

**HUMAN UNDERSTANDING IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF  
R.G. COLLINGWOOD**

**JOHN KARABELAS**

**PhD, CARDIFF UNIVERSITY**

**2009**



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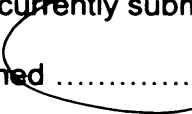
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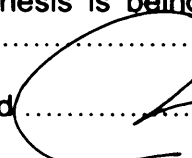
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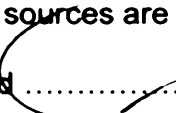
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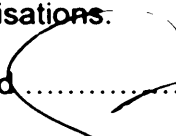
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J.K.

## Abstract

The thesis explores the role of human understanding in R.G. Collingwood's philosophy. I examine four major areas: the role of psychology, the unity of mind (i.e. unity of thoughts and emotions), the role of art and the case of fairy tales as a source of historical knowledge. These themes taken together expound a coherent way to see human understanding: with psychology Collingwood suggests the form that human understanding cannot assume; the unity of mind is Collingwood's idea of *how* we experience an activity, that is, as an undivided whole of emotions and thoughts (and in some respects sensations or feelings too), that exist in every activity as elements that cannot be distinguished or separated. When we come to the forms that an activity can take I argue, using art and fairy tales, that human understanding in Collingwood's system should be seen as a shift from the knowledge of the united spirit (as propounded in *Speculum Mentis*) to the knowledge of the historical consciousness. The knowledge of the united spirit is achieved through a dialectic scale of the different forms of experience, which individually, in isolation from one another, are not epistemologically valid. In the historical consciousness the forms of experience are epistemologically autonomous and are found within history, all being manifestations of the historical mind.

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## List of Abbreviations

### Works by R.G. Collingwood

RP	Religion and Philosophy, 1916
SM	Speculum Mentis, 1924
OPA	Outlines of a Philosophy of Art, 1925
PA	The Principles of Art, 1938
A	An Autobiography, 1939
EM	An Essay on Metaphysics, 1940 (rev. ed. 1998)
NL	The New Leviathan, 1942 (rev. ed. 1992)
IH	The Idea of History, 1946 (rev. ed. 1993)
PH	The Principles of History, 1999
PE	The Philosophy of Enchantment, 2005

### Works by others

Debbins	Essays in the Philosophy of History, 1965
Donagan	The Later Philosophy of R.G. Collingwood, 1962
Dray	History as Re-enactment. R.G. Collingwood's Idea of History, 1995
MHD	Mind, History, Dialectic, 1969
HS	History as a Science: The Philosophy of R.G. Collingwood, 1981
SPT	The social and political thought of R.G. Collingwood, 1989
Krausz	Critical Essays on the Philosophy of R.G. Collingwood, 1972
PHC	Philosophy, History and Civilization, 1995
Rubinoff	Collingwood and the Reform of Metaphysics, 1970
Taylor 1985	Bibliography, 1985
Taylor 1988	Bibliography, 1988

### Collingwood Studies

CS	Collingwood Studies, 1994-1999 (vols I-VI)
	Collingwood and British Idealism Studies, 2000-2004 (vols VII-X)
	Collingwood and British Idealism Studies: incorporating Bradley Studies, 2005-2008 (vols XI-XIV)

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about Collingwood's philosophy of history and human understanding.<sup>1</sup> Human understanding is central in Collingwood's philosophy. In *Speculum Mentis* he maintains that "We try to understand ourselves and our world only in order that we may learn how to live" (p. 15). His philosophy, like Giambattista Vico's and Wilhelm Dilthey's, is highly anthropocentric.<sup>2</sup> Man is the focus of philosophical reflection and the study of human conduct ensues in the understanding of him: what it is that he does; why he does what he does; why sometimes he fails and sometimes succeeds. This understanding is for Collingwood the role of history.

The engagement with human understanding, in the way that Collingwood proceeded, is an important endeavour. It is an endeavour understood in terms of a constant effort towards

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<sup>1</sup> For some general books on the philosophy of history and some useful classical philosophical expositions of the problems of history see: W.H. Walsh. 1951. *An introduction to philosophy of history*. Hutchinson. London (3<sup>rd</sup> rev. ed. 1967); B.A. Haddock. 1980. *An introduction to historical thought*. London, Edward Arnold; R. Martin. 1977. *Historical Explanation, Re-enactment and practical inference*. Cornell University Press; R. Klibansky and H.J. Paton (eds.). 1936. *Philosophy & history: essays presented to Ernst Cassirer*. Oxford Clarendon Press [also Collingwood's review of that book in 1937 in *English Historical Review*, vol. 52, pp. 141-146 (reprinted in CS, vol. V, 1998, pp. 145-151)]; I. Berlin. 1960. 'The Concept of Scientific History', in *History and Theory*, vol. 1, no 1, pp. 1-31; F.H. Bradley. 1874. *The Presuppositions of Critical History*. (reprinted in *Collected Essays*, 1969, pp.1-70. Oxford Clarendon Press. This book was first published in 1935 in two volumes).

<sup>2</sup> For more details on the work of Vico see: G. Vico. 1968. *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*. (revised translation of the third edition (1744) / Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch) Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press; G. Vico. 1944. *The autobiography of Giambattista Vico*. (translated from the Italian by Max Harold Fisch and Thomas Goddard Bergin) Imprint Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press; B. Croce. 1913. *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*. Translated by R.G. Collingwood. London; I. Berlin. 1976. *Vico and Herder: Two studies in the history of ideas*. The Hogarth Press; I. Berlin. 1979. 'Vico's Concept of Knowledge', in *Against the current: Essays in the History of Ideas* (H. Hardy ed.), pp. 111-119 (originally published in 1969); I. Berlin. 1979. 'Vico and the Ideal of the Enlightenment', in *Against the current: Essays in the History of Ideas* (H. Hardy ed.), pp. 120-129 (originally published in 1976); I. Berlin. 1990. 'Giambattista Vico and Cultural History', in *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas* (H. Hardy ed.), pp. 49-69 (originally published in 1983); B.A. Haddock. 1986. *Vico's Political Thought*. Swansea; L. Pompa. (ed.). 1982. *Vico: Selected Writings*. CUP; L. Pompa. 1990. *Vico: A study of the 'New Science'*. CUP; B.A. Haddock. 1995. 'Vico, Collingwood and the Character of a Historical Philosophy', in *PHC*, pp. 130-151. Also F. Copleston. 1960. *A History of Philosophy, (Vol. 6)*. Burns & Oates (Part III "The rise of the philosophy of history", pp. 150-179. On Giambattista Vico pp. 154-163). For more details on the work of Dilthey see: W. Dilthey. 1883. *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften*. (*Introduction to the Human Sciences*, edited, with an introduction, by Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi, 1989, Princeton University Press); M. Ermarth. 1978. *Wilhelm Dilthey: The Critique of Historical Reason*. Chicago; J. Owensby. 1994. *Dilthey and the Narrative of History*. Ithaca, NY; T. Plantinga. 1980. *Historical Understanding in the Thought of Wilhelm Dilthey*. Toronto; H.P. Rickman. 1961. *Meaning in History: W. Dilthey's thoughts on history and society*. (edited and introduced by Rickman) London: Allen & Unwin; H.P. Rickman (ed.). 1976. *Wilhelm Dilthey: Selected Writings*. Cambridge; H.P. Rickman. 1979. *Wilhelm Dilthey: Pioneer of the Human Studies*. London.

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the possibility of knowledge about man. Furthermore such knowledge is the necessary prerequisite, without which any further attempts of comprehending meaningfully other aspects of human life are ill founded. In his *Autobiography* Collingwood contends that the inability to control human situations was the reason for WWI and he believes that only “understanding of human affairs” (A, p. 92) will provide such control. It is no coincidence that Collingwood in NL adopted the structure of Hobbes and began with a section on man: the understanding of man comes first. The importance, therefore, of human understanding is that it serves as the foundation and the necessary condition of a civilised life. And it is historical in nature and Collingwood argues that “A scientific society will turn on the idea of *mastering* people (by money or war or the like) or alternatively *servicing* them (philanthropy). A historical society will turn on the idea of *understanding* them.” (HS, p. 432).

Implicit in the above situation is the acceptance that the pursuit of such knowledge is possible. Any scepticism, that almost every philosophical position acknowledges, should only serve to help the enquiry proceed unhindered, without taking certainty for granted. Thus scepticism is a tool but not a destination or a philosophical doctrine. For the challenge that thought poses to us is that every instance of scepticism should give birth to an instance of success and advancement of our study. Any philosophical project on human understanding that from the outset declares such a task impossible, makes a serious compromise. Because if the sceptic decides that knowledge about man is impossible or uncertain then everything else, that depends on this knowledge to be understood and explained, will be permeated by the same uncertainty. Our inquiry will reach a standstill.

Collingwood in EM described, in effect, this attitude. He called it the irrationalist movement or the propaganda of irrationalism, “a kind of epidemic withering of belief in the importance of truth and in the obligation to think and act in a systematic and methodical way” (EM, p.135). Collingwood's main focus of criticism was psychology because of its inability to admit and employ rules or criteria by which something could be judged to be good or bad, logical or illogical, true or false and so on. The non-criteriological character was for Collingwood a serious mistake since it implies a sceptical or relativistic attitude towards the attainment of truth. Thus psychology as the science of thought and human understanding is, Collingwood argued, erroneous and a serious danger to civilisation. Collingwood was concerned with this state of affairs when he was writing that “The fate of European science and European civilization is at stake. The gravity of the peril lies especially in the fact that so few recognize any peril to exist” (EM, p. 342).

Collingwood's ideas and conclusions about irrationalism are still pertinent today, as many aspects of the prevailing intellectual conditions can be reasonably seen as an extension and continuation of the situation he described in EM. We could see them originating from two main directions. One one hand there exist various manifestations of what can loosely be

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defined as the post-modern view that, in different guise, reiterate the old position of scepticism. The denial of fixed meaning, objective knowledge, reality and truth sees human condition and understanding as formless and subjective, thus leaving out the normative, or criteriological, approach. This view produces a fragmented human understanding, a highly individual construction with indiscernible variations of merit between different interpretations.

On the other hand we have explanation models based on a modern version of materialism. There are various areas such as neuroscience, cognitive psychology, evolutionary psychology and so forth, that interact with philosophy. These empirical fields do not constitute a uniform effort to explain human behaviour and the mind and between them substantial differences exist. What, however, they have in common is that they explain the reasons for human actions using a mechanistic, naturalistic framework. These reasons are found to be outside human control or intentionality and pertain to biological desires and appetites, survival mechanisms and so on. The idea of human actions as a vast, intricate complex of motives, intentions, beliefs, duties etc., is left virtually untouched.

These two ways to approach human understanding have substantial similarities with irrationalism as Collingwood defined it. The post-modern interpretations explicitly refuse the concept of truth and thus any subsequent inquiry doesn't include it in its pursuits. The modern materialism, because it is based on the naturalistic methodology, implies the same disregard for criteria and rules that Collingwood argued are essential in judging the success or failure of thought. Moreover both post-modernism and materialism strongly contend humanistic thought, the reliance, that is, on human rationality and the belief that thought is a free, self-creating process. The anti-humanistic tendency of both these movements is, in effect, a reaction against fundamental assumptions and presuppositions on which the idea of society and civilisation rests.

There are various reasons for advocating positions that seem to impede instead of fostering understanding and not always are these reasons easy to discern. The irrationalism, for instance, that Collingwood described in EM was not, he thought, the product of conscious, sinister motives but rather a product of misunderstanding of the nature of the inquiries.<sup>3</sup> This is certainly true when the subject of an inquiry is of philosophical nature and thus complex and prone to erroneous judgements. Every piece of writing about human understanding should, therefore, appraise, and if necessary remedy, the existing state of affairs before further clarify the investigation. This is what Collingwood did. He emphasised the need for a methodical and systematic way of enquiring about human understanding and tried to show why the scientific methodology, when applied to man in his capacity as mind, presents

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<sup>3</sup> EM, p. 135 and pp. 342-343.

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serious flaws and compromises. At the same time he provided his analysis of why history is the correct method to understand man.

The aim of my thesis is to provide the necessary material for addressing his position on human understanding and appreciating the significance of his arguments. What he presents us with is human understanding as a rich, multifaceted and multi-layered experience, as opposed to the dry, formulaic and pedantic to which other philosophical attempts have reduced human experience. Collingwood's analysis is important because his emphasis on history favours a detailed and attentive process for the study of man and the attainment of knowledge and understanding. In his approach many aspects of human experience, that had been suppressed, ignored, forgotten or derided, receive consideration as important elements of understanding. Hence emotions, art as knowledge, magic and fairy tales are in Collingwood's explanation essential features of culture, civilisation and human understanding. The broader intellectual significance of Collingwood's arguments can be found in his conviction that human understanding is always possible and can be approached by a historical method which will critically explore a wide spectrum of human experiences. It is a painstaking and perhaps slow enterprise, but the only one that will do justice to the human mind.

My thesis is placed closer to the exegesis of Collingwood's work, which emphasises the dialectic element and thus treats his philosophy as a whole. In that respect I find that the interpretations by Rubinoff and Mink provide a helpful framework and I am too of the opinion that SM is a very important and illuminating book, the value of which was also testified by Collingwood himself in his *Autobiography*. In view of seeing Collingwood's philosophy as a dialectic, interpretations that favour a rigid periodisation of his output tend to be rather restrictive. This can also be said for Donagan who, although examined Collingwood's later philosophy as a unity, only dealt with the works after 1933. Donagan's interpretation also rests on the idea of a planned series and on changes in Collingwood's philosophical conception that they were based on the planned series. As, however, van der Dussen has argued<sup>4</sup> even the idea of a planned series is not without problems. On the whole Donagan's interpretation, although it provides interesting views in his effort to challenge Collingwood's position, suffers from a selective approach. My reading also significantly diverges from Knox's, who devised a strict categorisation of Collingwood's writings. Moreover, his assertions about Collingwood's alleged historicism and scepticism have been challenged by most Collingwood scholars and Knox's view is regarded, at least, heavily idiosyncratic. One more viewpoint is that of Dray, who expressed his concerns about interpretations that attempt to answer larger questions. He argued that the examination of

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<sup>4</sup> HS, p. 5.

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Collingwood's philosophy as a system might obscure what Collingwood had to say about particular issues, especially history.<sup>5</sup> But Collingwood's philosophy is the attempt to explain experience as a whole and it does so through the eyes of history. My thesis, therefore, treats Collingwood's philosophy as a system and uses the idea of dialectic. In my interpretation Collingwood's dialectic is the ongoing interaction between the different forms of experience with a view to establishing their relationship with each other and explaining their general function. I contend that from the dialectic of the united spirit that we find in SM, Collingwood concluded in the historical consciousness or the dialectic of history. In this dialectic all forms of experience operate within history but are also autonomous. For that it is necessary that they are also forms of knowledge, epistemologically valid, and thus I argue against interpretations, like Mink's for instance, that deny the status of knowledge to art.

For the purposes of the thesis I have identified certain themes in Collingwood's philosophy that I have treated in successive chapters. These themes are: the place of psychology in human understanding; the unity of mind; the character of art and its relation to history; and the use of fairy tales and magic as historical evidence. My treatment of Collingwood's ideas follows a chronological examination and exposition. I have found this way of exploring Collingwood's philosophy helpful because of the nature of his thought. Collingwood's thought is not characterised by dramatic or radical changes. His ideas are consistent, with no sharp contrast between his earlier and his later views. However since, for most of his life, he was preoccupied with the same set of problems, his ideas can be seen as being in constant modification and refinement. In the process of this modification some of the previous tenets seem for a moment to disappear, only to resurface at a later point. Thus in order to understand his doctrines we need to pay attention to these vicissitudes and I have tried, where possible, to explain or give reasons for them.

Dealing with psychology I begin in the negative, examining, that is, what Collingwood thought human knowledge and understanding is not and why. The discipline of psychology is very important in Collingwood's philosophy. His ongoing effort to define the boundaries of psychology in relation to philosophy and history was valuable in formulating what the mind is and how it is to be studied. Collingwood responded to the claim by psychologists of his time that psychology is the science of the human mind. The new discipline came as a contestant to study something already within the purview of what Collingwood called philosophical sciences (later to become criteriological sciences with a strong historical character): ethics, logic, aesthetics, economics and so on. Whatever direction

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<sup>5</sup> Dray, pp. 3-4.

## INTRODUCTION

psychology investigated, a philosophical science already existed exploring it. And where different disciplines study the same field, they could only do it by using different methods. Collingwood asserted that psychology, as an aspiring naturalistic science, was committed to the scientific methodology, and thus it put forward an erroneous claim to the study of the mind. His treatment of psychology in his writings was to show why it couldn't do what it purported to be able to do and to reveal the dangers of misconceiving psychology's boundaries.

We can distinguish two main phases in Collingwood's ideas about psychology. In his early writings psychology was found to be entirely erroneous. In his later writings psychology is a very useful discipline as the study of feelings. Collingwood finds the origins of this psychology in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was a genuine, legitimate study up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, where Collingwood locates the assertions of a new psychology, that apart from feelings can also study thought. The fact that contemporaneous psychology was no longer just the science of feeling precipitated his direct criticism of the new way to perceive psychology as the science of the mind, which was for him an absurd claim. But in his later ideas the psychology of feeling has a valid position. The reason why Collingwood dismissed psychology altogether in his early writings but finds a place for it later on is to be found in his philosophy of mind. Collingwood's conception of psychology rests on his theory of mind and his views about the mind change and are reflected in his views on psychology.

Human knowledge and understanding is all about the mind. For Collingwood the study of the mind and the study of history is the same thing. History, for him, is nothing other than self-knowledge of the mind. It is thus essential to know what Collingwood subsumes under the term mind in order to know the boundaries of our exploration. It is this element of Collingwood's philosophy of mind that I am here concerned with, to see what he regarded mind's constituents to be. I maintain that Collingwood throughout his philosophy understood the mind as a unity of the different elements that it was traditionally divided into. In his early writings these elements are the thinking activity and what comes under the various names of feeling, sensation, perception, intuition and so on. In other words we have the immediate experience (sensation) and the mediating, reflective side of this experience (thought). These elements Collingwood regarded as forming a concrete whole, a unity that cannot be separated. The idea that we actually give different names to these elements is an abstraction, a false belief that these elements exist separately. In SM Collingwood complained about the claims of the different modes of experience to be able to attain knowledge autonomously and not communicating with each other. His attempt was to reunite them dialectically, where each mode of experience is not knowledge, but instead contributes to the knowledge that only the united mind can attain.

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The idea of mind's unity is something that we find in almost all Collingwood's later writings with the notable exception of IH. IH and some writings from the late 1920's present the mind in a rather different way. Although Collingwood in the late 1920's writings is ambiguous about the exact nature of mind's elements, he sees it as having conscious and unconscious activities, only the former being part of history's subject matter. In IH he maintains that the mind is divided into rational and irrational elements, such as emotions and feelings. These, although still mind and not body, belong better to what can be termed psyche and they can be studied by psychology, not history. Collingwood argues that the irrational elements are part of the conscious experience of human life and form the basis for our reason but are not part of it. I have tried to show that the reason why Collingwood in IH saw the mind in such a different way was the doctrine of re-enactment.

Collingwood's philosophy of art is not so much a canon for judging the aesthetic qualities, or the absence of them, in a work of art. Someone wishing to use Collingwood's aesthetics to do so will no doubt find some assistance in Collingwood's writings. But if art is seen as the attempt to achieve knowledge, then it is a part of the human condition, not just an activity of the artist. Collingwood's philosophy of art is, therefore, part of his philosophy of mind and closely connected to history as knowledge of the individual.

That Collingwood wanted to show that art is knowledge or expression, is something that occurred early on. Contrary to the usual interpretations, I maintain that his early ideas, however slight and brief, introduce art as expression of feelings or emotions. The view of art as imagination is supported by some of his writings during the 1920's, but during the same period we find some of his writings have a hybrid nature combining both art as imagination and art as expression. From the late 1920's the character of art as expression is established and remains so throughout Collingwood's late writings. Imagination still plays a role but not as prominent as before.

In the direction of clarifying art's character we can place the examination of the relation between history and art, a theme that we find to be long-standing in Collingwood's philosophy. Aristotle's<sup>6</sup> position that "poetry is more philosophical than and superior to

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<sup>6</sup> For Aristotle's *Poetics* I have used the Greek edition (Translation by S. Menardos. Introduction, text and interpretation by I. Sykoutris. Athens 1937, Academy of Athens, Greek Library series). In a very interesting introduction Sykoutris –a remarkably competent classicist of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century– talks, among other things, as to what prompted Aristotle to compare poetry with history. Sykoutris argues that this was due to the conception of ancient Greeks, where there was not a clear and firm distinction between the mythological and the historical events. In this conception the mythological events also belonged to the past and were used almost indiscriminately as historical, both for the survey of the past and in the discussions of seasonable, practical issues. Even the ancient historians didn't distinguish between historical and mythical periods. The ancient poets too (with the exception of the ones who wrote comedy) used the same mythological and historical material for their works, although admittedly



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history”, is taken by Collingwood and, like Croce<sup>7</sup> before him, revised considerably. The comparison between art (or poetry) and history is a correct one but between them there is no competition. Instead both are doing the same thing by constituting knowledge of the individual. Thus history becomes art and all the other attempts to explain history otherwise become obsolete: on the one hand the claim of history as a science of the individual and the subsequent effort to explain how such a science is logically possible, a contradiction in terms as Schopenhauer argued;<sup>8</sup> on the other hand the positivistic conception of history as a proper science that produces general laws like any other physical-natural science.

The changes in Collingwood’s theory of art occur because of the way he came to see the character of knowledge in his writings. In SM, which is the main exposition of his early, complete, philosophy, the modes of experience are not autonomous and only all of them together can yield knowledge. But later on each mode is independent and epistemologically sound in its own right. The importance of art, in that respect, is in showing this epistemological change in Collingwood’s ideas. It is also of interest in showing that, by treating initially art as expression, very early on Collingwood intimated a different theory of knowledge than the one he pursued in SM, a theory that was to become and form his epistemology later on.

In the areas of fairy tales and anthropology Collingwood finds himself very comfortably placed. Trying to show how everything men have made can be used as evidence

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they made a more liberal interpretation of the historical events than the historians. For the entire analysis of Sykoutris on the comparison between poetry and history see pp. 68-76.

