he would tell of being surprised to discover a shabbily dressed Wittgenstein, who everyone mistook for a senile old janitor, on his first night in his graduate program at Cornell. Always he continued with his work, leaving the unfinished *Walls* on his computer at Nottingham. It was a faithful end for a man rooted with integrity in the conscience of memory, imagination, and craft, whose life was focused with unique intensity on a nearly endless tangle of problems.[25]

[24] Eileen E. Schell, "Memories."
[25] The phrase, "a nearly endless tangle of problems," is a description of Green's own about his work, taken from the Preface to *Voices*, ix.

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Appendix: Notes on Methods and Materials

Structurally, this work falls into the category of intellectual biography, a subgenre of intellectual history. Just as intellectual history treats of the ways an idea changes over time, intellectual biography takes a particular subject as, in some sense, a privileged locus of those changes. Thomas Green championed the centrality of prudence in our thinking on moral education, and both his academic life and his work reveal in a unique way the social forces that ultimately occluded the role of prudence in moral formation. Indeed, he was in many ways the perfect person to play the part of prophet of prudence for the last half of the twentieth century. It is the purpose of the present work to show why this is so. First, it would be prudent to explain how I intend to compose this biography, explaining my own theoretical assumptions and methodology.

In his *Aspects of Biography*, Andre Maurois compares the work of a biographer to that of a portrait or landscape painter, who "must pick out the essential qualities in the whole subject which he is contemplating."[1] Undoubtedly, the first and most fundamental art of the biographer is this selectivity, without which biography devolves into an artless accumulation, a great drift of details. The basis for selecting "essential qualities" varies to some extent from one biographer to another according to concern for historical truth, depth of historical analysis, and level of identification between biographer and subject. The key is to "make the choice without weakening the whole."[2]

[1] Andre Maurois, *Aspects of Biography* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1929), 50.
[2] Maurois, *Aspects*, 50.

This amounts to saying that biography is as much a science as an art. Its twin objects are knowledge and pleasure, or, to put it another way, instruction and entertainment.[3]

Maurois proposes a two-pronged approach for "maintaining a scrupulous respect for scientific truth" while embracing the art of the novelist.[4] First, the biographer should present the selected details in chronological order. This makes intuitive sense in an age of three-act sitcoms and reality TV shows, but it represents a departure from the longstanding "facts first, character afterwards" approach to biography that held from Plutarch through much of the Victorian period.[5] This concern for chronological order is not rooted in a simple desire to break from the pattern of past biographies but is grounded rather in an important aesthetic consideration. A life unfolds in anticipation of a future and in reaction to the unforeseen. It follows patterns, is disrupted, and comes together in new arrangements, all in an attitude of expectation or surprise or disappointment. In biography, this chronological dialectic of mystery and anticipation constitutes the "romantic interest" of the reader—an interest that should be respected by the biographer.

Nevertheless, chronological order presents, if not exactly a problem, then perhaps a slight embarrassment for the biographer. She knows how her subject's life will turn out, knows the defining failures and successes, knows the changes of character that mark her subject's spiritual evolution, and yet she must, if she is to respect the interest of her reader, pretend to ignorance at the outset. To anticipate every discovery would deprive the subject of the tentativeness, the ambiguity, and the indecisiveness

[3] Arnold Rampersad, "Design and Truth in Biography" in *South Central Review* Vol. 9, No. 2. (Summer, 1992): 2.
[4] Maurois, *Aspects*, 56.
[5] Maurois, *Aspects*, 57.

that characterize a human life, and the resulting biographical portrait would be manifestly false.

In order to present not only a truthful but also an aesthetically pleasing work, a work that is both scientific and artful, the biographer must "relieve his reader of the burden of useless material."[6] This is Maurois's second prong. In intellectual biography, where the endgame is a greater understanding of ideas, the biographer assumes the burden of narrating a life and exploring an intellectual landscape in equal measure. Therefore, unlike biography more generally construed, intellectual biography demands a series of regressions. Certain points in the subject's life present narrative pivots into the history of an idea, and those pivots must be made as the opportunity presents itself or be lost as the narrative proceeds along the axis of the subject's life. In this regard, the present work diverges from Maurois but only in a qualified way. It presents Maurois' vision of biography in three dimensions, concerned as ever with aesthetics and accuracy while taking modest albeit necessary liberties with the primary narrative's chronology.