<sup>7</sup> Croce’s philosophy of art is very useful for Collingwood’s ideas. I will only refer to very few of his works. For more see: M.E. Brown. 1963. ‘Croce’s Early Aesthetics: 1894-1912’, in *Journal of Aesthetic and Art Criticism*, vol. XXII (Fall), pp. 29-41; H.W. Carr. 1917. *The Philosophy of Benedetto Croce: The Problem of Art and History*. Macmillan and Co; E.F. Carritt. 1953. ‘Croce and his Aesthetic’, in *Mind*, N.S. vol. LXII, pp. 452-464; B. Croce. 1928. ‘Aesthetic’, in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14<sup>th</sup> ed., (translated by R.G. Collingwood); B. Croce. 1921. *The Essence of Aesthetic*. Translated by Douglas Ainslie (The Italian original *Breviario di Estetica* was published in 1912) William Heinemann: London; B. Croce. 1966. *Philosophy, Poetry, History: An anthology of essays*. Translated and introduced by Cecil Sprigge (The Italian original *Filosofia, Poesia, Storia* was published in 1951), Oxford University Press; B. Croce. 1981. *Poetry and Literature, an introduction to its criticism and history*. Translated with an introduction and notes by Giovanni Gullace (The Italian original *La Poesia* was published in 1936. This translation is from the 6<sup>th</sup> edition, 1963), Southern Illinois University Press; A.A. de Gennaro. 1956. ‘The Drama of the Aesthetics of Benedetto Croce’, in *Journal of Aesthetic and Art Criticism*, vol. XV (September), pp. 117-121; K. Gilbert. 1927. ‘The One and the Many in Croce’s Aesthetic’, in *Studies in Recent Aesthetic*, North Carolina U; B. Mayo. 1955. ‘Art, Language and Philosophy in Croce’, in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. V, pp. 245-260; M.E. Moss (ed.). 1990. *Benedetto Croce, Essays on Literature and Literary Criticism*. State University of New York Press; G.N.G. Orsini. 1961. *Benedetto Croce: Philosopher of Art and Literary Critic*. S. Illinois U; G.G. Seerveld. 1958. *Benedetto Croce’s earlier Aesthetic Theories and Literary Criticism*. Kampen, Netherlands.

<sup>8</sup> A. Schopenhauer. 1819. *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. (English translation: *The World as Will and Idea*. First published in 1883, translated by R.B. Haldane and J. Kemp). {Especially vol. III, pp. 220-230, *On History*}.

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for yielding historical knowledge, he chooses to study fairy tales and proceeds in full conviction of their epistemological worth. The choice of fairy tales is important in showing how a rather surprising area for philosophical investigation can indeed be treated philosophically. It is also an important choice because of the element of magic. For Collingwood the world of fairy tales is the world of magic (particularly enchantment), which is what the historian needs to understand in order to use fairy tales as historical evidence. Magic is an emotional activity. It is in that respect very close to art, but also different from art. Both activities are necessary for the healthy life of man but they contribute to that end in different ways. Art discovers the emotions by expressing them. The expression of emotion brings about the self-knowledge of man and thus a sense of liberation. Magic deals with emotions in another way, by channelling our energy, that we find through these emotions, to the successful accomplishment of our practical concerns.

For Collingwood the negative connotation of the word magic has entirely disappeared. The broad definition he attaches to it renders magic a very important element in the human condition; most activities of our everyday life are of a magical character. Thus magic is essential for human understanding. More so because of its emotional character. Magic is, of course, not just an emotional activity but a thinking one as well. But Collingwood's emphasis on the emotional nature of magic was a necessary exaggeration in order to re-address the importance of emotions at a time when he perceived the over-rationalised and utilitarian attitude –with their suspicion towards the emotional sides of life– to present a serious peril for our civilisation.

The reason why I have chosen the above themes is that together they expound a coherent way of seeing human understanding in Collingwood's philosophy. Psychology is, for Collingwood, an erroneous way to approach human understanding. The unity of mind is Collingwood's scheme of how we experience an activity. That is, as an undivided whole of emotions and thoughts (and in some respects sensations or feelings too), that exist in every activity as elements that cannot be distinguished or separated. But apart from *how* something is experienced there also seems to be *as what*, the form or the mode that an activity can be experienced. Thus we can experience –and come to know– something as religion or art or science or history and so forth. In his early philosophy Collingwood explored all these forms of experience as an epistemological system. However later on he was mainly interested in the modes of art and history. Let us now see more about this change and, thus, understand how art and fairy tales fit in my presentation of human understanding in Collingwood's philosophy.

Human understanding is in effect the attempt to explain human experience. The problem with such an undertaking is the unfolding, ongoing process of experience and thus

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the difficulty of seeing a point of vantage from where to begin. Often we find ourselves surrounded by schemes already in place and we adopt them –however tentatively– in order to proceed with our enquiries. These schemes are, of course, temporary and imperfect and our responsibility is to use them cautiously and modify them if they need to be. One of these schemes is the classification and division of experience in various modes or provinces, each one with purportedly special characteristics that distinguish it from the rest. According to such a scheme one way to advance is to examine each province of experience and then to see if these provinces interact together and if so to ascertain what comes out of such an interaction.

Something similar to what I have just described was the task that Collingwood set himself in SM.<sup>9</sup> He identified five provinces of experience, art, religion, science, history and philosophy. From the outset he is convinced that the number of provinces is immaterial, since even the idea of dividing the experience –the human spirit– is only a working hypothesis and, as such, arbitrary. Arbitrary, therefore, are also the number of provinces that experience is divided into. The reason why experience was thought to be divided was the claim of each of the provinces to be epistemologically autonomous. Collingwood investigated this claim and found it problematic. Every individual province is not knowledge but instead it contributes to the life of the spirit which only when united is knowledge. The error of failing to see the human spirit united occurs when we direct our attention to one province and abstract it from the whole. When, that is, by giving a name to this province we believe we have given it identity and independent hypostasis too.

SM shows that Collingwood from early on in his philosophy saw the mind as a unity. This was to remain in his philosophy with the exception of some of his writings where the doctrine of re-enactment had a prominent position. What changes, however, is that the unity of mind after SM becomes a unity not of modes of experience but of the emotional and cognitive elements that these modes consist.<sup>10</sup> The forms or provinces of experience do not any longer follow a dialectical scheme any but they are autonomous. Thus, contrary to the conclusion of SM, different areas of experience can be found and each of them has epistemological validity. This shift in Collingwood's philosophy had as a result that his theory of art moved from art as imagination to art as expression, since expression is in effect the attainment of knowledge. It also resulted in the stronger and stronger character of history. These two forms of knowledge, history and art, are what Collingwood defined as the

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<sup>9</sup> I think a similar task was Michael Oakeshott's book, *Experience and its Modes* (1933, Cambridge).

<sup>10</sup> In SM this is also the case. Even art, the lowest form of experience in the life of the spirit, is not just an emotional activity but has cognitive elements too.

knowledge of the individual. As such they differ from science<sup>11</sup> –the knowledge of the universal– and in that respect science falls outside the endeavours directed to attain human knowledge and understanding. One notable absence from Collingwood’s epistemological concerns is that of religion.<sup>12</sup> After RP and SM the philosophical discussions of religion are very scarce<sup>13</sup> and it does not receive the attention that history and art did. It is not very likely that Collingwood’s interest in religion as a mode of experience ceased to exist or that he stopped believing that religion has a significant role in the life of man. In his 1940<sup>14</sup> essay it is the “vital warmth at the heart of a civilization ... Religion is the passion which inspires a society to persevere in a certain way of life and to obey the rules which define it” (p. 168). The concern of that essay was to contribute to the understanding of the dire conditions that facilitated the advent of Fascism and Nazism. Collingwood argued that the catalyst, which produced the death of civilization, was the diminishing religious energy –mainly in the form of Christianity– in the life of certain countries. It is my contention that the reason why Collingwood in his later writings did not treat religion as extensively as history and art, is not that he didn’t any longer consider religion an epistemologically valid form of experience. Instead it seems that the implication of the new way to see knowledge rendered the exhaustive treatment of the individual modes of experience not necessary.

This brings me to a final point: what is the implication of this new way of seeing knowledge? I maintain that even with this shift of emphasis, the philosophy of spirit that Collingwood expounded in SM is not profoundly affected. Collingwood himself says, for instance, that there is much in SM that “needs to be supplemented and qualified [but] not a great deal that needs to be retracted” (A, p. 56, ft 1). What needs to be qualified is, I believe, how from the dialectical and epistemologically incomplete Forms of Experience in SM, we move to the autonomy of history and art –and potentially religion– without disturbing the unity of spirit. In SM all forms of experience are in the end identical. Later by becoming individual epistemologies it seems that they cease to contribute to the unity. But this is not so.

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. R.G. Collingwood. 1922. ‘Are History and Science different kinds of Knowledge?’, in *Mind*, vol. 31, pp. 433-451 (reprinted in Debbins, 23-33). In this essay Collingwood argued that history and science are not different kinds of knowledge. This position was very soon to change, as for instance we find in his essay just one year later, R.G. Collingwood. 1923. ‘Science and History’, in *The Vasculum*, vol. 9, no 2, pp. 52-59 (reprinted in CS, vol. IV, 1997, pp. 197-205).

<sup>12</sup> For the treatment of religion see mainly RP and SM. Also R.G. Collingwood. 1918. ‘Christianity in *Partibus*’, in *The Challenge*, vol. IX, no 232, 4<sup>th</sup> October 1918, p. 323 (reprinted in CS, vol. VI, 1999, pp. 166-171. Compiled and introduced by James Connelly and Peter Johnson); L. Rubinoff. 1968. *Faith and Reason: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion by R.G. Collingwood*. Chicago; L. Rubinoff. 1972. ‘Religion and the Rapprochement between Thought and Action’, in *Krausz*, pp. 79-112; D.M. MacKinnon. 1995. ‘Faith and Reason in the Philosophy of Religion’, in *PHC*, pp. 79-91; L. Rubinoff. 1997. ‘Review Article: R.G. Collingwood, *Religion and Philosophy*’, in CS, vol. IV, pp. 157-182; J. Connelly. 2001. ‘R.G. Collingwood: Approaches to Religion’, in CS, vol. VIII, pp. 144-151.

<sup>13</sup> Collingwood’s lectures on topics related to philosophical religion stopped in 1925. He had lectured on the philosophy of religion in 1915 and from 1920 until 1925.

<sup>14</sup> R.G. Collingwood. 1940. ‘Fascism and Nazism’, in *Philosophy*, vol. 15, no 58, pp. 168-176.

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The mind –the spirit– that seeks to know itself will do so historically. That is, through what it has done and what it is capable of doing. History, thus, becomes or is mind. The new unity of mind has been effected through history. This is where psychology for Collingwood becomes irrelevant to mind's self-knowledge. The historic mind is an ongoing activity, a self-creating process and not an object that can be observed and studied. To overlook or deny this element is to misunderstand what the mind is. To try to study a process as an object is impossible.

Now, art, religion and so forth are not outside but within history. They have in common that they operate historically and thus have been synthesised into the unity of the historical mind. They also differ in that they are independent epistemologies. In themselves they are not incomplete forms of knowledge and they do not depend on a dialectical scale to become knowledge. Instead the mind can know itself in various ways, all of them autonomous and all of them necessary. How many such ways exist is, perhaps, superfluous or impossible to ascertain. The mind as an activity can manifest itself in various forms, as Collingwood meant to show by his use of art and fairy tales. These forms can be unpredictable, at a constant state of flux and even evade classification. What matters is that all of them are expressions of the historical consciousness.

## Chapter I: Philosophy, History and Psychology

### § 1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to consider Collingwood's position regarding psychology.<sup>1</sup> The significance of this theme has to do with Collingwood's perception of psychology as antagonistic to philosophy and history in the study of the mind. Collingwood's endeavour to define the boundaries of psychology also resulted in a clearer idea of what the mind is and how it is to be studied. His ideas on psychology have, therefore, a direct consequence for his philosophies of mind and history. Moreover his criticisms came at a time when psychology as the science of the mind and knowledge of man was becoming more and more accepted and consolidated. Collingwood saw various dangers coming from a credulous attitude to psychology's claims and his critique tried to show where and why psychology erred and what are the implications if the misconceptions about psychology's function continued. His evaluation of psychology is of current interest too. The problems he identified appear in various forms today and psychology's approach still presents unsatisfactory answers to human understanding.

One of the major problems that Collingwood recognised, in his effort to define the historical understanding, was the claim of psychology to be the science for the study of the human mind in its entirety. Such a claim would put psychology in direct confrontation with history as Collingwood had conceived it. Moreover psychology appeared as a very forceful contender primarily by taking an oath of allegiance to science and the naturalistic methods of inquiry, an allegiance, he thought, that history ought to avoid. The scientific methodology, compared to history, had created a pedigree of remarkable accomplishments and psychology could position itself safely by being categorised within an established and respected milieu. In a sense it could be argued that psychology was getting considerable strength for its claims just

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<sup>1</sup> For some useful commentaries on Collingwood's views on psychology see SPT, pp. 237-239; HS, pp. 364-368; Donagan, ch. VII, pp. 157-172; D. Boucher. 2002. 'Collingwood and Anthropology as a Historical Science', in *History of Political Thought*, vol. XXIII, no 2, pp. 302-325, esp. pp. 312-314 (Hereafter abbreviated as AHS); J. Connelly and A. Costall. 2000. 'R.G. Collingwood and the Idea of a Historical Psychology', in *Theory & Psychology*, vol. 10(2), pp. 147-170 (Hereafter abbreviated as CHP); J. Connelly. 1994. 'Writings on Psychology: Collingwood's Attack on Psychology', in CS I, pp. 182-193 (Hereafter abbreviated as Connelly). In this article three reviews of Collingwood on psychology books are reprinted, all published in 1923.

by having adopted or aspiring to a naturalistic epistemology.<sup>2</sup> However the study of the mind during the nineteenth century was within the boundaries of philosophy, at the time a discipline with higher standing and reputation than history which was still in its infancy. Thus psychology was conceived as trying to trespass upon an established field of learning. Many philosophers saw psychology with growing scepticism, suspicion and, in some cases, antipathy.<sup>3</sup> Collingwood started developing his criticisms on psychology within this atmosphere, long before working out his position with reference to history as the self-knowledge of the human mind. The early writings of Collingwood saw psychology as the antagonist of the philosophical sciences of the mind such as logic and ethics.

Of Collingwood's position two phases can be recognised; each one depends on and corresponds to the view of the mind he was developing at the earlier and later periods of his writing. I maintain that, essentially, Collingwood throughout his career saw the mind as a unity between its various faculties or activities (thought, emotion, sensation, will etc.). However the initial strong unity, present in his writing until the late 1920's, later becomes the subject of further inspection, resulting in the recognition of elements that do not properly belong to the mind but constitute the irrational psyche. According to this philosophy of mind, Collingwood treated psychology in two different ways:<sup>4</sup> the first is a total refutation of psychology as the science of the mind; the second is the recognition of psychology as the science of feeling but not of thought.

In his early writings, mainly RP and SM, Collingwood refers to psychology as the scientific study of the mind as a whole. Therefore if, given this condition, psychology's claim to be the science of the mind is found wanting then the refutation is total. In his early writings he doesn't make any reference to the psychology of feeling. I maintain that he could not have acknowledged such discipline because at that time he had conceived the mind as something indivisible: it can only be studied as a whole or not at all. The psychology of feeling, the discipline whose origins Collingwood traces back in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, is the discipline that

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<sup>2</sup> For instance: "the prestige of naturalistic methods, with their well-deserved reputation resting on what they had achieved since the late sixteenth century, being used to enforce exorbitant claims, now against the growing, but immature science of history, now against the ancient sciences of logic and ethics" (PH, p. 88).

<sup>3</sup> For the beginning of scientific psychology and its reception by philosophers, especially in Cambridge and Oxford, see Connelly, pp. 182-3 and CHP, pp. 147-149. It has been suggested that the relatively recent reconciliation between philosophy and psychology "has largely been possible through serious relegation by some philosophers of their critical duties regarding the absurdities of modern cognitive theory" (CHP, p. 166, n. 3).

<sup>4</sup> Collingwood himself didn't distinguish between these two different ways. However I maintain that the implications of his philosophy of mind logically require this view of psychology.

receives his approval in all his later writings. The psychology of feeling was, however, a discipline that Collingwood identifies with a traditional meaning of the word. It was not current in his times. What existed instead was the psychology he criticises in RP and SM, a psychology that studies not just feeling but also thought. For Collingwood this was a pseudo science and he is dismissive of it.

Collingwood's philosophy of mind is, therefore, necessary in order to understand the changes that occur in his views on psychology. If the mind is seen as a unity psychology has no valid claim to study it. The naturalistic methodology of psychology treats the mind as matter and this for Collingwood is an erroneous way to perceive the mind. Psychology in this instance is dismissed altogether. But if the mind is seen as having elements (i.e. the feelings) that can be treated naturalistically, then psychology becomes the perfect discipline for this study. Why Collingwood saw the mind in different ways is, I believe, the result of the introduction of the doctrine of re-enactment, which I will discuss in chapter II.

The fact that Collingwood distinguished between two different meanings –and in effect two different disciplines– of psychology and that he did so not from the very beginning, are significant factors in understanding his assessment of psychology. Firstly, they show that he was not hostile to psychology as such but only to certain, recent claims of it.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, that by the passing of time he softened his attitude towards psychology by recognising it as the very useful science of feeling. His idiosyncratic way of writing should not distract us from the fact that in his late writings he was prepared to allow much more credibility to psychology than in his early ones.

The scholars who have written on Collingwood are in agreement as to his ideas on psychology. They recognise that his position is very critical when he treats psychology as the study of thought. Also that his criticisms do not affect what he held to be valid psychology, the science of feelings. What, I believe, they have not touched upon is the implication that the unity of mind has, in his early writings, for psychology: the total refutation. In this respect my interpretation adds a dimension to our understanding of this aspect of Collingwood's thought.

In what follows I will describe the two phases of Collingwood's view of psychology: the first in his early writings where the refutation is total, and the second in his later writings where he recognises a valuable psychology for the study of feelings. I will also present his

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<sup>5</sup> van der Dussen, for instance, maintains that it would be "a misconception ... to think that Collingwood was against the science of psychology" (HS, p. 365). Rubinoff argues that Collingwood's attack on psychology "does not invalidate what Collingwood regarded as the proper concept of psychology" (Rubinoff, p. 389, n. 7). Also AHS, p. 313. Collingwood's criticism of psychology cannot thus be seen as "intemperate" (S. Toulmin. 1978. 'Introduction', in *R.G. Collingwood's An Autobiography*. Oxford Clarendon Press, p. xii, note 1).



historical explanation of why psychology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century claimed a different subject matter. If we consider his ideas in such a way, we should apprehend Collingwood's understanding of psychology more fruitfully.

## § 2. Psychology's total refutation in *Religion and Philosophy*

The formation of a notion about psychology occurred early on in Collingwood's teaching and writing career. There are, for instance, his 1913 ms notes prepared for his first lecture in 1914 on *De Anima* of Aristotle.<sup>6</sup> This is one of the first indications<sup>7</sup> of a written reference with regard to psychology. There, Collingwood understands psychology as an experimental, empirical, *a posteriori* science that differs from the philosophical sciences of logic and ethics on grounds of method: the philosophical sciences ask questions about a good and a bad act, a true and a fallacious argument, while psychology is concerned with averages and inductive generalisations.<sup>8</sup>

The first significant treatment of psychology, I believe, occurred a little later. Collingwood himself testified as to the emphasis he attributed to that period:

If this claim [i.e. psychology as the science of the human mind] never for a moment deceived me, that is a benefit I owed to my early studies in theology... This... work... stood me in good stead (A, p. 93).

The outcome of those studies was the book RP that Collingwood published in 1916. I believe what he asserts in his autobiography is in harmony with what that book actually set out to achieve and how important it was in manifesting Collingwood's views on psychology. In RP Collingwood, in effect, did three things in relation to psychology and its claim to study the human mind: he proclaimed the philosophical sciences (later to be characterized as criteriological sciences) as the right way to tackle the human mind; he distinguished between

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<sup>6</sup> See HS, p. 433 and p. 445. The lecture was delivered in 1914 and in the ms notes Collingwood writes that they are "intended for a lecture to cover 2 hours a week for 8 weeks given in 1913 and enlarged in 1914".

<sup>7</sup> Boucher mentions that Collingwood was critical of psychology in his essay 'The Devil' (SPT, p. 293, n. 83), originally published in 1916 in B.F. Streeter et al. (eds.), *Concerning Prayer: Its Nature, its Difficulties and its Value*. London. Reprinted in 1968 in Rubinoff's collection, pp. 212-233. This essay was probably based on the paper 'The Devil in Literature': "an essay upon the Mythology of the Evil One; Read before 'Etanos', 1908" (HS, p. 445).

<sup>8</sup> HS, p. 365.

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methodologies and the erroneous efforts to apply one methodology universally; and he denied psychology's claim to the study of the human mind.

That psychology is in direct confrontation with the philosophical sciences there is no doubt. Both claim the same subject matter and therefore their differences can only be the methodology they assume to tackle their subject:

If we ask what constitutes psychology and distinguishes it from other sciences, we cannot answer merely that psychology is the study of the mind or soul. The philosophical sciences, –logic, ethics, and so forth,– attempt to study the mind; and they are not psychological. Nor can we say (as some psychologists say) that this is the reason of their unsatisfactory character; for these sciences exist on their own basis, and it is no criticism of one science to point out that it is not a different one. Again, we cannot define psychology as the study of conduct; because that title is already claimed by ethics. From these philosophical sciences psychology is distinguished not by its subject but by its method (RP, pp. 39-40).

The description of the methodological approaches and their differences are highly reminiscent of the distinction between criteriological and non-criteriological sciences that Collingwood was to make in his late writings:

The method peculiar to psychology may perhaps be described as follows. The psychology of knowing differs from logic or the philosophical theory of knowledge in that it treats a judgment –the act of knowing something– as an event in the mind, a historical fact. It does not go on to determine the relation of this mental event to the “something” known, the reality beyond the act which the mind, in that act, apprehends. Such a further investigation would be metaphysical in character and is therefore avoided by psychology. Now this formula can be universalised, and thus gives us the definition of psychological method. Take the mental activity as a self-contained fact; refuse, so far as that is possible, to treat of its metaphysical aspect, its relations with real things other than itself; and you have psychology. Thus in scientific thought as studied by logic we have a judgment in which the mind knows reality: psychology, treating the judgment as a mere event, omits its reference to reality, that is to say, does not raise the question whether it is true. (...) In conduct generally we have certain actions, individual or social, designed to attain the ends of morality, utility, or the like; psychology will study these actions without asking whether they are right or wrong, but taking them merely as things done. In general, the characteristic of psychology is the refusal to raise ultimate questions. And since that is so, it is plainly not in a position to offer answers to them: or rather, in so far as it does offer answers these rest on an uncritical and quite accidental attitude towards the problems (RP, pp. 40-41).

From the description and contrasting of the methodologies of psychology and philosophical sciences, psychology appears to be in an odd situation. The function of recognising the mental activity is common both in psychology and the philosophical sciences. But logic, ethics, etc., go further than that asking and trying to answer whether the mental activity is right, wrong, valid, invalid and so forth: i.e. the philosophical sciences put emphasis

on the normative character of their subject matter, but they have satisfied the descriptive function first.<sup>9</sup> If psychology attempts to ask and answer such questions then its attitude becomes “internal” and it ceases to be psychology.<sup>10</sup> If psychology regards the normative character as a wrong method of proceeding, it will find the task of description already occupied by logic, ethics and so on. Of course it might be argued that the way psychology describes its subject matter is a different one. But in either case the mere description of the mind, of a mental activity, is what Collingwood called “external” attitude and is very problematic:

When I describe the attitude of psychology as “external” my meaning is this. There is an air of great concreteness and reality about psychology which makes it very attractive. But this concreteness is really a delusion and on closer inspection vanishes. When a man makes a statement about the nature of God (or anything else) he is interested, not in the fact that he is making that statement, but in the belief, or hope, or fancy that it is true. If then the psychologist merely makes a note of the statement and declines to join in the question whether it is true, he is cutting himself off from any kind of real sympathy or participation in the very thing he is studying –this man’s mental life and experiences. (...) The mind, regarded in this external way, really ceases to be a mind at all. To study a man’s consciousness without studying the thing of which he is conscious is not knowledge of anything, but barren and trifling abstraction. It cannot answer ultimate questions, because it has renounced the attempt; it cannot enter into the life it studies, because it refuses to look with its eye to eye; and it is left with the cold unreality of thought which is the thought of nothing, action with no purpose, and fact with no meaning (RP, pp. 41-42).

In Collingwood’s argument the conclusions are logically implied rather than forcefully stated. Thus psychology can either be a mistake or a superfluous discipline, which claims a position already taken by another field. The philosophical sciences are the only way of studying the mind, and psychology cannot sustain the same claim. The methodology of the natural sciences that empirical psychology embraced is erroneous for the study of the mind because “the functions of the mind itself are treated by methods which have been developed in connexion with the sciences of matter. Mind, according to these methods, is treated exactly as if it were matter;” (RP, p. 76).

One last question might be asked: is there a margin for a legitimate science of psychology to exist by having a different subject matter, that of feelings, emotions and appetite? The science, that is, which Collingwood recognised later. The answer must be no. Collingwood was not prepared to offer psychology the study of feelings. The discipline that

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<sup>9</sup> In RP Collingwood seems to suggest that thought and its object are two distinct things, but in SM it’s the same thing. Boucher points out that in RP Collingwood used “a realist argument, which he was later to abandon without abandoning the conclusion” (SPT, p. 238).

<sup>10</sup> RP, p. 41.

from the 16<sup>th</sup> century goes by the name of psychology and studies sensation, feeling and appetite does not receive a mention.<sup>11</sup> This might be surprising at first. However a closer inspection shows that something of the kind was justified. The notion of the mind that Collingwood had was that of a unity.<sup>12</sup> Thus a science which claims to study only one aspect of the mind appears to make an impossible statement. No discipline can study one aspect of the mind in isolation:

The life of the mind is whole, without seam, woven from the top throughout; the only sense in which we can separate one attribute from the others is that we may abstract it, that is, have a false theory that is separate; we can never actually employ one faculty alone (RP, p. 154).

The situation is therefore clear and not very good for psychology. Collingwood denies that the methodological orientation of psychology is appropriate for the study of the mind; at the same time he cannot, as he is to do later on, assign to it a more restricted subject matter (emotions, feelings, appetites etc.) due to the unity of mind's faculties; the refutation of psychology cannot be but total.

### § 3. Psychology's total refutation in *Speculum Mentis*

Along the same lines is the position Collingwood expressed in SM, where he regarded psychology as "the study of thought as a mere phenomenon, without attempting to raise the question whether a given thought is true or false, valid or invalid" (SM, p. 274). Psychology treats thought as just an event, an occurrence by abstracting thought "from its own truth or falsity" (SM, p. 274) in the case of the psychology of knowledge. In a similar way, according to Collingwood, the psychology of conduct will examine thought by abstracting it from being good or bad. And the same applies to every psychology. Therefore, psychology's is not just a different way of examining the thinking mind but an artificial way to do so, by imposing an abstraction on something that is an organic unity: the thought and the way we judge it.

Collingwood, as he did in RP, points out the significance of standards or criteria as the necessary condition to study thought and the mind. And the way psychology proceeds in its

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<sup>11</sup> Collingwood in his early writings refers to modern psychology, the discipline that was current in his time. Later, as we shall see, he was to contrast modern psychology to something that existed before by the same name and aspired to study specific aspects of the mind.

<sup>12</sup> For a more detailed account of Collingwood's theory of mind see chapter II.

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inquiry, offers something abstract, generalisations propounding no answers:

Because psychology ignores the distinction between truth and falsehood, it gives us laws of thought which apply indifferently to both; all its distinctions, that is to say, cut across the distinction between truth and falsehood, and when psychology has classified a certain process as one of association or whatever it may be, no result ever follows as to whether this process yields a truth or an error. It is a fallacy, but an exceedingly common fallacy, to imagine that by giving a psychological analysis of any 'mental event' we have done anything whatever towards either discrediting or commending it as an attempt at achieving truth, goodness, beauty or the like (SM, p. 274-5).

Not drawing a distinction between what is good and what is evil, what is true and what is false and so forth, and not trying to find out whether goodness, truth etc. has been achieved, is not something the study of thought can do without or can put aside for later consideration as "something alien to thought ... its accidental relation to an object other than itself" (SM, p. 276). For Collingwood "thought is nothing whatever but the drawing of this distinction" (SM, p. 276) and thus by ignoring this distinction the psychologist in effect ignores thought.

Psychology by not interfering with questions of value and judgment is not interfering with its subject matter. After the attempt to study the mind it leaves it completely untouched and no real advancement has been made towards the elucidation of its character. The problem of psychology in dealing effectively with the human mind is due to how it conceives the mind, in other words the methods it employs, methods that create a "mind de-mentalized, materialized" (SM, p. 276):

Its [psychology's] basis is radically unsound, and this defect becomes progressively important as it deals with more and more fundamental problems; (...) It is all to the good that psychology attempts to conceive mind as a self-contained system, working by its own laws and not determined by relation to anything outside itself. Its error is to regard this system not as thought itself but as an object of thought, external to the psychologist as a thing to be observed, not living in him as a thing to be enjoyed. By this error it reasserts the very fallacy which is trying to avoid (SM, p. 277).

Psychology had tried and failed to grasp the mind. But what Collingwood believes about psychology's attempt "to conceive mind as a self-contained system" is very important for his line of argument. Because although psychology has a serious shortcoming, it also seems to have a clear advantage:

But the work which it has done and is doing in detail is of the greatest value, and no one wishes to deny the fact. What we want is not a clean sweep of psychology but a psychology bent upon overcoming its own abstractness, a psychology of concrete mind; and, in

a sense, that is the aim of this book (SM, p. 277).

Where does this leave psychology? Can it become a successful science of the mind? Can it become such a science at the cost of the traditional sciences of value and judgment? To answer yes to these questions would imply a misunderstanding. Psychology isn't more successful in SM than it has been in RP. It employs erroneous methods to deal with the mind and such inquiry produces nothing. We can be certain that, as it stands, psychology's claim to study the human mind cannot be accepted by Collingwood. But then what is the "psychology of concrete mind"? I believe it would be helpful for our inquiry also to consider the following idea that explains the relationship between psychology and the sciences of value and judgment.

It has been suggested that Collingwood's later conception of psychology has an element of defence for logic and metaphysics, in his wish to retract an earlier position of his.<sup>13</sup> On one hand the word 'defence' is deceptive and might encourage the notion of a special motive. Moreover Collingwood didn't need to retract anything. His position in SM is much simpler than that and quite clear. Logic (that is formal or mathematical logic) and metaphysics are conceived in the very special sense of scientific philosophy. For Collingwood scientific philosophy is synonymous with European philosophy "from Greece to the eighteenth century" (SM, p. 195), which was the endeavour to study and analyse the scientific consciousness. The logic, the metaphysics, the psychology of this philosophy were concerned with the scientific consciousness and Collingwood argues that "they are properly not philosophies but 'philosophical sciences', a contradiction in terms which signifies that they are fundamentally science, but science turned upon itself, *scientia scientiarum*, the scientific theory of science" (SM, p. 195).

In this sense logic and metaphysics are the justifications provided by the "scientific philosopher" to the scientist: logic is "an account of scientific thinking, an exposition of its principles, structure, and methodology", and metaphysics "vindicates the objective validity of this type of thinking [i.e. scientific thinking] by showing that the real world is constructed in such a way that, in thinking of it scientifically, we are thinking of it as it really is" (SM, p. 271).

Collingwood's dissatisfaction with the scientific philosophy lies in the way it

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<sup>13</sup> Donagan, p. 157, n 1. The whole passage runs as follows: "In defending logic and metaphysics against psychology Collingwood partly recanted such remarks as the following. 'The moral of this is not that we ought to abandon psychology and return to the old logic and metaphysics. Those sciences have been once for all criticized by and absorbed into psychology, which has made a real advance upon them' (SM, 276)".

generalises. It is the “error of asserting an abstract generalization as lying behind and conditioning concrete fact” (SM, p. 280). This error appears in formal logic, in psychology, in “the attempt to draw up a table of ‘categories’ or necessary forms of thought, whether regarded as a cycle of *a priori* concepts, a series of predetermined dialectical phases of experience, or a system of distinct and separate forms of the spirit” (p. 280). And the scientific philosophy was for Collingwood at the time he was writing an anachronism.

That he recognised a logic, which does not suffer from the shortcomings of formal logic, is undeniable. For he explicitly identified this kind of logic with dialectical logic “whose point of view is the point of view not of science but of philosophy, and whose object is not the abstract thought of science but the concrete thought of history and philosophy” (SM, p. 195).

Therefore it becomes apparent it was this kind of logic and metaphysics –as justifications of the scientific spirit– Collingwood considered absorbed by psychology. Moreover at the level of principles psychology is not in a better position than logic and metaphysics. All are manifestations of the scientific philosophy and “the revolt against formal logic and psychology and metaphysics, and the revolt against science, are the same thing” (SM, p. 195).

As a result “psychology of the concrete mind” cannot be a discipline that has any methodological similarities with the existing psychology. The existing psychology cannot abandon its methodological conceptions without abandoning at the same time its character: if it does it ceases to be psychology, if it doesn’t it remains an error. That Collingwood called the new science of the concrete mind psychology is one of his idiosyncrasies. Psychology never achieved this different status. Collingwood was later to identify the discipline of the concrete mind with history.

The same, I believe, can be seen in some of Collingwood’s reviews of psychology books.<sup>14</sup> Although these reviews have been regarded<sup>15</sup> as more considered and careful than the more temperamental EM, still, having being published in 1923, they belong to a time that Collingwood’s philosophy of mind leaves no space for psychology. It is interesting, for instance, that the only occasion we find Collingwood “heartily agree” with Spearman is when the latter, looking at the history of psychology, “finds that general psychology has made practically no progress for many centuries, and that James’ famous description of it as ‘a string

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<sup>14</sup> Connelly, pp. 188-192.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 188; CHP, p. 153. Especially the review of C. Spearman’s book *The Nature of ‘Intelligence’ and the Principles of Cognition*.

of raw facts, a little gossip and wrangle about opinions, and a little classification and generalisation on the mere descriptive level' is entirely just. Experimental psychology, on the other hand, is as 'blind' as general psychology is 'empty'. Its accumulation of detail is guided by no principles and leads to no results" (Connelly, pp. 190-191). Collingwood is also critical of Carl Jung and of E. Rignano who "rhapsodises about the blessings of materialism in the good old positivist style" and offers "a very crude faculty-psychology applied with an uncritical assurance which is often astounding" (p. 192).

Concluding we could say that in his early writings Collingwood repudiates the claim of psychology to be the study of the human mind. The methodology of psychology, in tune with the natural sciences, has been examined and found inappropriate for such subject matter. And since Collingwood hadn't yet accepted a mind with independent activities, a psychology of feelings, sensations, appetites etc., couldn't exist. As a result the claim of psychology to be the study of the mind is completely erroneous:

We need not ask whether these claims [that psychology has solved or can solve problems that philosophical sciences have not or cannot] are justified; whether psychology is, as some believe, a new and brilliantly successful method of determining the true nature of mind, or whether as others maintain it is only an old fallacy in a new guise. It is enough for our present purpose to point out that it exists; that the distinction proposed by dualism as a working hypothesis is not actually accepted as helpful by the scientific men for whose benefit it is propounded (RP, p. 76).

The existence of psychology is the existence of a mistake and Collingwood's formulation of the above passage is just a tactful way to dismiss psychology altogether. A discipline that treats the mind in such a manner cannot study the mind at all. The same applies to SM. The passage that was regarded as making allowances for the victory of psychology over logic and metaphysics we have seen to have an altogether different meaning.

#### **§ 4. The Psychology of Feeling**

We are now ready to examine the distinction that Collingwood made between traditional psychology and modern psychology<sup>16</sup>. The former was the discipline known from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which had as its subject matter only a part of the human mind: feelings, emotions,

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<sup>16</sup> 'Traditional' and 'modern' are only terms of convenience I use to differentiate the two psychologies.



sensations, appetites and so forth<sup>17</sup>. Modern psychology was the discipline that claimed to enlarge the subject matter of the traditional psychology by encompassing the study of thought as well. It was the discipline that aspired to study the entire human mind. This discipline was current in Collingwood's time and it was this psychology that Collingwood attacked and considered pseudo-science of the mind. The historical justification that Collingwood gives for the rise of this discipline is interesting; thus I will devote § 5 to its description.

The new view on psychology was a result of the different perception of the mind that Collingwood had meanwhile developed. As we shall see in chapter II, Collingwood changed his view of the mind in his effort to define how historical understanding is possible. His answer to this question introduced the doctrine of re-enactment and the exclusion, from history's subject matter, of certain elements that he thought couldn't be re-enacted. Collingwood called these elements unconscious and then irrational. Thus, compared to his early writings and the unity of mind, his later philosophy supported a view of the mind where its faculties could be separated.<sup>18</sup> Thus psychology could now have a valid claim to study some aspects of the mind. One more thing to mention is that the study of thought is now reserved for history. When Collingwood now discusses psychology, his main concern is to define its boundaries with regard to history and not any more with philosophy. And although he still contrasts psychology with the traditional sciences of logic, ethics etc., these now have a strong historical essence. It was this historical essence that Collingwood recognized when he talked about the inefficiency of logic and ethics and the need to reform them. It was to see philosophy through a historical and not a scientific epistemology. And along the same lines was his proposal to substitute (in effect redefine) the term normative with the term criteriological. It was, in a sense, the culmination of Collingwood's dissatisfaction with the traditional spirit of these sciences, as it has already expressed, as we saw, in SM. I will treat this very point later in this chapter.

Before we proceed, it is worth clarifying a point. The distinction that Collingwood made between two psychologies has given rise to confusion as to the grounds on which he

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<sup>17</sup> Collingwood includes several elements in his definition of psyche and his various references of psychology tend to present a different combination of them. Terms he uses include: sensation, feeling, sentiment, instinct, appetite, emotion, desire, sense, impulse and so forth. Most commonly he uses feeling and sensation.

<sup>18</sup> Collingwood's separation of mind's faculties occurred in the mid 1930's, although indications towards the same direction can be found, not without ambiguity, in his 1928 philosophy of history lectures. However, as I have tried to show in chapter II, further elaboration of his ideas restored mind's unity, especially regarding the connection between thoughts and emotions. Still, the element of psyche remains throughout his late writings within the purview of psychology. A rather special case is that of NL where the distinction between feeling with a sensuous element and the psychological sense of body is a rather fine one.

refuted psychology's claim to be the science of thought. It has been argued that apart from methodological reasons Collingwood also considered differences of subject matter.<sup>19</sup> Psychology, that is, cannot study thought because it is the science of feelings, sensations and appetites. I maintain that Collingwood only saw methodology as the problem of psychology in studying thought.<sup>20</sup> To regard the subject matter in a similar manner amounts to the same thing: refutation, that is, for methodological reasons. It is not because psychology studies feelings and the like that it cannot be a science of thought; it is because by having such subject matter, it is committed to the use of naturalistic methods. These methods are fine in tackling this subject matter. If this science of feelings tries to study thought as well, this could only mean that the same methodology will be employed. And this is not possible or acceptable.

The distinction that Collingwood made put psychology back to a position of authenticity. Recognising a long-established, scientific discipline of feelings, emotions, appetites, and identifying it with psychology, Collingwood was happy to talk about its accomplishments. This position, contrasted with Collingwood's views in RP and SM, offers a softer approach to psychology.

Collingwood's later view on psychology was already mentioned in his cosmology writings of 1933-34, where the mind as psyche is the subject matter of psychology.<sup>21</sup> This view becomes clearer in IH. Collingwood in IH maintains<sup>22</sup> his critical attitude towards psychology

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<sup>19</sup> Connelly, pp. 184-185. Also CHP, pp.157-159.

<sup>20</sup> Saying, in the context of psychology as a neighbour to philosophical sciences, that a certain discipline cannot study a certain subject matter because it studies a different one, I take it to mean the following. A discipline has defined its subject matter by certain conventional considerations. These considerations might consist of time limitations, availability of resources and, most importantly, of a particular scope (arbitrary but with organic unity) by which the inquiry can be delineated. Potentially this discipline could encompass other elements, or even other disciplines, and thus expand its subject matter. That means, methodologically is capable of doing so because the elements it wishes to encompass could be a part of its initial organic unity. The examples of anthropology and archaeology could be mentioned in this respect. The traditional character of those disciplines has changed significantly. To talk about the "anthropology of modern Japan" or the "post-medieval archaeology of England" we imply the expansion of the subject matter of anthropology as 'the study of the pre-literary societies' and archaeology as 'the study of the material remains of pre-historic (before written records) cultures'. In these cases anthropology has interacted with the subject matter of sociology or folklore or even politics where archaeology has interacted with the subject matter of history. Of course, there are disciplines that, although methodologically allied, they have a subject matter that possesses no obvious interaction basis. In this respect I could mention the sciences of zoology and astronomy.

<sup>21</sup> Psyche being "desire or even appetite – it is in substance a complex of emotions" (HS, p. 365).

<sup>22</sup> After SM in 1924, Collingwood in 1927 ('Aesthetic', in *The Mind: A Series of Lectures Delivered in the King's College, London*. R.J.S. McDowall (ed.), London: Longman's. Reprinted, 'Aesthetic and the Mind', in CS, 1996, vol. III, pp. 194-215, with an introduction by James Connelly. My references follow the reprinted version. Hereafter abbreviated as Aesthetic) was also critical of psychology's inability to "distinguish between a healthy and a diseased imagination" (Aesthetic, p. 214) since it "possesses no criterion for distinguishing the healthy from the unhealthy imagination" (Aesthetic, p. 211). Imagination

but recognises aspects of the mind that psychology can study. His criticisms occur, for instance, when he discusses Dilthey<sup>23</sup> and his purported mistake of allowing psychology to enter his philosophy of history. Thus, when Dilthey applies his psychological method to the study of the history of philosophy this is done according to the principle that “there are certain fundamental types of mental structure, and that each type has a certain necessary attitude to, and conception of, the world” (IH, p. 173). Collingwood complains that this is erroneous because the criteriological character is ignored:

The only question that matters about a philosophy is whether it is right or wrong. If a given philosopher thinks as he does because, being that kind of man, he cannot help thinking like that, this question does not arise. Philosophy handled from this psychological point of view ceases to be philosophy at all (IH, p. 173).

The result of this approach is that “history disappears altogether and is replaced by psychology” (IH, p. 175). Similarly, elsewhere in IH, Collingwood sees the claim of psychology to be the science of the entire mind as unsound since “its apparatus of scientific method is merely the fruit of a false analogy, and it must pass over into history and, as such, disappear. And this is certainly what ought to happen so far as psychology claims to deal with the function of reason itself” (IH, p. 230-231).<sup>24</sup>

Although Collingwood again proclaims that the methods of psychology are not suitable for the study of thought, psychology now has certain element of the mind as its subject matter: “sensation as distinct from thought, feelings as distinct from conception, appetite as distinct from will” (IH, p. 231).<sup>25</sup> These are the elements that traditionally have been called

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is also a healthy activity studied by the science of aesthetic. He none the less appreciated psychology’s contribution to the pathology of the imagination. For more details of psychology, psychoanalysis and imagination see Aesthetic, pp. 208-211. Collingwood’s lecture on Aesthetic was one in a series of lectures delivered at King’s College London in the lent term of 1927, the theme being the mind and how it is perceived by various academic viewpoints.

<sup>23</sup> The whole discussion of Dilthey is in IH, pp. 171-175. It has also been suggested that Collingwood’s is “a contestable interpretation of Dilthey” (CHP, p. 166, n. 11).

<sup>24</sup> Collingwood also criticises the attitude of historians who adopted a psychological attitude towards their historical subject matter: Thucydides as the father of psychological history (IH, pp. 29-30), Tacitus (IH, p. 40), and Herder, whose psychological explanations Collingwood regarded in some respects as a precursor of racist theories (IH, p. 91-92). Cf. Collingwood’s objections to unhistorical entities put forward to explain historical phenomena (Collingwood’s case was the Celtic art as the product of the ‘Celtic temperament’): “With entities of that kind we have left behind us the daylight, end even the twilight, of history, and have entered a darkness peopled by all the monsters of *Rassentheorie* and Jungian psychology. In that darkness what we find is not history but the negation of history; not the solution of historical problems, but only a heady drink which gives us the illusion of having solved them” (A, pp. 139-140).

<sup>25</sup> We see the same in his 1936 lectures on the philosophy of history: “psychology [is] the study of

psyche and constitute the conscious but irrational part of the mind.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, in presenting the views of the French philosopher Lachelier, Collingwood is content to see Lachelier recognising that:

psychology, as a naturalistic science, cannot grasp mind as it actually is; it can only study the immediate data of consciousness, our sensations and feelings; but the essence of mind is that it knows, that is, has as its objects not mere states of itself but a real world. What enables it to know is the fact that it thinks; and the activity of thought is a free or self-creating process, which depends on nothing else except itself in order to exist (IH, p. 186).

Collingwood again in his "Notes on the History of Historiography and Philosophy of History" in 1936, recognises that the "idea of a naturalistic psychology is well-founded, but it runs into error if it is identified with a science of mind" (PH, p. 225). Instead this psychology is a science not of the entire mind but only of the irrational element of it, the "brute-mind in man", which "includes senses, instincts, impulses and in general the subject-matter of psychology" (PH, p. 225). The other element of the mind, "that which has reason", includes "intellect, will, and their synonyms" (PH, p. 225) and it is not within the scope of the psychological investigation.

In all his late writings Collingwood retained and elaborated this conception of psychology that occurs in the cosmology writings and becomes more prominent in 1936. Also he developed further the idea of the criteriological sciences, the self-criticising character of thought and the false claim of psychology to be the study of thought.

Collingwood after IH becomes more specific as to what psychology should be concerned with. He does this by clarifying what the difference between thinking and feeling is and why psychology cannot claim the study of the former. This occurs in a thorough manner in PA:<sup>27</sup>

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immediate experience, sensation and feeling, which, though the activity of a mind, is not the activity of thinking" (IH, p. 305). Also in his criticisms of the "Modern French Historiography" (IH, pp. 189-190) of having erred because of the identification of the historical process with the "process of immediate experience ... a merely psychological process, a process of sensations, feelings, and sentiments" (IH, p. 190). In the lectures 'Goodness, Rightness, Utility' delivered in 1940 (now reprinted in the new edition of NL, Appendix 1, pp. 391-479) Collingwood argues that "Nothing that a psychologist can say in his capacity as a psychologist about questions of moral philosophy has any interest at all for the student of moral philosophy" (NL, p. 402). None the less in the same lectures he maintains that capricious choice "arises from psychical conditions" and is a legitimate field for psychology (NL, pp. 429-431).