It is important to emphasize that the method of following narrative pivots is not to be mistaken for a somewhat different, popular approach to intellectual biography that "traces aspects of the performance of the intellect of an individual over an extended period of time."[7] Though that is indeed the common view of intellectual biography, I propose something a bit more radical with respect to the subject of an intellectual biography. On the one hand, that his or her identity is so forcefully shaped by specific currents of thought that the life-force of the subject will be uncovered where it intersects

[6] Maurois, *Aspects*, 62.
[7] Rampersad, "Design and Truth," 2.

with the history of an idea more so than in the particularities of the emotional life; and on the other hand, that the historic contingencies of the individual's life are uniquely suited to reveal the history of the idea(s) that shaped him or her. On this view, intellectual biography is *intellectual* from two directions: (a) because of the primacy of an idea or a set of related ideas to the production of the subject *qua* biographical subject; and (b) because of the centrality of the subject's intellectual work to the history of the idea. The *biographical subject* in intellectual biography is therefore a privileged point of contact between an historic individual and the history of an idea.

This way of conceiving the biographical subject as distinct from the historic individual has repercussions for the notion of biographical truth. The purpose of intellectual biography is to truthfully depict the life of an idea, especially as it is instantiated in the biographical subject. Therefore, only those facts of the subject's life that reveal the idea are brought within the compass of the present study. In the case of Thomas Green, it is difficult to imagine more pressing biographical facts than his close, lifelong identification with Protestantism and his experience, first as a student and then as an educator, of an educational landscape quickly changing to facilitate the demands of America's Cold War period.

The primary sources for my biographical dissertation include all five books written by Thomas F. Green, as well as his most important scholarly articles. These are *Work, Leisure, and the American Schools* (1968), *The Activities of Teaching* (1971), *Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System* (1980), *Voices: the Educational Formation of Conscience* (1999) and its companion volume, the unfinished and

unpublished *Walls*. I will also draw on his archived papers, including personal and professional correspondences and papers in the works.

Green began writing *Work, Leisure, and the American Schools* nearly fifteen years after graduating with his Ph.D. in philosophy from Cornell University. It is in some ways a surprising first book for Green, and perhaps it is appropriate here to say something about his dissertation before proceeding. His philosophical education was conducted under the auspices of three of America's most important analytic philosophers, O.K. Bouwsma at Nebraska and Norman Malcolm and Max Black at Cornell. Bouwsma made his mark on American analytic philosophy by being the first major name in the field, by writing in an often eccentric style, and by being the first American philosopher to understand the importance of Wittgenstein's *Blue Book*, communicating its meaning in a famous article conveniently titled, "The Blue Book." Norman Malcolm who, like Green, had been a student of Bouwsma, made his name in philosophy by bringing Wittgenstein to the United States and writing his definitive biography. This group of Wittgensteinian philosophers was actively engaged in common language analysis, believing that philosophy could be made relevant to real life through the logical analysis of the concepts that underwrote our ways of thinking, believing, and acting in the world. It was a "practical philosophy" that was nevertheless an alternative to pragmatism, which often lacked analytic rigor. One drawback of analytic philosophy, despite Wittgenstein's desire to bring philosophy down to earth, was a penchant among analytic philosophers to get lost in endless debates over the meanings of terms. Green's own dissertation had been a critique of some ambiguous phrasing in the common sense philosophy of Thomas Reid. Norman Malcolm had been

long at work criticizing the defense of common sense philosophy made by G.E. Moore, and so it is safe to assume that Green's dissertation had been an apprentice piece. The dissertation is entirely unremarkable and stands in stark contrast to the liveliness of mind characteristic of Green's professional scholarship. The tone of the work is flat and seems to indicate a lack of interest in the subject. In any event, he never again returned to the problem explored by his dissertation.

From another perspective, a book about the philosophical problems of education makes perfect sense. Green's mother, Norma Kidd Green, had been an historian of education and it is to her that he dedicated *Work, Leisure, and the American Schools* (1968) with the inscription, "To my mother/Norma Kidd Green/who knows better than most/what this book means." The book is, as he puts it in the preface, a personal work. It is also the product of more than a decade of thought about "what it means to think philosophically about education."[8] In it, he argues that the most fundamental problems of education are ideological, rather than psychometric or managerial, and therefore the philosophy of education is the philosophical study of ideology. One such fundamental problem is what we mean when we talk about work and leisure within the context of education. This question was of particular interest in the 1960s when the futurists were predicting a coming social change in which the majority of labor would be automated and America would be a leisure society. Green treats such speculation as grounds for a thought experiment: in a society which, through automation of labor, has abolished jobs for the vast majority of its population, what would "leisure" and "work" mean and how would we prepare the young for such a society?

[8] Thomas Green, *Work, Leisure*, vii.