<sup>26</sup> IH, p. 231.

<sup>27</sup> In PA Collingwood made a distinction not only between feeling and thinking but also between feeling and emotion. Feeling (that can have the dual meaning of sensation and emotion) is found at the psychic level of experience and combines a sensuous and an emotional element. These emotions have a psychical expression, i.e. "certain distortions of the face express pain; a slackening of muscles and a cold pallor of the skin express fear" (PA, p. 229). Psychology is the study of this psychic level of experience. More complex emotions only occur at the level of imagination or consciousness when language comes

feel are actually doing, in order to study the nature of thinking it is necessary to ascertain both what persons who think are actually doing and also whether what they are doing is a success or a failure. Thus a science of feeling must be 'empirical' (i.e. devoted to ascertaining and classifying 'facts' or things susceptible of observation), but a science of thought must be 'normative', or (as I prefer to call it) 'criteriological', i.e. concerned not only with the 'facts' of thought but also with the 'criteria' or standards which thought imposes on itself. 'Criteriological' sciences, e.g. logic, ethics, have long been accepted as giving the correct approach to the study of thought (PA, p. 171 note to p. 164).

Collingwood's argument stands on the relationship between the activities of thinking and feeling and how they became distinct. Therefore the essential element is the concept of thought as self-criticising activity. In PH Collingwood also maintained that criteria are essential and indispensable, not incidental to human thought.<sup>29</sup> With reference to theoretical and practical reason he argues that the former is "the pursuit of truth and the avoidance of error, nothing else" (PH, p. 88), while the latter is always the making of distinctions between "right and wrong, or virtue and vice" (PH, p. 88).

His most comprehensive account on this matter can be found in *An Essay on Metaphysics*. There he argues<sup>30</sup> that ever since the ancient times and through the medieval and Renaissance periods, it was believed that the mind<sup>31</sup>, like everything else (the human body, other animals, the plants), had a teleological behaviour and on top of that it was "aware of this and having opinions, in some cases knowledge, as to what its own ends were" (EM, p. 107). And if this is the case and "a mind is something which has opinions as to what it is trying to do, its possession of these opinions will in certain ways complicate its behaviour" (EM, p. 107). Collingwood maintains that the teleological self-awareness of the mind, this complication of its behaviour, is expressed through an appraisal of whether the ends that the mind is set to achieve have been met or not. This appraisal is an activity that is performed by the mind itself, a self-generated activity:

A mind aiming at the discovery of a truth or the planning of a course of conduct will

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<sup>29</sup> PH, p. 88.

<sup>30</sup> Especially pp. 106-108.

<sup>31</sup> Collingwood's references to the mind should be taken to mean, throughout his analysis, thought, that is "the general name for a number of different activities (questioning, supposing, and stating or propounding...) which together make up the complex activity of knowing. These activities, considered sometimes as emanating from and sometimes as constituting an entity traditionally known as intellect, reason, or mind, had been regarded ever since the days of ancient Greek thought as having two different modes of functioning, one theoretical and the other practical. Theoretical thinking meant trying to think out the truth about something. Practical thinking meant trying to think out what to do in a given situation" (EM, p. 106).

not only score a success or failure, it will also think of itself as scoring a success or a failure; and since a thought may be either true or false its thought on this subject will not necessarily coincide with the facts. Any piece of thinking, theoretical or practical, includes as an integral part of itself the thought of a standard or criterion by reference to which it is judged a successful or unsuccessful piece of thinking. Unlike any kind of bodily or physiological functioning, thought is a self-criticizing activity (EM, pp. 107-108).

There exists, therefore, a certain connection between the self-awareness of the mind and its self-criticism. If the mind is capable of knowing that it is directed towards some ends, then at least it should be capable of knowing how it is supposed to go there and when it has attained its aim. This is meant by Collingwood when he says that the mind “[n]ot content with the simple pursuit of its ends, it is also pursues the further end of discovering for itself whether it has pursued them successfully” (EM, p. 108). However this is not a mechanistic, unambiguous process since Collingwood recognises that the “mind judges itself, though not always justly” (EM, p. 108). The actual link, then, between a mind that knows it has some task to perform and a mind that knows it has performed it successfully, is a science that can describe not only each separate activity (self-awareness and self-criticism) but both in their mutual interdependence:

The science of mind, in addition to doing this<sup>32</sup>, must describe the self-judging function which is part and parcel of all thinking and try to discover the criteria upon which its judgements are based (EM, p. 108).

Therefore the establishment of criteria of judgement cannot be done arbitrarily, that is, be established from outside of the mind, according to some general rules. The criteria are related to the self-awareness of the mind, are related to what the mind aims to achieve. It is a motive that can be in a sense personal, esoteric. This is, I believe, why Collingwood describes the sciences of the mind as criteriological instead of normative or gives his own definition of normative. Collingwood provides a historical account of how the idea of normative science originated. He says that the self-critical aspect of thought was recognised by the Greeks who paid attention to the definition of criteria while constructing a theoretical and a practical science of thought –logic and ethics respectively– that referred to those criteria to judge their success in performing the thinking activity properly.<sup>33</sup> Because of the criteria involved in the

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<sup>32</sup> This is a reference to what Collingwood maintained to be the business of the science of the body, to “describe the physiological functions of which bodily activity is composed and try to discover upon what ends they are directed” (EM, p. 108).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

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process of judgement those sciences are called normative from the Latin word *norma*.<sup>34</sup> Collingwood is alert to the fact that normative should not be taken to mean that the criteria belong to the practitioners of the sciences, the logician or the student of ethics, who employ these criteria to judge other people's thinking.<sup>35</sup> Instead Collingwood argues that normative suggests "the necessity that in every act of thought the thinker himself should judge the success of his own act" (EM, p. 109). In order therefore to stress the importance of this element Collingwood adopts the term *criteriological* instead of *normative*.

Normative can mean the imposition from without of rules of some abstract ideal, but Collingwood by emphasizing the self-critical aspect of the mind gives a dimension of a very concrete individual. Then again the possibility, that Collingwood recognises, of one person to be able to judge the thoughts of another is based on one basic assumption: he who wants to judge must know what the other person is aiming to achieve. Only then the possibility of a judgement is real, otherwise it amounts to "tyranny". And for such tyranny the traditional logic and ethics were no less responsible. For although the practitioners of logic and ethics understood the need for applying standards to thinking, Collingwood argued that "it might very well be true that people who professed those sciences had misunderstood their normative character, and had claimed a right of censorship over the thought and actions of other people" (EM, p. 114). And because of that misunderstanding "a revolt against the old logic and ethics had been desirable and had proved beneficial" (EM, p. 114). Collingwood was of course conscious that whatever the shortcomings of logic and ethics and in spite of being "in need of reform" (EM, p. 104), their achievements had been substantial. Their strong point was that they were constructed around the fundamental principle of *criteriology*. And if at times they seemed to forget that the *criteriological* character of the mind was also self-imposed, this would be the point they would need to rectify.

The self-critical character was therefore the distinguishing feature between the mind and everything else that also had a teleological behaviour. But for the ancient thinkers, who didn't regard feeling as non-cognitive, the self-criticism could have been equally valid for feeling too. It was only in the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>36</sup>, Collingwood argues, that the advent of

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 108-109.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>36</sup> Also PA, p. 171, note to p. 164: "In the sixteenth century the name 'psychology' was invented to designate an 'empirical' science of feeling"; PH, p. 82: "that science of instinct, sensation, and feeling which had gone ever since the sixteenth century by the name of psychology"; PH, p. 108: "psychology, which had existed under that name since the sixteenth century as the science of sensation and feeling"; A, p. 93-94: "Psychology ... both word and thing had been in existence ever since the sixteenth century".

psychology as a distinct science could be traced “when the word was used by Melanchthon, Goclenius, and others as a new name to designate what was in effect a new science” (EM, p. 106). This new psychology did not come to replace logic and ethics but to supplement them, since in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (contrary to the Greek and medieval thinkers who had thought of feeling as a kind of thinking) it was recognised for the first time that the activity of feeling was different than the activity of thinking, in that feeling was not a cognitive activity, not self-critical<sup>37</sup> and therefore a science that was criteriological could not study it.<sup>38</sup> Therefore the activities of feeling (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting) were neither the activities of the thinking ‘mind’ nor the activities of the ‘body’ but of, what traditionally from the Greek word has been called, ‘psyche’, from where psychology got its name.<sup>39</sup>

Psychology, therefore, came to restore the discrepancy that was created as a result of the realisation that feeling was not a cognitive activity. The modification in the conception of the human mind resulted in a corresponding modification in the scale of the human sciences. Psychology was in effect invented as an answer to that specific problem:

Thus psychology was put on the map of the sciences, to march on the one hand with physiology and on the other with logic and ethics; a science of feeling, designed to fill a gap between the existing science of bodily function and the existing sciences of mind, in no way competing with any of them (EM, p. 110).<sup>40</sup>

With this Collingwood consolidates psychology, the traditional psychology, as a discipline that serves a necessary function and supplements the criteriological sciences and the sciences of the human body. The role, therefore, that Collingwood reserves for psychology is very vital: it is one indispensable contribution of the tripartite effort towards the total study of man. Moreover this psychology, according to Collingwood, has performed its business with significant success. For this discipline he had a sincere respect and he frequently declared his admiration for psychology’s achievements:

As the science of feeling, psychology is not only a science of respectable antiquity; it is a science with great triumphs to its credit, some of long standing, others lately achieved, others even yet incomplete, and (one may hope) others to come in the future. ... The study by

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<sup>37</sup> Which thinking is since it “includes the discovery and correction of its own errors” (EM, p. 110).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>39</sup> EM, p. 110.

<sup>40</sup> Also A, p. 94: “[Psychology] had been deliberately created ... in order to study that which is neither mind in the proper traditional sense (consciousness, reason, will) nor yet body, but ψυχή, or such functions as sensation and appetite. It marched on the one hand with physiology, and on the other with the sciences of mind proper, logic and ethics, the sciences of reason and will”.



psychologists of sensation and emotion, whether in the laboratory or in the consulting-room or in what other conditions soever they think it capable of being pursued, is a most important kind of research and a thing which every friend of science will encourage by every means at his command (EM, pp. 141-142).

Also in his discussions of psychology Collingwood often includes the practises of psychoanalysis and argues that his opinion about the psychology of thought “implied no hostility towards psychology proper, the science of sensation, appetite, and the emotions connected with them, or towards the Freudian and other forms of treatment for certain ailments” (A, p. 95). Collingwood in fact respected Freud and thought of him to be “the greatest psychologist of our age” (PA, p. 64) and that his works had “reached a very high scientific level when dealing with problems in psychotherapy” (A, p. 95).<sup>41</sup>

### § 5. Psychology as the Study of Thought: A Historical Explanation

Collingwood produced a historical account of why psychology came to be regarded as the science that could study thought, why it “annexed a territory which was not its own, which its methods did not enable it to manage” (PH, p. 84). For him it was important to discover the rationale behind the attempt of psychology to substitute the philosophical sciences<sup>42</sup>, which in Collingwood’s understanding was equal to the commitment of an obvious and precarious mistake. He understood this attempt to be one aspect of a greater scheme, namely that the “intellectual task of the eighteenth century was the liquidation of Europe’s debt to Greece” (EM, p. 112). It was a revolt against the “typically Greek idea, the idea of purposive action” (EM, p. 113). Collingwood argued that on one side it was biology as the science of organism, “the last refuge of teleological natural science” (EM, p. 113), that this eighteenth century

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<sup>41</sup> Collingwood is expressing his high opinion about Freud elsewhere too: in PE, pp. 156-157, p. 169; EM, p. 118, n. 1; Aesthetic, p. 209. He was however very critical of Freud, and the psychological school of interpretation of fairy tales and magic: PE, pp. 156-177; PA, pp. 62-65, p. 77, note on § 2. He also thought that Freud’s works “sank beneath contempt when they treated of ethics, politics, religion, and social structure” (A, p. 95).

For his positive view of the psychology of feeling see also SPT, p. 293, n. 81; NL, p. 431; and PH, p. 84: “I do not intend any disrespect to modern psychology in so far as it has continued and developed very successfully the work of the old psychology, the rightful owner of the name, which was originally intended to identify its field as the ‘psychic’ part of man’s nature or activities, as distinct from his ‘bodily’ structure and activities on the one hand and his ‘rational’ activities on the other”.

<sup>42</sup> Apart from logic and ethics Collingwood in PH includes the “eighteenth century additions to their number, aesthetic[s] and economics” (PH, p. 82) that also exhibited a criteriological character from the beginning. For Collingwood and aesthetics as a criteriological science see AHS, p. 313.

proposal attacked. And on the other side were the theories about the thinking mind:

In the theory of knowledge the same revolt was at work. Here it took the form of maintaining that intellectual activities, or operations of thought, were nothing but aggregations and complexes of feelings and thus special cases of sensation and emotion. Theoretical reason or knowledge was only a pattern of sensations; practical reason or will, only a pattern of appetites. ... [The aim of] 'materialistic epistemology' was to wipe out the old sciences of thought, logic and ethics, with their criteriological methods and their guiding notions of truth and error, good and evil. ... [M]aterialistic epistemology hoped to study the processes of thought, theoretical and practical, by substituting for the old methods of logic and ethics the modern methods of psychology, the science of feeling (EM, pp. 113-114).

It was during the eighteenth century that the new proposal started and by the following century it had solidified its position.<sup>43</sup> Psychology was now a science that had extended its interests and subsumed the thinking mind as well. It did so because of a "misguided attempt to show that natural science is the only kind of science that can exist" (PH, p. 84). And since psychology retained the study of feeling in its subject matter, Collingwood maintained that "there are now in existence two things called 'psychology': a valid and important 'empirical' science (both theoretical and applied) of feeling, and a pseudo-science of thought, falsely professing to deal 'empirically' with things which, as forms of thought, can be dealt with only 'criteriologically'" (PA, p. 171, note to p. 164).

The empirical standpoint of psychology was therefore manifested in that it tried to translate every mental activity into a physical one, that "reason and will were only concretions of sense and appetite ... For there was no such thing as 'mind'; what had been so called was only 'psyche'" (A, p. 94). Psychology was a natural science, based on materialistic principles and its meaning of the word 'thought' is related to those principles:

Hence when we are told that psychology is the science which tells us how we think, we must never forget that the word 'think' is being used in a rather special sense. It has lost all suggestion of self-criticism. It has lost all suggestion of an attempt to think truly and avoid thinking falsely. In fact, since this is at bottom what distinguishes thinking from feeling, the word 'think' here simply means feel (EM, p. 117).

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<sup>43</sup> See PA, p. 171, note to p. 164: "In the nineteenth century the idea got about that psychology could not merely supplement the old 'criteriological' sciences by providing a valid approach to the study of feeling, but could replace them by providing an up-to-date and 'scientific' approach to the study of thought"; A, p. 94: "early in the nineteenth century, the dogma got about ... that logic and ethics could disappear, and that their functions could be taken over by psychology"; PH, p. 82-83: "The new science of human nature was ... envisaged as a science of human thought or the rational part of human nature ... The proposal, then, was to replace logic and ethics, and their new kindred economics and aesthetics, by a science covering the same ground but using naturalistic methods".

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For Collingwood the inability of psychology to deal with criteria is something endemic to the natural sciences.<sup>44</sup> It is an idea found in the core of the natural sciences and their methodology, which emphasizes that observation and explanation is within the scope of science but that there is no need for judgement. Collingwood maintains that this idea of natural science was the outcome of the belief that nature as the work of God is infallible, as all the works of God, as opposed to the works of man that are not perfect and can often be something else from what they meant to be.<sup>45</sup> Therefore human sciences have criteria to judge whether the human intention was successful or not but the natural sciences, with “assumptions consciously worked out and explicitly stated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and thereafter taken for granted” (PH, p. 83), do not distinguish between success and failure because God’s nature is not a world of failures.<sup>46</sup> Collingwood argues that the idea of the infallible nature was still valid in the 18<sup>th</sup> century although people “had parted company with the theology on which these beliefs were based” (PH, p. 84). Therefore this belief in the infallible nature and the fallible human works was, for Collingwood, the reason for the methodological difference between natural sciences and human sciences: the former contain no element of judgement because they do not distinguish between success and failure while the latter are criteriological because they do recognise such distinction.<sup>47</sup>

Psychology then being faithful to its methodological orientation “approached the study of thought with a perfectly clear and conscious determination to ignore one whole department of the truth, namely to ignore the self-critical function of thought and the criteria which that function implied” (EM, pp. 115-116). However by doing so psychology has committed a serious blunder, omitting the distinctions of good and evil, truth and error etc., that everyone, including psychologists themselves, pursues, successfully or not, in every thinking activity. In the scientific sphere this amounts to a refutation of science itself:<sup>48</sup>

if a science of thought has nothing to say about truth and falsehood the omission

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<sup>44</sup> The distinctions, that criteria allow us to make, are “valid for reason and will [i.e. logic and ethics] but not for sensation and appetite” (A, p. 94). By that Collingwood refers to the idea that these distinctions do not apply to feelings because feelings cannot be right or wrong, they are what they are. However those distinctions do apply to the scientific method as such when, for instance, a theory or a hypothesis needs to be accepted or rejected. Therefore it might be said that criteria are not necessary in the actual subject matter of a naturalistic discipline but they are necessary in the conceptual frameworks within which this discipline operates.

<sup>45</sup> PH, p. 83

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 84

<sup>48</sup> See also, A, pp. 94-95; PH, pp. 84-85, pp. 87-88; SM, pp. 275-276.

becomes important. It can only mean that according to this science the distinction between truth and falsehood does not exist. ... Since the drawing of a distinction between truth and falsehood belongs to the very essence of thinking, a 'science of thought' which does not discuss the function by which thought distinguishes these things, and neglects to give a scientific account of the distinction itself, is doing something more than merely renouncing by its actions any claim which it may make in words to be considered a science of thought. It is actually teaching that there is no difference between the pursuit of truth, or science, and the pursuit of falsehood, or sophistry; no difference between scientific teaching or the inculcation of truth and pseudo-scientific teaching or the inculcation of falsehood (EM, pp. 119-120).

For Collingwood psychology belonged to a broader nexus of a condition that resembled "a kind of epidemic withering of belief in the importance of truth and in the obligation to think and act in a systematic and methodical way" (EM. p. 135).

#### **§ 6. Philosophy, Psychology and the Study of Thought**

According to Collingwood's analysis traditional psychology was meant to be an empirical science. It was a science, that is, which would observe and analyse its subject matter but it was not within its interest to pass a judgement upon it. We have also seen that thought is the activity where the thinking mind's self-awareness of its aims and the evaluation of the attainment of those aims are two interrelated processes and cannot be studied in isolation from one another. When Collingwood says that a student of a criteriological science has as his task to study what the thinking mind does and *in addition* to see whether this has been done successfully or not, one point should be made clear. *In addition* does not mean subsequently, afterwards. It means extra, more. It has not a temporal or sequential meaning but a quantitative meaning. In an ethical matter, for instance, it means that we have the prospect of doing something with the hope or intention that it will be the good thing to do. The idea of goodness exists in the criteria that one considers when attempting to do that good. The attempt to do the good is not an activity in vacuum; it does not proceed from total darkness to something that only vaguely hopes to be light. The criteria are used both when the attempt is made and afterwards in order to evaluate the success of that attempt.

It is erroneous, therefore, to say that two stages exist –the thinking of an aim and the evaluation of the attainment of that aim– and that an empirical science of psychology can study the first and leave the second to a criteriological science. Consequently any attempt to study thinking empirically, that is without any reference to the second of the two interrelated processes, must be absurd. Based on the mistaken possibility that the two processes in thinking

can be distinguished, Collingwood was criticised in the form of a reply to his claims in EM.<sup>49</sup> Hearnshaw deals with various points of Collingwood's general position of psychology in EM but I would wish to focus on one which I think is the core of the argument.<sup>50</sup> He says:

psychologists ... do not deny the self-critical function of thought ... psychology, like all sciences, is an abstract study and leaves out certain features of its subject-matter, but that this does not constitute a denial of the existence of these features ... psychology hands over the study of the formal and criteriological features of thought to the philosopher. But in dismissing them from his science the psychologist is not denying their existence, any more than the anatomist denies the existence of the bodily functions which he leaves to the physiologist, or the chemist denies the reality of the physical properties of matter which he leaves to the physicist (p. 166).<sup>51</sup>

At first this proposal seems, and has been considered, legitimate.<sup>52</sup> Of course it presupposes the denial of the indivisible thinking activities, but then again it seems to be offering a formula by which both psychology and philosophy can study thought. It can be seen as an attempt to moderate the conflict between psychology and the criteriological sciences of thought that Collingwood recognised. It can be seen as an attempt to deny that psychology tries to substitute the philosophical sciences and instead to put forward the idea of supplementing them. However this suggestion is more problematic than it seems. There are two points of interest in the above proposal.

The first is that psychology recognises the two phases in thinking (a. what the mind does and b. whether it does it successfully or not), proceeds to acknowledge them as distinct and thus capable of being studied separately and then decides to devote its methods to the study of the first one and to leave out the second. The study of that second phase is reserved for philosophy. Let us, for a moment, accept that psychology's new interpretation, of the thinking processes as two separate activities, is viable. If the first phase of thinking is what

<sup>49</sup> L.S. Hearnshaw. 1942. 'A Reply to Professor Collingwood's Attack on Psychology', in *Mind*, n.s. vol. 51, pp. 160-9.

<sup>50</sup> For more of Hearnshaw's reply see SPT, p. 272, n. 88; Connelly, pp. 186-188; CHP, pp. 151-153.

<sup>51</sup> Hearnshaw says that "when the self-critical aspects of thought have been relegated to philosophy, there are other aspects of thought that fall within the province of psychology" (p. 166). This is a rather misleading phrasing. It might be taken to mean that thought is divided into two: the self-critical aspects that philosophy studies and the non self-critical aspects that psychology studies. This however cannot be accurate. Often there is overlap between what psychology studies and what philosophy studies. The cases, for instance, of art and religion testifies to that. And what both disciplines study, in these cases, is the whole phenomenon of thought as manifested in art or religion. They do not study aspects of the phenomenon; they study the phenomenon as such but in two different ways.

It is also of interest to note that "there are certain kinds of thinking, sometimes termed by psychologists 'autistic', which fall primarily within the province of psychology, for instance reverie, and the imaginative thinking of the child" (p. 167), and contrast it with Collingwood's objections in *Aesthetic*.

<sup>52</sup> CHP, p. 152; Connelly, p. 187.

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psychology wishes to study this certainly can be done. Assuming psychology's position, it is not problematic to study the activity of thinking without any reference to the self-critical aspect of it. But if for psychology the criteriological aspect is not important, we cannot say the same about the first phase of thinking for philosophy. It would certainly be impossible to imagine how a discipline that studies the criteria, the success or failure of 'something', is capable of doing so without any reference to and knowledge of that 'something'. This surely is an impossible task. Without the knowledge of what the thinking mind does, whether it has done well or ill cannot be verified. Philosophy or any criteriological science needs to study the first phase of thinking as well. And if the study of the first phase belongs to both sciences then one of them must be superfluous (and in this case it is upon psychology –as the modern contender– to defend its claim to be the science of thought). Certainly another possibility exists, namely that those two disciplines could indeed study the same subject matter given that they will adopt different methods and different concepts. In such a case there must exist some sort of conflict between the two disciplines and it was this sort of conflict that Collingwood acknowledged and Hearnshaw in his reply tried to compromise by assigning different activities of the thinking mind to philosophy and psychology.