Green's next book, *The Activities of Teaching* (1971), is not a survey on the philosophy of education as a scholarly field so much as it is a handbook on how to think philosophically about key problems in education. Green's method is simple: to illustrate in a step-by-step manner how he goes about the business of analyzing concepts. From a biographical standpoint, his book is interesting because it contains some of the most explicit statements by Green of his Wittgensteinian approach to philosophy. In the preface, Green says that "[p]hilosophy is an activity and not a subject, something to do rather than something to study."[9] When explaining why he did not write a textbook on the philosophy of education, he says, "A textbook is a peculiar form of discourse…it need not have unity and coherence, though it should have organization…should be coldly objective and never personal, supremely confident and never admittedly inadequate or puzzling…in short, a textbook, by its very conception, is everything philosophy is not."[10]

Green's epistemological humility about what can and cannot be accomplished through the philosophical analysis of concepts does much to explain the fact that his book is aimed merely at teaching students how to formulate their questions with more precision and how to answer them with a more complete grasp of their tentativeness. This way of conceiving the work of philosophy of education is not about knowledge acquisition, true beliefs, or justification of beliefs. It is rather about clarifying questions and selecting the most heuristically and pedagogically worthy questions. The outcome of such aims is neither to produce a doctrine nor a complete system of thought, nor is it to produce ideas in some final form.

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[9] Thomas Green, *The Activities of Teaching* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), ix.
[10] Green, *Activities*, ix.

The method Green employs is fairly straightforward. First, connect a supposition about some concept to education, and then illustrate that connection through examples. For instance, one might suppose, as Green does, that practical activities involve "an exercise of judgment based upon whatever knowledge is appropriate for that particular activity."[11] He then connects that supposition to education with the claim that teaching is a kind of practical activity. Next, he illustrates the connection between the concepts of teaching and practical activities by categorizing all of the things a teacher does that might be called "practical activities," including explaining, concluding, motivating, counseling, collecting money, and keeping reports, to name a few. As a final move, he divides these activities according to their structure into logical acts, strategic acts, and institutional acts. From a biographical perspective, what is interesting about Green's method is that he reveals affinities with various philosophical movements. His notion of a concept as "a locus of inferences permitted by the various uses of a term" is drawn from analytic philosophy, whereas his claim that "the analysis of a concept is the description of its use" is a notion taken from Peirce's pragmatism. This reveals a consistency between his ideas here and his desire to remain outside of ideological disputes between philosophical movements as expressed in the opening pages of *Work, Leisure, and the American Schools* as well as later in his career, in the opening pages of *Voices: The Educational Formation of Conscience.*

In the same year Green published *The Activities of Teaching*, he also published a monograph, *Educational Planning in Perspective: Forecasting and Policy-Making* (1971). In both the Introduction and in his chapter contribution titled, "The Dismal Future of Equal Educational Opportunity," Green writes about an emergent context for

[11] Green, *Activities*, 1.

understanding and undertaking educational planning. This new context is one which calls into question "the very idea of schools and schooling" in both the undeveloped, developing, developed, and over-developed world. Whereas the previously held belief in a causal connection between the growth of schools and economic growth had gone unchallenged in most of the OECD countries, educators and policymakers in Latin America and parts of the undeveloped world had raised valid objections to the social value of schools, claiming that they acted far too often as tools of oppression for the enfranchised groups.

In his chapter contribution, Green takes up one goal that education policymakers could put forward in response to the increasing sensitivity to issues of injustice, the problem of equal educational opportunity. He examines what it might mean in multiple contexts and assesses the prospects of achieving it in the schools. He defines equal educational opportunity as a problem primarily concerned with injustice, "a problem in the distribution of educational goods and benefits."[12] One of the keys to addressing the problem is to determine what does and does not count as educationally relevant criteria for the distribution of benefits. Race, class, and wealth are ruled out. Ability and choice seem to be the most promising candidates for educationally relevant criteria, but upon reviewing an exhaustive number of cases in which both are rendered problematic, Green concludes that "[e]ducation is endemically unequal in the way it distributes its benefits. Some distributions will be acceptably unequal and some will not."[13] It is this kind of honest analysis that caused problems for Green throughout his career, especially

[12] Thomas Green (Ed.), *Educational Planning in Perspective: Forecasting and Policy-Making* (Surrey, England: Futures, 1971), 25.
[13] Green, *Educational Planning*, 39.

with philosophers and education theorists who felt he should take a principled (meaning ideological) stand on educational problems.