Along the same lines to argue that one science studies something and then, and only then, a different science can take the results and proceed to a different examination is unduly narrow. In this specific case it would be to suggest that psychology investigates what the thinking mind does and then hands over to the criteriological sciences the task of judgement. No scientific field functions like that. No scientific field is so inextricably linked to any other field as not to be able to proceed with its own enquiries until it has been provided with material partially investigated by some other discipline. A rudimentary autonomy is the prerequisite when a subject matter, and thus a scientific field, is defined. Even when a communication exists between neighbourly disciplines, it is a communication of mutual help and not of obdurate dependency. Therefore what Hearnshaw and his idea of psychology put forward as communication is in fact a form of dependency.

The argument, that both psychology and philosophy can co-exist and study different aspects of the same subject matter, breaks down in close inspection. It is a confusion that arises from the erroneous concept that thinking can have two distinct activities that can be studied independently from one another. In fact Hearnshaw has produced nothing but a circular argument. His effort was to tone down the tension between psychology and philosophy by giving a part of thought to each one. But his division created the problem of philosophy being isolated from the first part of thought and the contradiction of studying criteria for an entity

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that remains unknown. The effort to solve this unavoidably brings the argument to the situation of tension again. His initial argument is the reason for the creation of the tension he wishes to solve.

Let us move now to the second point of interest, because it can give us an idea why psychology excludes the self-critical aspect of thought from its subject matter and why it hands it over to philosophy. We are told that from the features that psychology –as an abstract science– leaves out, at least one is the self-critical character of thought. And this is done not because psychology is denying the existence of that character but because it chooses not to incorporate it. It is crucial to see why psychology chooses to exclude that element from its subject matter. In this respect the analogy with the sciences of anatomy and physiology is very interesting.<sup>53</sup> As the anatomist concentrates on certain aspect of the human body and leaves other aspects such as the bodily functions to the physiologist, likewise, the argument goes, the psychologist studies certain aspects of thought and leaves the criteriological aspect to the philosopher.

Let us see what this analogy is about. The subject matter of anatomy and physiology is nothing more than the division of labour between those two sciences. The complication and the intricacies of the human body have given rise to different disciplines and to the subsequent creation of arbitrary but workable boundaries within which each of those disciplines can function with a reasonable degree of independence. But this doesn't mean that the anatomist or the physiologist cannot use elements of the bodily functions or the bodily structures respectively, if for the purposes of their study such practice becomes helpful. This is not intrusion, is fruitful communication. And in many cases such communication is not just helpful but essential.

Given this analogy, psychology doesn't choose to exclude the self-critical aspect of thought from its subject matter because is incapable of studying that aspect. We must not forget that between neighbourly disciplines –as psychology and philosophy are presented in this case due to the analogy– any elements that are excluded on the basis of 'subject matter' and not of 'methodology' are elements that are not incompatible with the methodology of the discipline; they are excluded for reasons of convenience and convention in order for that discipline to be able to have a manageable, but always coherent, study material. Therefore to exclude the self-critical character of thought for reasons of convenience and convention shows

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<sup>53</sup> The example of chemistry and physics follow the same principle; thus what I am saying about anatomy and physiology apply to chemistry and physics as well.

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psychology's commitment to regard what the mind does and whether it does it successfully, as two distinct activities.

It seems therefore that psychology's relation to philosophy is similar to the relation we find between anatomy and physiology. Hence psychology hands over to philosophy the self-critical character of thought not because –as an abstract, empirical science– it cannot study the criteria of thinking but because the subject matter of philosophy and psychology is the division of labour between them for the study of the thinking mind. But does such a relationship mean that philosophy and psychology have interchangeable and identical methodologies? Does it mean that psychology is potentially able to study the self-critical aspect of thought by approaching it with the empirical methodology? Alternatively does it mean psychology assumed that philosophy would tackle the self-critical aspect of thought using methods of the natural sciences? Or does it simply mean that the methodological distinction exists but still the division of labour is possible? Of course all these questions cannot receive a satisfactory answer that will help us to move forward.

The problem is obvious: the analogy with the sciences of anatomy and physiology is misleading. To consider psychology and philosophy, when they claim to study thought, under the same light as some natural sciences of the body is problematic. Between psychology and philosophy there is not a division of labour. They might complement each other (in the case where psychology studies feeling) but they do not communicate in the strict sense: they do not exchange results. The methodologies they have adopted commit them to different approaches to their subject matter (or the nature of their subject matter led them to adopt certain methodologies) and those approaches might be conflicting. Therefore psychology cannot hand over the study of aspects of thought to philosophy, with which there is no obvious communication. Notwithstanding the problem mentioned before (that philosophy cannot study the self-critical element of thought without studying what thought does nor can wait until the study of what thought does is passed on by psychology) the two aspects of the thinking mind are to remain unconnected since there is nothing to guarantee that the psychological and the philosophical investigations cannot produce contradictory or non-reconcilable results. But does it matter that the two won't be connected? It does, because the division was not organic but conventional. It is a division of a unity (the thinking mind) in order to study the, alleged, constituents of it. At some point the communication ought to be established and the unity to be restored. This is the idea of one discipline supplementing the other. In the case of disciplines where the division of labour is genuine, the results of the individual sciences (e.g. physiology and anatomy) will be brought together, will be seen in their connection to the whole (i.e. the



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organism), suggest new lines of inquiry and so forth. If there are conflicting results then the assumption will be that an error has occurred. In the case of psychology and the philosophical sciences conflicting results cannot be ascribed to a similar concept of error: a psychology of art that testifies to the essence of art as the production of pleasurable effects on people is in fundamental disagreement with a philosophy of art that considers art as something altogether different, where the mere production of certain feelings has nothing to do with the aesthetic aspect of art.<sup>54</sup>

In a sense for psychology to acknowledge that it cannot study the self-critical character of thinking and that is why it hands it over to philosophy, wouldn't have been worse than the claim of the division of labour. In both cases the issue of communication will arise. It is only less obvious in the second case and takes more time for the blunder to be detected.

We can thus sum up Hearnshaw's argument as follows. His argument is built around the effort to reduce the tension between psychology and the philosophical sciences and to find a common ground for them to co-exist. The idea behind this was: a. to absolve psychology from any accusation that it trespasses into the territory of the philosophical studies and seeks to substitute these studies; b. to show, at the same time, that psychology has indeed a legitimate claim to the study of thought. Without this understanding we cannot analyse his position and detect his mistakes. However the attempt wasn't successful because it rests on the false dichotomy of the thinking mind: what the mind does and whether it does it successfully or not, are for psychology two different things. The argument proceeds with the conviction that this division is feasible and psychology can study the first activity (what the mind does) while the philosophical sciences can study the second (whether the mind does it successfully, the self-critical aspect of thinking).

There are two problematic implications by that suggestion. One is that philosophy cannot study the second without studying the first. And if it studies the first then there is an overlap with psychology's assumed subject matter. In this case the accusation of substitution is

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<sup>54</sup> Collingwood among other things repudiated the idea of art proper as a form of amusement, see PA, pp. 15-41, pp. 78-104. For art as psychological stimulus PA, pp. 29-36. The considerable amount of philosophical aesthetics that pointed to the shortcomings of art as amusement, pleasure etc., is virtually ignored in modern attempts of psychology to define art in those terms. In the 1997 book, for instance, *How the Mind Works* by the psychologist Steven Pinker, we are told that "What is it about the mind that lets people take pleasure in shapes and colors and sounds and jokes and stories and myths? That question might be answerable, whereas questions about art in general are not. Theories of art carry the seed of their own destruction" (p. 523). Thus the question for the psychology of art is not 'what is art' but what is the effect of works of art on people and Pinker suggests that the arts are nothing more than another type of 'pleasure technology' (p. 525). His supporting argument are strikingly similar to the ones against which Collingwood was writing in the 1930's.

back. The second implication is that psychology excludes from its subject matter the self-critical element of thought on the basis of the division of labour with philosophy. This creates an odd alliance between the two disciplines, an alliance that cannot be sustainable since they are disciplines that follow different methodologies. Therefore how a communication can be established (the two aspects of the thinking mind to be brought together), psychology cannot answer. The truth is that such an answer cannot be given because the initial division is an erroneous one. In no case a communication between psychology and philosophy can be of such nature as to allow a meaningful exchange of aspects of their subject matter.

In fact Hearnshaw's position clearly includes the element of substitution. Thinking, which previously was within the purview of the philosophical sciences, is now reserved for psychology. This position indeed denies criteriology too, in the sense that it doesn't perceive it as vital in the empirical study of thought that psychology carries out. The recognition of the self-critical aspect of thought as not so important to psychology makes it easy to be handed over to the philosophical sciences for study. This is the only way that an accusation for total substitution might be avoided: psychology claims that only one aspect of thought is its business.

The fact that psychology gives to philosophy the study of criteria under the idea of division of labour is a pretext. The pretext is easily, under closer inspection, revealed because psychology and philosophy cannot be conceived as disciplines that can develop the idea of the division of labour. Their methodologies have advanced in very diverse directions. Indeed the truth is that psychology needs to give something to the philosophical sciences in order to justify the non-substitution claim and to reinforce its position as a discipline that wants to supplement the philosophical sciences. But the trade is nonsensical.

Indeed it would have been better for Hearnshaw's argument to have denied the criteriological character altogether. This is exactly what a lot of modern psychological schools have done. The accusation of substitution is not any more of any particular value. Currently psychology studies the mind as matter.

## § 7. Conclusions

Collingwood in the development of his ideas on psychology traversed as follows. Two stages can be recognised. In his initial position, which is manifested in RP and SM, he saw psychology as one of the agents of natural science. The effort of psychology was to apply to

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the mind the same methodology that had been developed for the needs of the study of nature. In other terms, psychology attempted to study the mind only as an observable process and not as an activity that can be judged and evaluated as to the success or not of its performance. For Collingwood the mind acts and then it wants to know whether it has acted rightly or wrongly, truthfully or falsely and so forth. These are ultimate, metaphysical questions and psychology doesn't raise them. But philosophical sciences do. Collingwood during that period had conceived the mind as a unity. The recognition of the different aspects of the mind (thought, emotion, will) wasn't also recognition that those aspects could be separated and studied independently of each other. They were interrelated and every activity of the mind involved all three aspects. Therefore to see psychology as the study of the mind was equal to see it as the study of the entire mind. This was resulted in the total repudiation of psychology. Psychology as a naturalistic science of the mind cannot study the mind at all.

This position of total repudiation is helpful in understanding why Collingwood's later views are indeed milder and more thoughtful towards psychology. His second position was found in all his subsequent works, e.g. IH, PA, A, PH, EM. This position rests on a different – because of the introduction of re-enactment– understanding of the mind, where feelings were excluded from the subject matter of a discipline that wishes to study the mind historically. In PA and EM Collingwood delineated the functions of feeling and thinking. The distinction is an important one since thinking is understood as a cognitive activity, a self-aware activity, but feeling is not. The distinction has a real value for psychology too: Collingwood recognises the study of feelings as the proper subject matter of psychology. In sharp contrast with how it was regarded in RP and SM, the later notion of Collingwood assigns a significant position to psychology. It is seen next to the philosophical sciences of thought and the sciences of the human body, all three together providing the total study of man.

However Collingwood recognised a problematic facet in existence, with the ideas of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century to have created a claim for psychology as the study not only of feelings but also of thought. Collingwood repudiates such a claim. The ground on which he does it is the denial of psychology to attach importance to the self-critical aspect of thought and to study the criteria that this self-critical function sets. Therefore the reasons for his refutation of psychology as the study of thought –the study of feelings is still, rightly, under psychology's purview– are identical to the ones used earlier in RP and SM. Psychology perceives only the process and doesn't tackle the issue of whether this process has been performed successfully or not. Collingwood identified this extended psychology as a clear attempt to supersede the philosophical sciences that proceeded with their inquiries

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acknowledging the self-critical character of thinking.

Collingwood rightly understood that the psychology of thought, purporting to complement the philosophical sciences and not substituting or competing with them, was not a genuine claim. It was clear that psychology of thought came to study something that was already within the purview of philosophy. Also the idea of “division of labour” was erroneous and even misleading. We have seen that for different disciplines to share common elements and examine them from different angles is possible, sometimes even necessary. And we have also seen that the same idea is quite problematic when applied to the study of thought by psychology and philosophy. Collingwood was aware of that and detected that psychology didn't have the intention to complement the philosophical sciences; its implicit aim was to offer a different and better approach to the study of the thinking mind, an approach that wouldn't have the alleged shortcomings of the philosophical sciences. Psychology by aspiring to be a scientific field was placed within a tradition of methods different to the ones used by the philosophical disciplines.

A significant addition to his later view is the description of the philosophical sciences as criteriological, something only hinted in RP and SM. By using the term criteriological Collingwood tried to avoid misunderstandings often associated with the term normative. In so far as normative means the imposition of external criteria to the judgment of thought, Collingwood regarded such interpretation as erroneous: the thinking mind is self-critical, the criteria are imposed internally, from the mind itself upon the mind itself. In my interpretation of this character one point appears to be unavoidable. The thinking mind's self-awareness and self-criticism cannot be functions that exist independently. The self-awareness, the knowledge that the mind does something, depends on the knowledge of the criteria by which the mind will judge its achievements. The criteria are presupposed in the initial effort of the mind to do something and in the later stage where the mind criticises the efficiency of its performance. Although mentioned as two activities, the one presupposes the other, they are two parts of the same activity and they are linked in such a way that it is absurd to suggest that they can be broken up effectively. Such efforts have been made and I have tried to show how, according to the above principle, they have implications that are indefensible.

There are important factors in Collingwood's account on psychology. The first is that any accusation of being hostile to psychology doesn't appear to be justified. His own confessions of the value of psychology aside, the implications of the development of his thought demonstrated that he had travelled from a total denial of psychology as a science of the

mind, to proclaim psychology the uncontested science of feeling.<sup>55</sup> By my exposition in this chapter I contended that this was a result of his careful and methodical consideration of the mind and the nature of its constituent parts. To the same careful and methodical consideration I attribute his denial to see psychology as the science of thought.

A second point is Collingwood's almost prognostic account of the consequences of seeing psychological models as capable of explaining human actions due to thought. The situation today is a fully developed version of what Collingwood was writing more than half a century ago. The substitution of the philosophical sciences by psychology has been achieved in a remarkable degree. The behaviouristic, cognitive or evolutionary explanations of the mind all have in common that they present the processes of a thinking activity as the causes, the causal laws, of that activity.<sup>56</sup> These explanations are currently widely held as providing a more satisfactory answer to the mind than any criteriological, historical reasons. Collingwood's unease in EM was not unjustified. He saw psychology as a threat to civilisation, a way to promote irrationalism and fascism.<sup>57</sup> Freud's *Totem and Taboo* illuminated the problems of trying to understand a historical phenomenon using psychological abstractions; it "expresses the contempt and horror with which our civilization looks upon those different from itself" (PE, p. 169). It was a very dangerous attempt to "reduce the differences between non-European and European civilizations to differences between mental disease and mental health" (PA, p. 77, note on § 2).

The third point is that the criteriological character –which he largely developed in his effort to refute psychology as the science of thought– regarded as a self-imposed activity gives important insights in the way Collingwood conceived the understanding of human actions. When it is seen from an esoteric level (from the level of the person who performs a thinking activity) the criteriological character of thought first and foremost is the idea of a personal

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<sup>55</sup> This is also true for NL, although there psychology is concerned with manifestations of 'body' and not with feelings as such, although the word body in its psychological sense is a group of feelings. See NL, chapter III and for an analysis SPT, pp. 118-119.

<sup>56</sup> See MHD, p. 248, about the problem of psychology to distinguish between reasons and causes. Also M. Oakeshott. 1975. *On Human Conduct*. Oxford University Press, pp. 20-23. Oakeshott argues, for instance, that the "theorems of a science concerned with the process of believing are represented as the causes of beliefs" (pp. 21-22).

<sup>57</sup> SPT, pp. 232-233. Also in the 1935 *Reality as History*: "Psychology is an attempt to understand man by the same methods by which modern man understood Nature. These methods, as applied to the study and consequent control of Nature, were built on the double assumption that man, the knower and controller, is intelligent; Nature, the known and controlled, unintelligent: mere mechanism, blind force. When these same methods are turned upon man, they preserve their character unchanged. They therefore assume that human nature, as the object upon which they are exercised, is unintelligent. The result is that intelligence itself is converted into unintelligence" (PH, p. 175).

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freedom within the effort and the responsibility to think correctly, logically and so forth. When it is seen from an exoteric level (from the level of the person who wants to understand the thought of other people) it is the attempt to realize that the above effort is due to reasons and the understanding of a thought is the understanding of the reasons behind it.

Collingwood's conception of the criteriological character of thought recognises that the mind in its judgement is capable of making errors. The obligation of the mind is to think correctly but not every attempt of the mind to think correctly will necessarily score a success. A failure to achieve the aim that the mind sets is not an erroneous judgement, for the mind might recognise that it has scored a failure. An erroneous judgement is the judgement where the mind mistakenly believes that it has achieved its aim. But for the mistakes that the mind makes, Collingwood argues, the mind itself is capable of correcting them. And this is the main consideration of the criteriological character. The possibility of an external judgement (a man's thought to be judged by another) is of course real but less important. It rests on an adequate understanding of what the mind aims to achieve. But it is less important because the core of criteriology is the self-criticism.

This characteristic of the mind –to score judgement errors– can be an adequate explanation for any ideas of relativism. Not every action is correct, true, logical, good etc. The mind has the capacity of correcting its errors but if it doesn't then the error cannot be mistaken for the truth. Collingwood's idea of criteriology is the denial of mechanistic models and processes in thought. Instead the thinking mind is the self-generating mind, free and responsible in its actions.

## Chapter II: The importance of mind's unity

### § 1. Introduction

The previous chapter on psychology presented what Collingwood perceived as an erroneous attempt towards human understanding. This chapter will be, instead, a positive contribution by looking at Collingwood's philosophy of mind<sup>1</sup>, since for him knowledge and understanding of man is the knowledge of his mind. This chapter is connected to the previous chapter on psychology in that it provides an analysis of the different stages of Collingwood's ideas about the mind and their effect on the discipline of psychology. It was because Collingwood, in the late 1920's and again in IH, in 1936, saw the mind differently than before, that he identified for the psychology of feeling a niche in the study of man. Before that the implication of his philosophy of mind rendered psychology completely erroneous.

The vicissitudes of Collingwood's ideas about the mind are of special significance in tracing his ongoing efforts to establish a historical understanding of human actions. This chapter will be an exploration of this main notion with the qualification that I will only dwell on a certain aspect of Collingwood's philosophy of mind, that is, the unity of mind. I take the unity of mind to be of particular significance because it is the skeleton around which other elements of a general philosophy of mind can be built. By unity of mind I am referring to Collingwood's idea of the inter-connection of the various elements that the mind is thought to consist. Thus thinking, feeling or emotion and sensation are elements that do not exist independently from each other, cannot be distinguished in any given activity and thus cannot be identified with 'what the activity is about'. Instead their mode of function within an activity is as elements that interact closely with each other and the activity is the outcome of that interaction. That we name different elements doesn't mean that we identify their individual existence; for Collingwood such an existence is an abstraction, a false theory that any of these elements can operate without the others.

The unity of mind is significant as a way to overcome the criticisms that Collingwood restricted the subject matter of history and excluded elements of human activity that professional historians find indispensable to their business. Thus emotions too in

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<sup>1</sup> Very good treatments of Collingwood's philosophy of mind can be found in HS, pp. 259-269; SPT, especially ch. 4, pp. 110-140; Donagan, mainly chapters II, pp. 27-46 & III, pp. 47-65; L.O. Mink. 1968. 'Collingwood's Dialectic of History', in *History and Theory*, vol. 7, pp 3-37 (esp. 7-17) (Hereafter abbreviated as Dialectic); MHD, ch. 4, pp. 79-118 and ch. 6, pp. 162-170; L.O. Mink. 1972. 'Collingwood's Historicism: A Dialectic of Process', in *Krausz*, pp. 154-178 (Hereafter abbreviated as Historicism); Dray, especially ch. 4, pp. 108-149. Some aspects of Collingwood's philosophy of mind are discussed in W. von Leyden. 1972. 'Philosophy of mind: An appraisal of Collingwood's theories of consciousness, language and imagination', in *Krausz*, pp. 20-41.

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Collingwood's philosophy of mind and history have a very prominent role and can be seen as a reason and motive for human action. The unity of mind is also helpful in interpreting some of Collingwood's positions when a certain amount of ambiguity exists. For instance, the function of emotions in PH can be better understood if we accept that the unity of mind is the case. On the whole the unity of mind is one of the vital ingredients of an extensive and wide ranging human understanding.

In Collingwood's theory of historical understanding, the relation between the mind's elements has played a decisive role. The unity of mind is related to the idea of the broader historical understanding that Collingwood attempted in his later writings. Not only history itself must include emotions as a vital element for the explanation of actions, but also, with the increasing importance of emotions in Collingwood's writings, areas such as art and magic would become essential in historical knowledge and understanding. In fact the exact boundaries of these areas – history, art, magic – become less easy to discern and I maintain that there is a lot of scope to see art and history as identical in Collingwood's late writings.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time the above position seems paradoxical in the light of what Collingwood asserted in IH, where not only the mind is clearly divided but certain of its elements fall outside the historical concerns. IH constitutes a moment of controversial claims by Collingwood and it was also the main impetus for the various criticisms against his historical theory. But as we shall see careful commentators of Collingwood's theories of mind and history have identified the problematic aspects that IH present and have alerted us against an isolated reading of this book.

How, therefore, should the unity of mind be seen? Was it something constant in Collingwood's philosophy or something that shows hesitation, wavering and instability? I maintain that the idea of mind's unity is something that permeates all Collingwood's philosophical writings. It has a very robust presence in his early writings and again it becomes very prominent in all his later writings. There is however a period between the early and the later writings when the unity of mind is not as straightforward an idea as it is presented elsewhere.

I recognise three phases in Collingwood's unity of mind. The first is the one that Collingwood assumed as early as RP, and it was maintained in all his writings of the mid 1920's. In these writings thought and what comes under the various names of feeling, sensation, perception, intuition and so on, form a concrete whole. Thought and sensation are not separate elements but the two sides that compose any single activity. The activity is not due to thought only or due to sensation only; it is always the union of the two. When will (conation) is included the result is the same: thought, feeling-emotion and will are inseparable

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<sup>2</sup> For more see chapter IV.



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elements in any given activity. In other words for Collingwood this unity of mind admits that immediate experience and the mediating, reflective side of this experience cannot be separated.