His next book, *Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System* (1980), grew out of his puzzlement with what fundamental elements comprise our education system. This inquiry began when Green ran up against a wall while thinking about policy-making in his previous monograph. If education is not clearly a system of distribution based upon a principle of justice, then what exactly was it and how did it produce such uniformity across the country in the "absence of any basic [national] policy requiring it?"[14] Green's answer is elegant and relatively simple and has the advantage of rendering a "formal" (as opposed to content-oriented) account of the educational system rationally intelligible. It is composed of schools related through a system of exchanges, arranged by a principle of sequence.[15] There are certain secondary characteristics occasioned by these primary features, such as a definite size, a means of social control, and a means of distributing its benefits.

The primary criticisms of this book are (a) that it is too ethnocentric to actually reveal a *logic* of *the* educational system, (b) that it presents too rational a picture of educational change, and (c) that it is sociologically naïve.[16] Yet, all three criticisms follow, I think, from a failure to understand the pragmatic tenor of Green's analytic approach to philosophy. He does not set out in search of ultimate definitions or even ultimate "Platonic" logical structures, but rather his method is to take some presently

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[14] Thomas Green, *Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980), 3.
[15] Green, *Predicting the Behavior*, xvi.
[16] See Margaret Archer's review in the *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1981) pp. 211-219. Also see William H. Weber, III in the *Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Jul-Aug, 1981), pp. 437-439.

existing problem and unravel whatever is of philosophical significance about it. Therefore, the logic of the educational system refers to a structure as it is found in America; and the practical rationality of the system points to the real practice of education policymakers to offer reasons for putting forward, accepting, or rejecting policies. To point out, as Archer does, that people are also motivated by irrational drives and desires, does not negate the fact that policy decisions are made based on reasons that are either accepted or rejected. In other words, policy plays out in the arena of reasons. He is not talking about ultimate, abstract realities, but rather of present realities and the way those realities operate.

Green's last published book, *Voices: The Educational Formation of Conscience* (1999), and its companion piece, the unpublished and unfinished *Walls*, are in a very real sense the intended follow-up to *Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System*. Whereas the latter book dealt with the logical structure of the educational system, the former books deal with the content of education. Green's opening shot in *Voices* is the claim that education in a democratic society simply is the matter of achieving self-governance. This, as with every claim he made in his long career, is deceptively complex. It means that education in a democratic society for democratic citizenship is nothing other than moral education, and moral education means the formation of conscience. Green defines conscience as the exercise of reflexive judgment on matters of importance, and *Voices* is about how the complex structure of conscience is formed. Conscience, Green tells us, speaks in the voices of craft, membership, sacrifice, memory, and imagination. Voice is used throughout as a metaphor for the self-

governance, or reflexive self-judgment, that occurs when one has internalized or "acquired" a norm.

Not only do we learn to exercise self-governance, i.e. to heed the voices of conscience, in our sectarian normative communities, but moral education should actually aim for extending the practice of self-governance to the polity in the office of citizen. One obvious conclusion of this construal of moral education is that morality is not held by Green to be a private affair. It includes not only deeply sectarian self-judgments about things like sin but also public prudential considerations such as feeling guilty when one has shown up to work late or even feeling that one has not performed a task excellently. The claims Green makes in this book, though acknowledging the role of sect or normative community, could apply to anyone regardless of the content of his or her particular belief system. He asks simply, however one construes the good, how does one get to be that? His concern is the acquisition of norms, whatever they may be.

Walls takes up the sectarian side of the problem. The dominant fact of our society is pluralism, and the relationship between commons and sect has grown increasingly complex. The problem he focuses on is not, however, the moral problem of pluralism but the educational problem. He asks, "What must education be like in a world of rampant pluralisms?"[17] He argues that education must be conducted in the "in the embrace of some unity,"[18] and this fact renders both the sect and commons necessary to education. Some unity is required within the commons to hold together the national community, but because of our commitment to a secular commons that unity will possess a certain shallowness. The unity of the sect is necessary for the formation

[17] Thomas Green, *Walls* (unpublished manuscript), "Prolegomenon," 2.
[18] Green, *Walls*, "Prolegomenon," 2.

of identity in the young. They need something "to push against," a set of guiding certainties, as Green says quoting Bruno Bettelheim. That is the educational function of the sect.

The very notion of commons creates the problem of public speech. If we are to have a truly common space in a pluralistic culture, then we must learn to offer our reasons in acceptable terms. For example, if a Christian supports universal health care because he or she has interpreted the sermon on the mount as commanding it, then that is fine, but he or she will have to be able to offer reasons for universal health care that an atheist or a Buddhist or a Muslim would find acceptable. Otherwise, there will be no hope of rational persuasion and the commons will be an impotent space for action. Because *Walls* is unfinished, it is difficult or perhaps impossible to tell where Green would have taken the argument. He was not one to define his terms at the outset and interpret his findings in light of them. His work was intensely exploratory, pragmatic in the best sense of the word.