The second phase I take to begin with the 1928 lectures on the philosophy of history. This is also the earliest reference on the principle of re-enactment. These lectures, in trying to establish how historical understanding is possible and what is the subject matter of history, present the mind in a different way from before: as a combination of conscious and unconscious activities. History is only concerned with thought, which is taken in a broad sense and includes all the conscious activities. This formulation of Collingwood is not free of ambiguity since he doesn't clarify or specify which activities are conscious and which are not. The terms, however, in which he now talks about the mind evidently allow for the division of mind's faculties since history can study the conscious without tackling the unconscious. Moreover the terms conscious and unconscious are a new way to describe mind's elements. The same idea of mind's division can be seen in some of his writings from the early 1930's. Still, both the 1928 lectures and his early 1930's writings are not clear as to the role of emotions and indeed there is plenty of scope to assume that emotions are closely connected to thought. From the mid 1930's however we have the historical theory expounded in IH, where most of mind's faculties are excluded from the subject matter of history. Given all the previous discussions of the mind, IH appears to possess a unique place in Collingwood's thought. I will argue that, however important and influential might have been in introducing his theory of history, IH is a moment of aberration in the main corpus of Collingwood's philosophy of mind and history. The rest of his writings from 1928 until IH, although they don't support as strong a unity of mind as before, still they can be placed within a philosophy that perceives the mind essentially as a whole.

The third phase is the systematic (since his main philosophy of mind can be said to originate from this phase) endeavour we find in all Collingwood's writings after IH, to re-unite the mind. It was also a period in which Collingwood considered emotions extensively and urged their necessary and healthy function in all aspects of a civilised human conduct, a function often impeded by an over-rationalised modern life. He mainly developed this philosophy of mind in PA and NL. Of special importance are also his writings on anthropology and folk tales, where the position of emotions is very prominent. The folklore writings provide in many respects a foundation upon which PA was developed. The unity of mind is present in PH too, where with specific reference to his theory of history Collingwood considered thought and emotion as closely connected. Thus 'history as the history of thought' in PH is extended to include emotions that are essentially related to thought.

Collingwood's later unity of mind is in one respect different from the initial unity of mind. His early writings show a total unity, that is a unity not only of thought and emotion but

also of sensation. This is not present in the later unity of mind, as for instance we can see in PA where emotions and thought are connected but the psychical level (that includes feelings as sensations) belongs to a different level of experience. However the early unity of mind seems to be present in NL: mind *is* consciousness or thought and *has* feelings. These feelings (sensations with an emotional element, are the same as the psychical level of experience in PA) are intimately connected with consciousness. In this respect NL is quite close to SM.

Why the changes occur in Collingwood's theory of the unity of mind is an enticing subject. Collingwood in the 1928 lectures includes only the conscious activities of the mind in the subject matter of history, but he is not very clear as to what these activities are. The same lectures introduce the doctrine of re-enactment as an important element towards Collingwood's attempts to elaborate a theory of history and historical understanding. In IH re-enactment is also present and what is excluded from history's subject matter becomes clear. I maintain that the doctrine of re-enactment has been cardinal in effecting the novel appreciation of mind's unity. The scholarship on Collingwood's philosophy of mind has given appropriate consideration to the unity of mind. In addition to that my interpretation recognises the break of mind's unity, due to re-enactment, as an aberration in Collingwood's philosophy. I also maintain that the unity of mind underwent different stages where gradually the element of sensation became body and not mind.

## § 2. The First Phase: The Early Unity of Mind

Early on in his writing life, in RP, Collingwood spoke of the relationship between the various elements of which, traditionally, the mind is thought to consist; the elements or functions of thought, of feeling/emotion and of will. He found the relationship to be one of unity, where the three functions always interact and each one necessitates the other two. Thus in the case of the emotions, for instance, we are told that "emotion is not a totally separate function of the mind, independent of thinking and willing; it includes both these at once. If I feel pleasure, that is will in that it involves an appetition<sup>3</sup> towards the pleasant thing; and it is also knowledge of the pleasant thing and of my own state. There is no emotion which does not entail the activity of the other so-called faculties of the mind" (PR, p. 10).

This is not to say that only emotions entail the other two aspects. The unity is extended to the other two faculties as well, so we can have a will which is at the same time a thinking and an emotional activity and a thought where the emotional and the conational

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<sup>3</sup> This is the word that Collingwood uses.

element is present.<sup>4</sup> And Collingwood concludes that “[t]he life of the mind is whole, without seam, woven from the top throughout; the only sense in which we can separate one attribute from the others is that we may abstract it, that is, have a false theory that is separate; we can never actually employ one faculty alone” (RP, p. 154). This is the earliest manifestation of what I perceive to be Collingwood’s first phase of his theory of mind. It is the phase where the unity of the mind is proclaimed unequivocally.

A similar argument was put forward in 1923<sup>5</sup> where Collingwood, arguing against various aspects of contemporary theories of knowledge, maintained that “the activities of sensation and thought always go hand in hand”<sup>6</sup> and “are not two distinct cognitive activities each with a specific object of its own –whether separable or inseparable activities– but correlative aspects of a single activity with a single object: and that this object cannot either really or ideally be divided into a *sensum* and (if I may use the word) an *intellectum*”.<sup>7</sup> And Collingwood after having demonstrated the impossibility of having purely sensuous or purely intellectual knowledge and the unsatisfactory attempts at “patching up... the quarrel between sensationalism and intellectualism”<sup>8</sup>, concluded “not only that all knowledge is both sensation and thought at once, but that even ideally these elements can never be distinguished”.<sup>9</sup>

In the vein of the above positions, Collingwood in 1924 explored activity –that is mental life– as displaying three elements. He presented his position in his 1925 book OPA and in one manuscript written in 1924 and published recently<sup>10</sup> that represents a draft version of the book. Collingwood recognised that the three aspects of “all psychical life: cognition, conation, emotion (thought, will, feeling) ... are inseparable: any activity involves all three” (PE, p. 51). To recognise the three aspects within any activity is not the same as accepting these aspects as separate and he argued that there is an error “in the attempt to equate various activities with the three aspects of the mental life which are distinguished by analytic psychology: cognition, conation and emotion. This threefold distinction has a very real value, but it becomes a fantastic mythology if it is mistaken for a distinction between three activities which can exist separately, or of which one can predominate over the other, or of which one can undergo a modification without producing corresponding modification in the other” (OPA, p. 10). His analysis exemplifies what is the specific character of each aspect but also

<sup>4</sup> There is an instance of the special relationship between will and thought, RP, pp. 33-34.

<sup>5</sup> R.G. Collingwood. 1923. ‘Sensation and Thought’, in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 24 (1923-24), pp. 55-76.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> The manuscript can now be found in PE, pp. 49-80.

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how each aspect is connected to the other two in such a way as to make it impossible to be distinguished from them:

In every field of activity there is a theoretical element, in virtue of which the mind is aware of something; there is a practical element in virtue of which the mind is bringing about a change in itself and in its world; and there is an element of feeling, in virtue of which the mind's cognitions and actions are coloured with desire and aversion, pleasure and pain. In no case is any of these elements active without the others; they are correlative elements in every act and every experience, and make up a single indivisible whole. But the theoretical element is not always knowledge in the strict sense of the word; knowledge is the highest form of theoretical activity, not equivalent to that activity in general: and in the same way moral action, though the highest form of practical activity, is not found wherever practical activity is found. And each specific form of theory, practise or feeling involves corresponding forms of the other two elements, and cannot exist in the absence of these (OPA, p. 10).

Thus, through the inseparable character of the three aspects in any activity, Collingwood maintained that the mind must be seen as a unity.

Finally the same, I trust, is being asserted in SM<sup>11</sup> when Collingwood maintains that “the immediacy of perception does not exclude mediation, it is not abstract immediacy (sensation) but implicitly contains an element of mediation (thought). When we say that we perceive something, we mean thereby to assert that we are not thinking; but this assertion is an error, and the analysis of perception reveals inevitably the presence of thought” (SM, p. 204). Collingwood in SM refers to intuition as being sensation, the immediate element of experience. Thus intuition and thought “are not distinct activities but correlative aspects of experience itself ... are inseparable, being only the immediacy (actuality, positiveness) and mediation (reflection upon itself) of all experience” (SM, p. 95). Also that “[i]ntuition is the questioning, immediate side of experience: thought is the asserting, explanatory side” (SM, p.188). Experience “as such is not partly intuitive and partly conceptual, it is all intuitive and all conceptual” (SM, p. 95) and “the division of experience into intuition and thought ... is a fiction” (SM, p. 188). And summarising Collingwood asserts that:

Intuition and thought are not two separate activities which are somehow united in the body of human experience. Experience is an indivisible whole in which two sides can always be distinguished: an immediate, intuitive or questioning side, which is hypostatized by abstract psychology into the faculty of sensation, and a mediating, reflective, logical or assertive side, which is called thought. Thought is the one, sensation the many. What characterizes the intuitive or sensuous side of experience is just its manyness or perpetual

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<sup>11</sup> See also, R.G. Collingwood. 1926. ‘The Place of Art in Education’, in *Hibbert Journal*, 24, pp. 434-448 (Hereafter abbreviated as PAE), which can also be pertinent to the philosophy of mind since it explores the role of art in education, a role that Collingwood considers fundamental. Art here is imagination, “...a fundamental mode of mind’s activity...which by bringing language into existence reveals thought to itself” (p. 442). The connection between Collingwood’s conception of art in this article and in the OPA and SM is very strong.

difference from itself, flux, novelty or creation. What characterizes the logical or reflective side is its self-identity, permanence, unity (SM, p. 188).

In his discussion about art Collingwood says:

But if art is pure imagination, it is not therefore a purely immediate, instinctive and undifferentiated activity such as would be implied by placing its essence in feeling, emotion, or sensation. Art is a concrete activity; feeling and sensation are abstract elements which can be distinguished within any concrete activity by cannot form the whole or essence of any (SM, p. 63).

A concrete activity is the activity where different elements can be identified and distinguished but they are interrelated in such a way as to structure the unbroken whole of that activity. For the activity to be concrete we need not, and in fact we cannot, say that a certain element can alone be responsible for that activity. That is why the individual elements, in their individuality, are abstract elements: their function is their contribution to the whole; separately they serve, essentially, classification purposes.

The argument of mind's unity in SM is even more comprehensible if seen against the general idea of the book: Collingwood's dissatisfaction with the fragmentation of the mind and his effort to re-unite it. Collingwood considered that book to be his "Philosophy of the Spirit"<sup>12</sup> and his attempt was to elaborate the principle that all the activities or "forms of the spirit"<sup>13</sup> he identified (art, religion, science, history, philosophy) "must be identical".<sup>14</sup> He maintained that such principle "would serve to articulate without destroying the unity of the spirit".<sup>15</sup> The fragmentation of the mind, exemplified by the different and, taken in isolation (one distinct from the others), incomplete forms of experience, is like the attempt to recognise different elements within any mental activity: it becomes an abstraction.<sup>16</sup> The only meaningful and satisfactory way is to see the mind as a unity, experience as a concrete whole.

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<sup>12</sup> Letters to de Ruggiero, Bodleian Library, Collingwood Papers, dep. 27. This letter is dated 24. viii. 23, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> The fact that Collingwood regarded this fragmentation an abstraction, an arbitrary division, is further supported by his examination of five forms of experience (provinces), a choice only used as a working hypothesis since "[h]ow many such provinces there are we do not yet know ... the number of provinces may be augmented or decreased without affecting our fundamental questions" (SM, p. 39).

### § 3. The Second Phase: The Division of Mind's Unity

#### *a. History as the History of Thought: The 1928 Philosophy of History lectures*

During the middle of the 1920's Collingwood started lecturing on the special subject of the Philosophy of History. It was a subject that he continued teaching for several years.<sup>17</sup> Through meticulously writing his notes for those lectures, he developed more systematically his ideas on history. Some important principles first found expression in those notes.<sup>18</sup>

I would like to show now that the division of the mind was something that seems to have appeared during that period in Collingwood's writings and thought and more specifically in the 1928 philosophy of history lectures. However, although this idea might be conceived as the precursor of his famous 1936 lecture and notes where without ambiguity he excluded emotions from history's subject matter, the 1928 lectures present a more cryptic treatment of emotions and possibly there is space for their inclusion to what a historian can study. If this is correct then the significance that has been attached, in the form of criticism, to Collingwood's exclusion of emotions can be found to be excessive; the idea of emotions as something outside the historical scope might have only been a brief interlude that occurred in 1936. In the concluding section of the present chapter I will argue that the reason for this different appreciation was the introduction of the doctrine of re-enactment.

The subject of history as the history of thought appeared for the first time in the "Outlines of a Philosophy of History" a series of lectures presented to his students in Oxford in 1928, but never published during his lifetime. In those lectures thought is not only considered as a subject of history but as "the only thing of which there can be history" (IH, p. 444). History's subject matter, therefore, is limited to thought. But what kind of thought did Collingwood have in mind? Did he present, in this sense, a comprehensive theory of mind? Thought, Collingwood argued, is the only subject for history if thought is "understood in its widest sense" (IH, p. 444), if thought "includes all the conscious activities of the human spirit" (IH, p. 445). Only this kind of thought historians can tackle "with that intimacy without which history is not history" (IH, p. 444). If nature<sup>19</sup> sometimes appears to have a

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<sup>17</sup> A list of all the lectures given by Collingwood between 1914 and 1941 can be found in HS, pp. 433-434. On the philosophy of history he lectured in 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1936, 1937. The list doesn't mention the 1932 philosophy of history lectures but they are mentioned in HS, pp. 163-164.

<sup>18</sup> Information on the 1926-1928 lectures: introduction by van der Dussen in the revised edition of IH, pp. xlii-xlvi.

<sup>19</sup> Collingwood gives the following examples: the birth of solar systems, the origins of life on our planet and the early course of geological history, IH, p. 445.

history this is not quite accurate since in these examples “the historian can never really get inside<sup>20</sup> them, actualise them in his mind” (IH, p. 445).

Here, thus, we have the human spirit, which we are told consists of conscious and –by the logical antithesis– unconscious activities. This is substantially different to the theory of mind presented in OPA, where the mind consisted of thought, emotion and will. “Conscious and unconscious activities” is not only a different name for those three aspects. It is now also a different way to see human spirit. Thought understood in the widest sense, encompassing, that is, all the conscious activities of human spirit, is history’s only subject matter. The unconscious activities, whatever they might be, are not history’s subject matter. Conscious and unconscious activities can exist and can be studied independently, if we assume that a discipline that studies the unconscious activities exists. Spirit is not inseparable. It is possible to separate it on the principle of whether the activities are conscious or unconscious.

By 1928, then, Collingwood’s unity of mind as we have seen it in his earlier writings is no longer current. The new theory sees spirit (mind) as being divided into conscious and unconscious elements. It remains to examine a final point: do we have enough to approximately ascertain what these elements are and whether they correspond to the previous scheme of the three inseparable aspects of the mind (cognition, conation and emotion)?

Collingwood does not offer a conclusive description as to what those conscious activities of the human spirit are. The only indication of their character is that they allow the historian to get inside them and develop an intimacy with his subject, something impossible to develop in the study of nature. What this character entails, however, is not at all clear. The same applies to the unconscious activities: not only do we not know what they are but Collingwood doesn’t even mention the term “unconscious”. We are only allowed to infer that unconscious elements exist as the logical antithesis to the conscious ones. However we can be certain that conscious activities are something more than thinking or cognition, because thought in the widest sense cannot be just thought. It must be something more.

Given the various criticisms Collingwood has received on account of the exclusion of emotions from history’s subject matter –a thesis he was to make few years later, in 1936– it is an interesting point to see whether a similar position was implied in 1928. The scarcity of enough information to do so due to the laconic and cryptic wording of Collingwood is a fact. But Collingwood himself points towards a certain direction. Trying to imagine potential objections to the re-enactment theory he comes up with a consideration that poses a “more serious difficulty”. He says, for example, that the modern historian “is unable to share the emotional heat with which the characters of his narrative did the things narrated of them” (IH, pp. 446-447). Therefore, if we are to maintain that the historian re-enacts the past, we need to

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<sup>20</sup> The division between the inside and the outside of an event is a theme that Collingwood explored more fully in his later essays.

ask why the re-enactment doesn't involve the original emotional heat and to justify how, if "so important an element" (IH, p. 447) is absent, the re-enactment can be "the same thing over again and not a mere pale copy of it or something radically different" (IH, p. 447). Collingwood thus emphasises the importance of the emotional element and his answer to whether the re-enactment ignores or leaves out this element is that:

to re-enact the past in the present is to re-enact it in a context which gives it a new quality. This context is the negation of the past itself. Thus, the historian of poetry, reading Dante, re-enacts the medieval experience which that poem expresses: but while doing this he remains himself: he remains a modern man, not a medieval: and this means that the medievalism of Dante, while genuinely revived and re-experienced within his mind, is accompanied by a whole world of fundamentally non-medieval habits and ideas (IH, p. 447).

We have, therefore, the historian who by re-enacting the experience genuinely revives and re-experiences the whole experience adding something from his own world. I think there is plenty of scope to assume a legitimate place for emotions in the theory of history and the contention that conscious activities are "presumably encompassing human emotions"<sup>21</sup> is very reasonable.

Summarising then we can see that the 1928 lectures present some interesting insights into the development of Collingwood's theory of mind and the beginning of his theory of history as the re-enactment of past thought. In contrast with the unity of mind that Collingwood advocated previously, in 1928 he felt he had to divide the mind, or at least to identify elements that they could and could not belong to history's subject matter. Whether this was done at the expense of emotions is doubtful. Still a certain amount of puzzlement exists as to the exact character of the conscious and the unconscious activities, the areas that Collingwood divided the mind. Perhaps the fact that Collingwood only used those ideas as his teaching material is enough to tell that he felt it as something only partially complete: ideas in the making that he could further develop and elaborate by sharing them with his students. It is also tempting, and perhaps not a coincidence, to see the division of the mind and the theory of re-enactment somehow associated. Both occurred within the same context, for the first time in the 1928 lectures. It might be that Collingwood, trying to develop a theory of how the past can be known and establishing that re-enactment is the answer, felt that the former unity of mind cannot be sustained since the immediacy of certain elements of it would be difficult or impossible to be captured re-enactively. I will investigate this further in the last section of this chapter.

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<sup>21</sup> The editors' introduction, PH, p. xxxvi. Also W.H. Dray. 1997. 'Broadening the Historian's Subject-Matter in The Principles of History', in CS, vol. IV, pp. 2-33 (Hereafter abbreviated as BH), p. 8.



Before moving to IH it is worth mentioning the interesting case of the cosmology manuscript.<sup>22</sup> Written in 1933/4 it deals extensively with the philosophy of mind. In the cosmology ms Collingwood divided the mind into spirit and psyche, the latter being what psychology studies, consisting “not of an activity of clear thought and pure activity but of conations and ‘ideas’ which are subjective and, regarded as thought, mainly illusory ... [Psyche is] desire or even appetite – it is in substance a complex of emotions” (HS, p. 365). Thus it seems that Collingwood regarded thought and emotion as parts of different aspects of the mind. Interestingly enough, the same cosmology writings see emotions and thought closely related. Collingwood maintains that “[a]n emotion which we find by reflection to persist as part of the furniture of our mind is a thought, or contains thought. Emotion as such is not destroyed by reason; it is clarified, it comes to know itself, it rids itself of many strange errors; but it survives all these changes” (PH, p. 129-130). These two positions appear to be contradictory: emotions as part of psyche, an activity that is not clear thought, and emotions that contain thought and are clarified by it. Moreover, in the Moral Philosophy lectures of 1933<sup>23</sup>, Collingwood argues that the “forms of rational action have their emotional colourings. In a sense, each is a peculiar emotion or complex of emotions”. I believe the reason for this ambiguity is that Collingwood had yet to distinguish between feelings and emotions the way he did in PA. Therefore emotion as part of the psyche can be something equivalent to the psychical experience as exemplified in PA: sensation with the emotional charge; while rational emotion or emotion that is or contain thought is the equivalent of what we find in PA at the level of imagination or consciousness. Thus the mind in the cosmology writings, as in the 1928 lectures, cannot be seen as having the unity of the earlier writings of Collingwood, where even sensation was connected to thought. Still, in 1933, emotions are considered in two different ways, one of which has a close connection with thought. Thus the division of mind in 1928 and 1933/4 is different from Collingwood’s description of 1936. Strictly speaking it can be seen as a division between mind and body and not within the mind as such.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Bodleian Library, Collingwood Papers, dep. 18. The importance of the Cosmology ms has been mentioned (for instance HS, pp. 260, 262, 265).

<sup>23</sup> Bodleian Library, Collingwood Papers, dep. 8, p. 125. In the same lectures Collingwood advises the students to respect both their mind and their body: “respect not only your reason but your passions; not only your conscious mind but your unconscious mind; not only your mind but your body”, “The Rules of Life” (extract from the moral philosophy lectures of 1933, 127-130), in *Essays in political philosophy/R.G. Collingwood: edited with an introduction by David Boucher* (1989, Oxford Clarendon Press), pp. 171-174, p. 173.

<sup>24</sup> Collingwood in the cosmology ms also says that he cannot admit “the separation of intellection from other mind-functions” (HS, p. 262).

*b. The Idea of History: Mind as Psyche and Spirit*

The next phase of Collingwood's theory of mind appeared in the well-known passages of IH.<sup>25</sup> We have seen that chronologically this theory appeared in 1936, in one of Collingwood's published essays as well as in his Philosophy of History lectures of the same year. The different treatment of the mind becomes immediately apparent. Man in his striving to attain self-knowledge does not need to know his body and not even the parts of his mind (which aren't his knowing faculties), i.e. feeling, sensation, emotion.<sup>26</sup> Therefore when, according to Collingwood, the mind becomes the object of historical knowledge, only the activities of the mind expressive of thought are of interest to historians. Historians do not consider within their subject matter the non-historical impulses and appetites of man that constitute his animal nature.<sup>27</sup> In IH Collingwood had subscribed to the old division of spirit and psyche or soul. Both are constituents of the mind. But the spirit is responsible for the rational elements, while psyche contains "the irrational elements" (IH, p. 231). These belong not to history but they are the subject matter of psychology.<sup>28</sup>

The wording of Collingwood in 1936 is in accord with what he was saying in the 1928 philosophy of history lectures, only when it comes to see the mind as something that can be divided into elements that pertain or not to history's subject matter. However where in 1928 the division was between conscious and unconscious elements now, in 1936, the division occurs between rational and irrational elements. These are not synonymous or interchangeable terms. In fact he refers to the irrational elements as "the blind forces and activities in us which are part of human life as it consciously experiences itself, but are not parts of the historical process: sensations as distinct from thought, feelings as distinct from conceptions, appetite as distinct from will" (IH, p. 231). Also those blind forces constitute "the proximate environment in which our reason lives... the basis of our rational life, though no part of it" (IH, p. 231). Thus we cannot see the division of the mind into rational and irrational elements as a development or a different formulation of the division between conscious and unconscious elements and we cannot associate the rational to the conscious and the irrational to the unconscious. In 1936 both rational and irrational elements are part of the conscious experience of human life.

Again in the 1936 philosophy of history lectures Collingwood refers to thought as the proper purview of re-enactment, when thought is taken "in the widest sense of that word" (IH,

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<sup>25</sup> Epilegomena §1: Human Nature and Human History, pp. 205-231, Epilegomena §2: The Subject-matter of History, pp. 302-315.

<sup>26</sup> IH, p. 205.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 231.

p. 282). However the widest sense excludes a “merely immediate experience, a mere flow of consciousness consisting of sensations, feelings and the like” (IH, p. 302).

Thus if we assume that Collingwood held the same idea of consciousness in 1928 (i.e. that conscious elements involve emotions) this only strengthens the position that his theory of history only briefly excluded emotions from the realm of re-enactment.<sup>29</sup> In effect Collingwood’s philosophy of mind and the theory of history can be seen to be very compatible with the ideas of Mink, where a very broad definition of the term thought could be discerned in Collingwood’s writings from early on.<sup>30</sup> It is also compatible with van der Dussen’s position that, minor details and changes of emphasis aside, Collingwood’s thoughts on the philosophy of mind are consistent.<sup>31</sup> The main line of their argument is that Collingwood from the early 1920’s developed a philosophy of mind, where one important aspect is that he didn’t make any sharp distinctions between different aspects of the mind.<sup>32</sup> This is obvious by a careful reading of his various writings on the philosophy of mind but his writings are scattered and it’s not always easy to see the continuous nature of this idea. The consequence of the mind being united is that the term “thought” can be seen as having a broad meaning or definition and “does not exclude but includes emotions, desires, motives, attitudes, and acts of will –all those non-rational aspects of human life” (Historicism, p. 157).<sup>33</sup> Moreover Collingwood’s philosophy of mind informs other areas of his thought, such as his philosophy of history, but often in an indirect way. A clear example of this indirect way is found, according to Mink and van der Dussen, in IH and it is argued that “it is virtually impossible to arrive at an adequate interpretation of Collingwood’s idea of history from *The Idea of History* itself”(Dialectic, p.3).<sup>34</sup> For Mink Collingwood’s conception of thought in IH should be understood as a “recessive doctrine”<sup>35</sup>, which should be seen and interpreted within

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<sup>29</sup> It seems that the exclusion of emotions was abandoned more or less in the same year by the introduction of emotions as a historical element in the folklore manuscripts, where a much more sustained analysis of the role of emotions in human actions and life was presented. 1936 was also the year of the “Man Goes Mad” manuscript (now published in PE, pp. 305-335), a clear indication of the importance that Collingwood attached to emotions, for he considers them one of the three necessary dimensions of a real civilised condition (emotion gives vitality, intelligence gives complexity and memory gives continuity: PE, p. 329). This essay has been rightly seen (for instance HS, p. 268) in connection with Collingwood’s philosophy of mind.

<sup>30</sup> Mink interpreted Collingwood’s philosophy of history by paying close attention to the connection between the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of history and how the former is necessary in understanding and clearing misunderstandings about Collingwood’s historical theory. For the relevant sections see ft. 1 of this chapter.

<sup>31</sup> HS, p. 260.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>33</sup> Also Historicism, p. 165, Dialectic, pp. 12-13, HS, pp. 265, 266.

<sup>34</sup> Also HS, p. 259, Historicism, p. 157. Boucher in that respect stresses that “*The New Leviathan* is central and not marginal to our understanding of Collingwood’s philosophy in general, and to his philosophy of history in particular” (NL, p. xviii), while Mink maintains that “the main questions of *The Idea of History* belong to the philosophy of mind rather than to what is arbitrarily called the ‘philosophy of history’” (Historicism, p. 155).

<sup>35</sup> Historicism, p. 155.

the broader philosophy of mind that Collingwood held, i.e. as thought that does include emotions.<sup>36</sup>

The analysis by Mink and van der Dussen is very useful since it provides a clear account of the continuity and consistency of Collingwood's philosophy of mind. It is however very difficult to reconcile a total unity of mind throughout Collingwood's writings with the 1936 position, where he is so ambiguous about the role of emotions. The position of Mink and van der Dussen reads back into IH certain elements of the philosophy of mind that Collingwood only developed in a more clear way later on in PA and in NL. This interpretative view, as Boucher has pointed out, "is quite contrary to the view Collingwood wishes to present in *The Idea of History*" (NL, p. xxxiii)<sup>37</sup> and, I contend, it does not recognise IH as signifying a break, albeit short, with the previous concept of the mind that Collingwood held. It is not a matter of linguistic confusion, as Mink maintained, that Collingwood assimilated emotions to feelings and sensations. It seems that in IH he intentionally excluded emotions in his attempt to formulate his historical theory.

It is fair to say that exclusion of emotion doesn't deserve the attention received so far; it has been based mainly on an isolated reading of IH. Thus the result is not only a restricted general picture but also a distorted one since IH signifies an odd departure from Collingwood's philosophy of mind. As part of Collingwood's theory of history the exclusion of emotion is of secondary importance, of use only to inform us about the vicissitudes of Collingwood's efforts in the formulation of his ideas.<sup>38</sup> A reading of Collingwood's views on the philosophy of mind throughout his published and unpublished material confidently shows that any strict division between thought and emotion, as Boucher has suggested, "is implicitly rejected in *The New Leviathan*, and everywhere else in Collingwood's writings for that matter" (NL, p. xxxiii).

It is true however that, as in 1928, the division of mind's faculties is a fact in 1936 too. Furthermore Collingwood is more assertive in indicating what is and what is not, part of

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<sup>36</sup> Mink says about Collingwood's wording that "in *The Idea of History* Collingwood had not yet given full expression to parts of his own theory of mind, and therefore in discussing the connection of thought and emotion he tended to slip into the confusions embedded in ordinary language and hence seems to assimilate emotion to sensation and feeling (as we often do) rather than recognising, as in his more developed theory of mental functions, the extent to which emotion dialectically links the levels of consciousness and appears, as sensation and feeling do not, in all the higher levels although it is rooted in the lowest" (Dialectic, p. 12). Mink also maintains that "Collingwood's view of the 'subject-matter of history' can be emended without important repercussions where his other views are concerned" (MHD, p. 165-166).

<sup>37</sup> Also that "the subject matter of history is conceived differently in *The Idea of History* and in *The New Leviathan*. This is because in the former Collingwood wishes to emphasize that thought and feeling are distinct and, for the purposes of historical enquiry, quite separate, whereas in the latter he emphasizes at every stage the overlapping character of thought and feeling" (SPT, p. 110). Also NL, p. xxxiii.

<sup>38</sup> In the next sections of this chapter this will become more categorical, with the attention that Collingwood gave to emotions in nearly all of his later writings.

history's subject matter. The mind has rational and irrational elements and the latter cannot be the historian's concern. To the irrational part of the human mind belong feelings, emotions, sensations and the like. These elements are excluded from history's subject matter.<sup>39</sup>

In this respect the division of mind's faculties has been unequivocally proclaimed. But where does this leave the quest for a satisfactory answer to the subject matter of history and the general theory of understanding? We should now proceed to the next phase of Collingwood's theory where a slightly different picture began to emerge, approximately the same time as the ideas presented in IH.

#### § 4. The Third Phase: The Later Unity of Mind

##### *a. The Folklore writings*<sup>40</sup>

The folklore or fairy tales writings contain very valuable ideas on several of the areas that Collingwood embarked upon. It is my purpose to deal with them extensively in chapter IV, where I will refer to details concerning the various topics they cover, their treatment by modern scholarship and their importance to Collingwood's general theory of history. For now I will restrict myself to the examination of their content with regard to Collingwood's theory of mind.

Collingwood wrote his ideas on fairy tales before PA and almost at the same time as the theory of the division of the mind presented in IH, where emotions were treated as something not belonging to the subject matter of history.<sup>41</sup> However the folklore writings demonstrate a different idea.

The essential effort of Collingwood in the folklore writings was to use fairy tales as historical evidence, because a "theme contained in such a story is a fragment of ancient custom or belief" (PE, p. 128). We know that something becomes historically known when the historian re-enacts the thought it expresses in his mind. Collingwood holds to a very similar principle here too when he contends that "All historical knowledge involves the recreation in the historian's mind of the past experience which he is trying to study" (PE, pp. 128-129). Collingwood wanted, therefore, to show how fairy tales, properly studied, could

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<sup>39</sup> Boucher argues that "The theory propounded in *The Idea of History* does not entirely exclude what might be called rational emotions, it simply ignores them", Boucher, D. 1997. 'The Significance of R.G. Collingwood's *Principles of History*', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 58, No 2, pp. 309-330 (Hereafter abbreviated as SPH), p. 323.

<sup>40</sup> All the relevant sections are included in PE, pp. 115-287. The importance of the folklore mss for the subject of emotions has been pointed out frequently, for instance: HS, pp. 187-191; SPT, p. 133; AHS, pp. 324-325; SPH, pp. 323-325.

<sup>41</sup> Collingwood however regarded emotions important as the environment and the basis of rationality.

yield knowledge. Now, in order to study and understand fairy tales the historian needs to understand magic because this is what, according to Collingwood, the themes of fairy tales, in their diversity, have in common: they operate in a world that is ruled by magic. In his analysis Collingwood shows that magic's "basis is emotional" and he believes that this "is true not of one type of magic only, but of all magic" (PE, p. 201). Magic for Collingwood is the emotional activity where we contemplate, express an emotion "in its relation to practical life, as a motive for acting in a particular manner" (PE, p. 228).

By describing the themes of fairy tales as an area deserving the attention of history and by recognising the emotional activity of magic as the common element of fairy tales, Collingwood clearly connects the issue of emotions and history's subject matter. This, after the theory of mind's unity in mid 1920's (and the suspected role emotions might have had within the "conscious activities" of the human mind in the 1928 lectures), is the first time we find emotions possessing a significant role in Collingwood's theory. It is a significant divergence from the ideas of IH about the irrationality of emotions and feelings. Now emotions are not seen as a peripheral element in history's subject matter, but as the driving force, the motive and the reason behind an important human activity, magic, which can be treated historically. Thus Collingwood has added a new dimension to the theory of mind and history's subject matter, a new dimension that is remarkably similar to his earlier views, where the mind was seen as a whole, as a unity. But is the strong unity of mind also the case in the folklore writings? Is it not true that Collingwood stresses the emotional character of magic at the expense of its intellectual, cognitive character? Are we, therefore, to say that magic, as a purely emotional activity, pertains to only one of mind's elements, which can be isolated and understood and regarded as the sole reason for this activity?<sup>42</sup>

In various places in PE Collingwood seems to be making a sharp distinction between intellect and emotions or feelings. For instance when he declares that the idea of magic can be found "not in the savage's intellect, but in his emotions" (PE, p. 196); or that magic is "an idea which arises spontaneously, without any theoretical or intellectual basis, from our emotional nature" (PE, p. 199); or that all of us have "a feeling –not an intellectual idea, but an emotional one– of an intimate connexion between ourselves and the things which we have made" (PE, p. 196). However these statements are much less categorical if seen next to other ideas of Collingwood's found in PE, where magic is also presented as an activity of thought. We are told, for example, that the historian studies fairy tales –and by implication magic– "by reconstructing in his mind the life *and thought* of the people who have left him this sample of their work" (PE, p. 128, my emphasis); or that the historian would find it impossible "to understand magic, superstition, and so on if he himself has no inner experience of these

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<sup>42</sup> See also the conclusions of chapter IV, where I have tried to show that this is not the case.

*thought-forms*. (...) Either these things are only phenomena outside him, in which case they must be to him for ever unintelligible; or they are a part of his own experience, and therefore not the peculiar *thought-form* of other people called savages but *thought-forms* of his own” (PE, pp. 193, my emphasis).

A too literal interpretation of Collingwood’s understanding of magic as only an emotional activity will give us a misleading idea on how Collingwood saw the unity of mind in his folklore writings. Unquestionably he emphasised the emotional element of magic. But this he did in his effort to define magic adequately, correcting what he argued were the mistakes of the previous over-intellectualised interpretations of the scientific anthropologist and psychologist. But magic cannot exclude thought. If fairy tales are to be used as historical evidence in order to yield historical knowledge then magic, as the common element of fairy tales, is an activity that necessarily includes thought too. Thus I maintain that the unity of mind was not compromised in the folklore writings.

*b. The Relationship between Thought and Emotions: The Case of The Principles of Art*

It might be said that what Collingwood hinted in the 1933 moral philosophy lectures (see footnote 27) and how he dealt with emotions in the folklore mss, were the precursors of a more detailed theory of mind articulated in PA and in NL.

The effort of Collingwood in PA to define art is almost synonymous with his effort to clarify the place of emotions in human experience. This is the second step in his effort to unite the mind or, for that reason, to widen the understanding of human actions. The first was when he attributed a significant role to emotions as reasons for action in the folklore manuscripts. There it was within the scope of his theory of history, since magic as an emotional activity is the main element of fairy tales and fairy tales can be used to provide us with historical knowledge. In PA the new perspective was to link emotion and art. Thus it is only logical that his theories of art and history must be seen as having a strong connection.

PA offers a very valuable exposition of the relationships between the thinking and the feeling activities of the mind. Collingwood described at some length, and under a novel perspective, the relation between feelings and emotions and offers a theory of mind that sees a close connection between thoughts and emotions.

Collingwood first contrasts the thinking and the feeling elements of the mind. These elements display specific characteristics and they are distinguished from one another.<sup>43</sup> However the definition of feeling is not the same as before. He points out the double meaning

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<sup>43</sup> PA, pp. 157-160.

of that word: feeling as sensation, the equivalent of the Latin *sentio*, and feeling as emotion.<sup>44</sup> Moreover sensation and emotion share an “intimate” relation, in the sense that they are combined and performed together as one experience.<sup>45</sup> This union is not random but occurs “according to a definite structural pattern” (PA, p. 161). Sensation is what occurs first and emotion follows, but Collingwood doesn’t see this as temporal or cause and effect relationship.<sup>46</sup> The outcome is to regard “a given emotion as the ‘emotional charge’ on the corresponding sensation” (PA, p. 162). This sensation Collingwood calls *sensum* and “every *sensum* has its own emotional charge” (PA, p. 162). This is a fine relation and in the ordinary life the exact correspondence between *sensa* and emotional charges is difficult to establish, not the least because modern people are more sensitive to their sensations than to their emotions.<sup>47</sup>

These feelings, the *sensa* with their emotional charge, have in PA the same character as the irrational elements in IH. They are independent of the thinking nature of man –although they are discovered by thought– and as an experience they are placed to a level lower than thinking.<sup>48</sup> Lower for Collingwood has not the sense of importance but of structure, it is the “foundation upon which the rational part of our nature is built (...) before the superstructure of thought was built upon it, and enabling that superstructure to function well by being itself in a healthy condition” (PA, pp. 163-164).<sup>49</sup> And as we have seen<sup>50</sup> these feelings, the psychical level as he calls it, are what Collingwood regards as the legitimate subject matter of psychology.

Finally Collingwood elaborated further and made another distinction, this time between feelings as sensuous-emotional experience and emotions as such:

This level [i.e. the psychical level] contains indeed a vast variety of emotions; but only those which are the emotional charges upon *sensa*. When thought comes into existence... it brings with it new orders of emotions: emotions that can arise only in a thinker, and only because he thinks in certain ways. These emotions we sometimes call feelings; but in this book I shall avoid so calling them, in order not to confuse them with the peculiar experiences we enjoy at the psychical level (PA, p. 164).

This refinement seems clearly to dissociate emotions from the previous irrational context. Collingwood proceeds in a careful way, which builds solidly upon the ideas

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<sup>44</sup> PA, p. 160.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 162. He argues that women, artists and children are more sensitive to their emotions.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>49</sup> In IH Collingwood said in the same vein that the irrational elements “are the basis of our rational life, though no part of it ... Our reason ... [b]y learning to know them, it finds out how it can help them to live in health, so that they can feed and support it” (IH, p. 231).

<sup>50</sup> See chapter I about psychology.



presented in the folklore mss. The position in PA is drastically different to the one advanced in IH. Now emotions don't belong to the basic appetites of man but are linked to thought. But what are exactly the "emotions that can arise only in a thinker" and what is their connection to thinking?

This is where Collingwood's theory of language appears, where language is conceived as the activity that expresses emotion and, with certain modifications, thought.<sup>51</sup> Collingwood's purpose is to show that "the expression of any given thought is effected through the expression of the emotion accompanying it" (PA, p. 225). It is not within my current scope to present all the intricacies of his theory of language and the various levels of experience.<sup>52</sup> For now<sup>53</sup> it will suffice to say that in PA Collingwood identified different levels of experience. These levels are structurally related and the new level (the level above) retains elements of the previous level (the level below), which modifies in order to form the individual character of that new level and effect the transition from the lower to the higher level (the terms lower, higher, above, below, have always structural connotation and they do not indicate degrees of significance). The lower level (the psychical level) contains the elements that Collingwood identified earlier as *sensa* with the emotional charges. The other levels, all of which are conscious, contain emotions of a progressively more advanced character. Thus, for example, at an initial level of consciousness we have the "emotions of consciousness", which "unlike the purely psychical emotions, admit expression in language: in a phrase, a controlled gesture or the like" (PA, p. 232) and these emotions are "the emotional charge not on a *sensum* but on a certain mode of consciousness" (PA, p. 232). Because of the structural character of the various levels –i.e. the fact that elements of the previous level remain at the next (with the necessary modification in order to be consolidated at that level)- the emotions of consciousness can have not only linguistic expression but psychical too, the latter being the element from the previous level of experience. Language, thus, appears at the young levels of the conscious experience where "it receives its original characteristics, which it never altogether loses, however much it is modified (...) in adapting itself to the requirements of the intellect" (PA, p. 225).

The progression from one level to the next and the corresponding modification of the emotions and their linguistic expression continues until the level of the intellect, the ultimate level. Summarizing this process Collingwood says:

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<sup>51</sup> Collingwood says that language is "an imaginative activity whose function is to express emotion. Intellectual language is the same thing intellectualized, or modified so as to express thought" (PA, p.225).

<sup>52</sup> PA, see mainly chapters X and XI. For a detailed analysis of these matters see the commentaries on Collingwood's philosophy of mind mentioned in footnotes 29 and 30.

<sup>53</sup> My following synopsis of Collingwood's theory comes mainly from chapter XI.

An emotion is always the emotional charge upon some activity. For every different kind of activity there is a different kind of emotion. For every different kind of emotion there is a different kind of expression. Taking first the broad distinction between sensation and thought, the emotional charges upon sense-experience, felt as they are at a purely psychical level, are psychically expressed by automatic reactions. The emotional charges upon thought-experiences are expressed by the controlled activity of language. Taking then the distinction within thought of consciousness and intellect, the emotions of consciousness are expressed by language in its primitive and original form; but intellect has emotions too, and these must have an appropriate expression, which must be language in its intellectualized form (PA, pp. 266-267).

The interconnection of the levels reminds us of the unity of mind in the early writings of Collingwood. Moreover the specific link between thought and emotion at the level of intellect now appears to be strong and Collingwood describes the connection in clear and unambiguous terms:

If it is once granted that intellectualized language does express emotion, and that this emotion is not a vague or generalized emotion, but the perfectly definite emotion proper to a perfectly definite act of thought, the consequence follows that in expressing the emotion the act of thought is expressed too. There is no need for two separate expressions, one of the thought and the other of the emotion accompanying it. There is only one expression. We may say if we like that a thought is expressed in words and that these same words also express the peculiar emotions proper to it; but these two things are not expressed in the same sense of that word. The expression of a thought in words is never a direct or immediate expression. It is mediated through the peculiar emotion which is the emotional charge on the thought (PA, p. 267).

c. *The Relationship between Thought and Emotions: The case of The Principles of History*

*The Principles of History*, written in the first months of 1939 during Collingwood's voyage to the Dutch East Indies, is an important text. Collingwood thought highly of it or at least of the intended outcome. He considered it as the pinnacle of his efforts in the philosophy of history.

The value that Collingwood attributed to it and the turbulent history of the manuscript itself (the idiosyncratic editorial decisions of T.M. Knox combined with the disappearance and the subsequent rediscovery of part of the ms) are sufficient reasons to exercise a definite attention to it.<sup>54</sup>

Moreover, the actual content itself put forward various ideas that Collingwood either explored and developed further or introduced for the first time. In many respects to the latter category belongs the treatment of emotions as an element related to thoughts and thus a part

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<sup>54</sup> The following treatments of the PH present valuable insights and the necessary historical background of the writings of the book:

D. Boucher. 1995. 'The *Principles of History* and the Cosmology Conclusions to the *Idea of Nature*', in CS, vol. II, pp. 140-174 (Hereafter abbreviated as Cosmology); W.J. van der Dussen. 1997. 'Collingwood's "Lost" Manuscript of *The Principles of History*', in *History and Theory*, vol. 36, pp. 32-62 (Hereafter abbreviated as LMS); SPH; BH; PH (Editors' Introduction), pp. xiii-lxxxvii.

of history's subject matter.<sup>55</sup> PH sharply contrasts with IH in the treatment of emotions. Boucher sums up the basic ideas and reasons behind Collingwood's modified theory of history by pointing out that although "in *The Idea of History* Collingwood distinguished between thoughts and feelings in an uncompromising way, suggesting that the latter were the context in which the former occur, he seems in *The Principles of History* ... consciously to be bringing his theory of history into line with the theory of mind and language articulated in *The Principles of Art*" (Cosmology, p. 158).<sup>56</sup> Moreover certain significant ideas in PA were based on the folklore ms and thus Boucher rightly observes that Collingwood in PH made clear "the implications of the importance he attached to emotions in his study of anthropology, which in many respects provides the foundation for the theory of mind formulated in *The Principles of Art*" (SPH, p. 323).

Collingwood presents his position in the, now, well-known example of the fortification officer. A historian, who studies a fort that has been built during a certain campaign, needs to know why the fortification officer built that particular fort. In order to do so the historian needs to understand "the nature of fortification in general, and of fortification at the time of that campaign in particular" (PH, p. 68). Collingwood then goes on to explain that:

Fortification in general is a protection against certain dangers; any particular type of fortification a protection against some particular variety of these dangers. And certainly the consciousness that one is providing protection against danger will be accompanied by certain emotions. If one is conscious that the protection is of a new and ingenious kind, these emotions will be complicated by others. These are emotions essentially related to the thought of the officer responsible for the fortification. And if we know what his thoughts were, we know what emotions of this essential kind he experienced (PH, p. 68).

To distinguish between essential and inessential emotion he adds:

But in the life of the officer, while the fortification was being planned and carried out, there were plenty of other emotions for which we have no evidence. ... (B)ut so long as these emotions are neither directly due to his building the fort, nor the cause of his building it in what a military engineer would consider a bad or inappropriate way, they have nothing to do with the fort and relatively to his action in building it are inessential emotions (PH, p. 68).

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<sup>55</sup> We have already seen that the relationship between thought and emotion was an idea that preoccupied Collingwood and he explored it before mainly in the folklore writings in PE and in PA. In PH, however, this relationship can be more clearly seen within the scope of history. In PE of course emotions can also be a part of history's subject matter but they seem to be independent of the intellectual processes.

<sup>56</sup> Boucher also maintains that PH shows "how integral *The Principles of Art* and *An Essay on Metaphysics* are to understanding Collingwood's later philosophy of history" (SPH, p. 310). Dray points out that PH should also be read along with A since "the two are practically simultaneous works on the same subject" (BH, p. 33, n. 80).

The same, for Collingwood, applies to other thoughts that might have been present in the officer's mind but they "affect his building of it [i.e. the fort] not at all, and therefore have no connexion with the history of that event" (PH, p. 68). The conclusion that follows from Collingwood's analysis is that history as the history of thought now "includes the history of emotions so far as these emotions are essentially related to the thoughts in question" (PH, p. 77). However other emotions and thoughts that "may happen to accompany" (PH, p. 77) the thoughts in question are excluded.

This is a clear exposition, with a particular reference to his theory of history, that Collingwood sees thought and emotions related, both constituting a legitimate subject matter for the historian. However his thesis is not without problems or at least ambiguity. I see two main questions. One has to do with the exact relationship between thoughts and emotions or, in Collingwood's terms, how emotions are essentially related to thoughts (and not just accompany them); the other has to do with whether emotions can be historically known the same way as thoughts. I will begin with the first question.

It has been argued by Boucher that essential emotions are the ones "necessarily bound up with the thoughts of the person who performs the action" (SPH, p. 325).<sup>57</sup> Thus in the case of the fortification officer the emotion that accompanied necessarily the thought or choice of building the fort was fear of a danger against which protection was needed.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand Dray sees fear as an emotion that Collingwood explicitly considers inessential<sup>59</sup> and wonders whether there are indeed any emotions that "can be considered essential in the specified sense, namely, that of being strictly inferable from actions which ... they

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<sup>57</sup> Boucher gives an example of essential and inessential emotions in the form of an historian whose historical interest in a poem will lead him to be "unconcerned with the inessential emotion of anger as the nib of the pen snaps half way through the second verse, but he is concerned with the essential emotions of love and desire expressed in the poet's characterization of the woman he adores" (SPH, p. 325). Similarly he provides an example from Collingwood's own account of his life that shows what emotions can be considered essential: "The details of his life which he gives relate directly to the thoughts he had at a particular time. In so far as emotion plays any part, it is those emotions directly related to his philosophical thought that are presented, and not those related to his personal life. We glimpse his emotional side, for example, when he talks of his frustration at not being able to understand Kant at an early age, his revulsion when gazing at the Albert Memorial, or his anger at contemporary political developments" (Cosmology, p. 160).

<sup>58</sup> SPH, p. 325.

<sup>59</sup> Collingwood in fact wrote that "We cannot say ... when we see how strong and elaborate the fortifications were, that he [i.e. the officer] must have been very frightened of the enemy; ... He may certainly have been frightened ... but as long as these emotions are neither directly due to his building the fort, nor the cause of his building it in what a military engineer would consider a bad or inappropriate way, they have nothing to do with the fort and relatively to his action in building it are inessential emotions" (PH, p. 68). Thus it can be said that Collingwood doesn't rule out fear altogether but only when it is not relevant to the building of the fort.

‘accompany’” (BH, p. 9).<sup>60</sup> He also seems to equate the terms essential and necessary for emotions that accompany an action or a thought.<sup>61</sup>

To assume that there are emotions necessarily connected with thoughts or actions is, I believe, problematic. To assume, that is, that a necessary emotion is the emotion that ought to be produced when a specific thought is formulated or when a specific action is taken. The same I think happens with thoughts: there are no thoughts that ought or should be expected to be present in a specific situation. At least not with the certainty that would make them causally probable or explainable. However there are thoughts and emotions that are pertinent in a given situation. I take pertinent to mean the following. Collingwood refers to the fact that the fortification officer’s *consciousness* of what he does, of his situation, is accompanied by certain emotions. These emotions pertain to consciousness; other emotions might exist but they are not pertinent if the officer himself was not aware of their existence at that specific time. The same applies to other thoughts: the officer might have had other thoughts but they are not pertinent since they were not fully conscious ones or, in other terms, they were not pertinent to what he was doing at the moment of the building of the fort. Thus those thoughts were at an undifferentiated state and didn’t leave any evidence of what they were about.

Now, as Collingwood claimed in PA, there is no need to assume that the act of attention to consciousness has two distinct objects, one being the thought and the other being the emotion. This is, I believe, what he implies by “essential”: essential refers not to the correspondence between a specific thought and a specific emotion<sup>62</sup> but to the *way* emotions and thoughts are connected, the *kind* of connection or unity they have. It is a reminder of the earlier formulations of Collingwood’s unity of mind where he used to call emotions and thoughts “correlative activities”, connected in such a way that cannot be distinguished. It is the idea of the mind as a unity that Collingwood wishes to emphasize and not to prescribe guidelines for a necessary connection between certain thoughts and certain emotions.

Therefore his phrase “if we know what his thoughts were, we know what emotions of this essential kind he experienced” appears to be much less cryptic. Collingwood was describing the process of the mind as a complex one, where different elements have a simultaneous presence but a conscious attention to certain of those elements is our awareness of a specific situation. Moreover in our awareness of that situation there is no real distinction between thoughts and emotions and no real basis to believe that we are able to discern one

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<sup>60</sup> Also PH, p. xxxvii: “it may well be doubted that there are any emotions which, in any strict sense, are essentially connected with acting in certain ways”.

<sup>61</sup> BH, p. 28, ft. 26; PH, p. xxxviii.

<sup>62</sup> And similarly the terms “accompany” and “related” do not entail particular combinations or absolute connections between certain thoughts and certain emotions. This seems to be impossible to ascertain and just gives the idea of a peculiar uniformity.

but not the other. The idea of knowing the thoughts but not the emotions seems, thus, an absurd one.

The point that Collingwood was trying to make was to insist on the very individual, the historical, character of an action and not to provide abstract generalisations. For him this individual character should involve the close connection between thoughts and emotions, not a connection between specific thoughts and specific emotions but between the generic concepts of the two. What emotion accompanies what thought cannot be decided in the abstract and in fact for Collingwood, I believe, such a question wouldn't arise. Thus it was not his inability or inattention to provide "a general analysis of the concepts"<sup>63</sup> that would suggest such a connection between thoughts and emotions. This cannot be done by this kind of analysis, since it presupposes what Collingwood's historical approach wishes to avoid: generalisations, uniformity, logical connections and so forth. The concrete, individual, historical action can, thus, be only understood through a meticulous, historical analysis of the situation.

This certainly doesn't solve the general problem of understanding something historically. However, in the hypothetical situation of the fortification officer, Collingwood does provide a framework within which historical understanding can be approached meaningfully. One of the parameters is to consider every utterance, action, event and so on as the product of a unified mind, where thoughts and emotions cannot be distinguished as individual elements. Another one is to consider an action as individually as possible. Towards this direction, I think, point Collingwood's various remarks. When, for instance, he says that the historian needs to understand not only the general nature of fortification but the fortification of the specific campaign;<sup>64</sup> that particular types of fortification provide protection against particular varieties of dangers;<sup>65</sup> that the consciousness of fortification as protection against dangers will have emotions that will be complicated by other emotions should the fortification is of a "new and ingenious kind".<sup>66</sup> Thus by degrees the general situations are broken down into smaller actions that need to be understood in that sense first, before they can take their place in the more general scheme: the building of the specific fort as a part of the specific campaign, which will be seen as a part of the specific war and so forth.

In that respect, therefore, with reference to the fortification officer example it is a real possibility to consider fear as one of the emotions that the officer had during the war campaign. However fear seems to be a more general emotion. It exists before the construction

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<sup>63</sup> Dray argues that Collingwood didn't show "by a general analysis of the concepts involved, that particular emotions are, say, logically or conceptually connected to corresponding types of action" (BH, p. 9). See also PH, p. xxxvii, where such analysis might be able to demonstrate "that certain emotions are necessarily connected with certain types of action".

<sup>64</sup> PH, p. 68.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

of the fort and might well continue to exist after the fort has been completed. Fear of the enemy is one of the general emotions, a general condition in a war.<sup>67</sup> But the activity as such of the building of the fort as protection against dangers, although it might fall within the general emotion of fear, still is a specific activity of a certain kind –a work of engineering– that has more specific emotions as well. What these emotions are I think we cannot infer without a real knowledge of the historical situation. The same with thoughts.

I have tried to show what I believe ‘essential’ means in the context of Collingwood’s example. This leads to our second question: can emotions be historically known the same way as thoughts? It seems now that if by essential Collingwood wanted to refer to the *kind* of connection between thoughts and emotions, it follows that emotions can be historically known the same way as thoughts. If it is impossible to distinguish between a thought and an emotion, what the historian faces in his studies is a whole that necessarily entails both elements. Now, according to Collingwood something is historically known if it can be re-enacted in the mind of the historian who studies it. Therefore the historian, who works along the principles of Collingwood’s theory, should be able to re-enact emotions as well as thoughts.<sup>68</sup> However any discussion about re-enactment is absent from PH, even though the doctrine was meant to be part of the book.<sup>69</sup> This is surprising and has raised various questions, even as to whether Collingwood himself in his late thought regarded re-enactment important for his theory of history.<sup>70</sup> Of course the reason why in PH he didn’t write about re-enactment is possibly a very simple one, like deciding “not to write about the subject without consulting his lectures on philosophy of history of 1936, which have a section on re-enactment” (LMS, p. 40).<sup>71</sup>

It has also been suggested that although there is no reference to re-enactment as such, the idea still survives in different expressions, such as reconstruction, or implied in the way

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<sup>67</sup> This general condition however might or might not be present in individuals. For example it needs to be absent for the notion of fearlessness during a war or a battle to be meaningful. Otherwise it would be an incomprehensible notion altogether. Moreover what makes this condition ‘general’ is rather an abstract psychological (or even statistical) element, not a historical one.

<sup>68</sup> The idea that emotions are re-enactable was suggested by Mink much earlier than the discovery of the PH manuscript and it was based on his dialectical interpretation of Collingwood’s philosophy. See *Dialectic*, p. 12-15; *Historicism*, p. 167; *MHD*, p. 164-167.

<sup>69</sup> See Collingwood’s *Scheme for a Book: ‘The Principles of History’* (PH, p. 245-246). Re-enactment was to be discussed in the 3rd Chapter of Book I: “Conception of *Re-enactment*, and contrast the *Dead Past* and *Completeness*”.

<sup>70</sup> For example van der Dussen argues that it is interesting to ask whether Collingwood himself thought of re-enactment “as paramount or perhaps as problematic, at least at this final stage of his thought, as it has appeared to most of his commentators” (LMS, p. 40).

<sup>71</sup> van der Dussen also argues that in general the reasons that PH was not finished are to be found “largely in certain fortuitous circumstances” (LMS, p. 36) and “certain accidental conditions” (LMS, p. 38) and not in Collingwood’s dissatisfaction with the content or the subject-matter of the book. For van der Dussen’s justification of this argument see mainly LMS, pp. 36-39.

Collingwood presents several of his examples in PH.<sup>72</sup> In short it seems not very likely for Collingwood to have abandoned re-enactment.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, with the assumption that re-enactment continued to play a role in Collingwood's theory of history and understanding, the re-enactive understanding of emotions becomes a very interesting topic. We have seen that if 'essential' refers to the intimate connection between thought and emotion, then when a thought is re-enacted the emotion is as well. However the re-enactment of emotion has been seen as more complicated than that. One problem, as van der Dussen puts it, is whether emotions can "be understood in the way Collingwood elsewhere says thoughts are to be understood. For the "mediacy" of thoughts, which for Collingwood is a condition of their being historically understood ... seems to be lacking in the case of emotions" (LMS, p. 51, n. 39).<sup>74</sup> However as it has been pointed out neither emotions nor thoughts can be re-experienced or re-enacted in their immediacy but in their mediacy.<sup>75</sup> Still more perplexing seems to be the intentional character of emotions. As Dray suggests in the case of emotions, as opposed to thoughts, the element of intention is missing since emotions are out of our control and cannot be felt on purpose.<sup>76</sup> On the other hand Boucher argues that Collingwood in the folk tales writings and in PA tried to show how the expression of emotions can be a controlled, deliberate and purposive activity and thus a criteriological human science and re-enactable.<sup>77</sup> The main difficulty with seeing emotions as non purposive and non intentional is, I believe, the following. If by intention and purpose we mean something like a process that begins *because* of our own will and continues to be under our absolute control, then even thought looks difficult to possess such qualities. The actual birth of any intellectual process is somehow contingent and random. It actually appears to be impossible even to locate the very point of birth of any given intellectual process, any given thought, emotion and the like. I think this idea is not unlike Montaigne's distrust of thoughts since they just occur to us. None the less after the appearance of any thought or emotion, however contingent their birth might be, there is little doubt that we are presented with something upon which we can exercise a certain control. We may not start to think or feel on purpose, but there is scope to accept that under certain conditions we harness our thoughts and emotions and deliberately direct them. Therefore I see no fundamental difference between thoughts and emotions as to their intentionality; and contrary to the suggestion that Collingwood didn't see emotions as reasons

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<sup>72</sup> SPH, p. 326; PH, pp. lxvi-lxvii; LMS, p. 50; BH, p. 24.

<sup>73</sup> PH, p. lxiv; SPH, p. 327; BH, p. 23-24.

<sup>74</sup> However van der Dussen at the same footnote stresses the fact that Collingwood in PA distinguished between feelings and emotions and related thoughts to emotions.

<sup>75</sup> Boucher maintains that the "aspect of Collingwood's theory that enables emotion to be experienced in its mediacy, that is, its ability to be revived in a different context, is the theory of imagination found in the *Principles of Art*" (SPH, p. 330). Mink used the term 'surrogate way' to describe how emotions that survive in consciousness can be re-enacted (Historicism, p. 14; MHD, p. 167).

<sup>76</sup> PH, p. lxvii; BH, p. 11-12, 13; Dray, pp. 130-131.

<sup>77</sup> SPH, pp. 324-325, 329-330.



or motives for action and didn't assign an explanatory role to them<sup>78</sup>, it seems that this is exactly how he saw them.

d. Feelings and Consciousness: The New Leviathan

The theory of mind expounded in NL is very similar to the one Collingwood described in PA. The connection between these two books in that respect has been pointed out and a parallel reading has been suggested<sup>79</sup> as a meaningful way to understand and put in a single context the intricacies of Collingwood's theory of mind.

The mind in NL is again seen as having levels that are structurally interrelated. Only that now, in contrast with PA, feelings do not form a level below the conscious ones but they belong to consciousness.

Consciousness or thought is what the mind is made of. Thus we are told that the "essential *constituent* of mind is consciousness or thought (practical and theoretical<sup>80</sup>) in its most rudimentary form. In addition, many minds have other constituents in the shape of various specialized forms of consciousness. Forms of consciousness are the only constituents, so far as I know, possessed by any mind" (NL, 4.18). For Collingwood man in his capacity as mind "is consciousness, practical and theoretical, both in its simplest form and also in specialized forms" (NL, 4.2).

In contrast feeling is not a constituent but "an *apanage* of mind" (NL, 4.19). Therefore a feeling being an apanage of mind is an apanage of consciousness. Man is not feeling but "has feeling, both in its simplest or purely sensuous-emotional form and also in specialized forms" (NL, 4.2).

The simple feeling is exactly the same as what Collingwood in PA described as *sensa* with their emotional charges. The same connection (structurally and not temporally or causally) appears to exist as well, where the sensation (*sensum*) takes precedence over the emotional charge. Thus in NL a feeling "consists of two things closely connected: first, a *sensuous* element such as a colour seen, a sound heard, an odour smelt; secondly, what I call the *emotional charge on this sensation*: the cheerfulness with which you hear the noise, the disgust with which you smell the odour" (NL, 4.1).

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<sup>78</sup> BH, p. 9-10; PH, p. xxxiii.

<sup>79</sup> For an exposition of a theory of mind by a parallel reading of PA and NL see mainly Mink's writings and Boucher's SPT.

<sup>80</sup> About this dual aspect of thought Collingwood says that: "Theoretical thought is, for example, thinking about the cold, or thinking about the difference between cold and hot, or thinking that yesterday was even colder than to-day" (NL, 1.64). "Practical thought is, for example, thinking whether to light a fire or thinking that you will go back to bed, or thinking: 'Why should I have the window open?' " (NL, 1.65). Also he asserts that "thought is primarily practical; and only in the second place theoretical" (NL, 1.66).

About the specialized forms of feeling Collingwood says that they “arise through the practical work of consciousness, which is always bringing into existence new types of feeling and then, reflecting on the situation its practical work has created, making it a new object to itself in its theoretical form” (NL, 4. 21).

The relation between thought (or consciousness) and feeling is thus very intimate. They are connected both at the simple forms of consciousness and at the more specialized or complex ones. In its simple form feeling is an apange of “simple consciousness, namely its proper object, what there is consciousness of” (NL, 4.19). Simple consciousness, when operating theoretically, “finds feeling in its simplest form” (NL, 4.22) and its only job is “to apprehend simple feeling” (NL, 4.24), that is, to have that simple feeling as object. In the same way any specialized form of consciousness, when operating theoretically, “finds feeling in a correspondingly specialized form” (NL, 4.22). Again any specialized form of consciousness has as object, apprehends, the corresponding specialized form of feeling.<sup>81</sup> Always the work of any form of consciousness is to apprehend the corresponding form of feeling and any form of feeling can only be apprehended by the corresponding form of consciousness.<sup>82</sup>

From this intimate relationship between feelings and thought (consciousness) it follows that all forms of consciousness have a close connection with emotions too. Since all forms of feelings are immediate objects to the corresponding forms of consciousness and “[e]very immediate object (...) carries one [an emotional charge]” (NL, 4.77), thus “any form of consciousness, however highly developed, it always has an immediate object, and the immediate object always carries an emotional charge” (NL, 4. 78).

The case of NL, the mind as a unity of feeling and consciousness (thought), consolidates the ideas that Collingwood in various degrees expounded in PE, PA and PH. However the argument of NL is unique in one respect. As it has been pointed out<sup>83</sup> in NL the psychical level of experience is within the province of the sciences of the mind since feelings, as an apange, belong to the mind. In PA Collingwood did distinguish between feelings and emotions. Feelings belong to the psychical level of experience, while emotions belong to higher levels of experience. Thus the distinction made was between psyche and spirit, predominantly a way to divide the mind as such. In NL Collingwood makes a distinction between body and mind, which is not the same as the distinction between spirit and psyche, not a division within the mind as such. In fact Collingwood appears to consider the psyche and the mind the same thing when he says in his discussion of the Greek word ψυχή that “‘Soul’ is our conventional translation for ψυχή; but the word ‘soul’ is obsolescent or obsolete

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<sup>81</sup> NL, 4.24.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> SPT, pp. 118-119.

in modern English, except in a few special contexts, and ‘mind’ has taken its place” (NL, p. 17, n. 1).

Now his distinction between body and mind is a distinction between something that is made of matter (i.e. body) and something that is not made of matter (i.e. mind).<sup>84</sup> For the purposes of his investigation of the mind “all inquiry into ‘body’ where ‘body’ means matter” (NL, 3.71) must be excluded. However Collingwood argues that there is an occasion “in which a discussion of man’s ‘body’ can be of value for an inquiry into his mind” (NL, 3.12). This is when the word ‘body’ has “a sense neither physical nor chemical nor physiological but *psychological*” (NL, 3.13), when “‘body’ means not matter but feeling” (NL, 3.72). And when body has this meaning it “is closely connected with our present inquiry, and we must not ignore it” (NL, 3.14).

This psychological sense Collingwood attaches to the phrases “‘*bodily appetite*’, ‘*bodily pleasure*, and ‘*bodily exertion*’” (NL, 3.2). Appetite, pleasure and exertion are general terms and can include cases where ‘bodily’ can and cannot apply. Thus the general term appetite can include hunger and curiosity but Collingwood contends that ‘bodily’ applies to hunger but not to curiosity<sup>85</sup> and this because “there is a characteristic group of feelings (sensations and emotions connected with them) whereby a man knows that he is hungry, and none by which he knows that he is curious” (NL, 3.34).<sup>86</sup> The same with pleasure, where “lying in a hot bath is called a bodily pleasure; the pleasure of reading Newton’s *Principia* is not” (NL, 3.4), the difference being “that in the case of the bath the pleasure is the pleasure of feeling in certain ways: the pleasure of warmth on the skin and so forth; in the case of the *Principia* the pleasure is the pleasure of thinking in certain ways” (NL, 3.42). And in the case of exertion Collingwood maintains that digging, as opposed to following a mathematical argument, is a *bodily exertion*.<sup>87</sup> Therefore in all three cases of appetite, pleasure and exertion the term *bodily* applies to them when they are connected with feelings.

One thing should be noted. When Collingwood says a) that the *bodily appetites*, pleasures and exertions are connected with feelings; b) that the appetite of curiosity, the pleasure of reading the *Principia* and the exertion of following a mathematical argument are not *bodily*; we should not assume that the non *bodily appetites*, pleasures and exertions are not connected with feelings. As we have seen consciousness and feelings in NL are always connected, both in their simple forms and in the more specialised forms.<sup>88</sup> Therefore even the

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<sup>84</sup> NL, 2.14.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 3.3.

<sup>86</sup> Collingwood gives the examples of “a ‘gnawing’ sensation at the stomach, a general organic sensation of weakness or lassitude, with an inability to see clearly and a tendency for things to go black, and an emotional feeling of gloom or depression” (NL, 3.32), as the group of feelings that are present in hunger but absent in curiosity.

<sup>87</sup> NL, 3.5-3.54.

<sup>88</sup> NL, 4.2-4.22.

non-bodily appetites, pleasures and exertions will be connected with feelings. I think, however, that Collingwood is in some way unclear at this point, since on one hand he differentiates between the physiological and the psychological sense of body (which is connected with feelings) and on the other hand he also seems to maintain a distinction between the psychological sense of body and the mind, where the mind is a combination of thoughts and feelings.

This ambiguity aside NL is closer to Collingwood's early philosophy of mind than any of his other later writings. Feelings in NL are connected to consciousness and are part of the mind. Since they are a combination of sensation and emotion, they remind us of Collingwood's writings of the 1920's where sensation was a necessary part of the mind and not distinguished from thought. Moreover the concept of the 'psychological sense of body' brings the elements of sensation closer to the human mind and at the same time creates an intimate connection between the sciences of the mind and psychology.

### § 5. Conclusions

In the previous sections I have attempted to show that the philosophy of mind Collingwood formulated in his various writings, had as one of its main tenets that the mind should be seen as a whole, which is not and cannot be divided and whose different activities can only be separated in the form of an abstraction. To abstract is, for Collingwood, the attempt to separate any activity from the concrete form of experience, the experience that is, whose activities interact and create an indivisible whole. Abstraction then becomes not a legitimate attempt to describe individual activities, but rather a meaningless game. In Collingwood's words it is a "false theory".<sup>89</sup> It is not, however, to be believed that the concrete experience is composed of an undefined single activity; different activities can be identified. But to identify different activities is not to deny that the mind is united, only to realise that these activities have a proper life only when they interact with each other; in their individuality they hardly possess more than a name.

This position of Collingwood's was particularly strong in his earlier philosophical production: RP, SM, and various essays from the 1920's. In those writings the unity of mind includes not only thoughts and emotions but also what comes under the name of feelings or sensations or, in the case of SM, intuition. For Collingwood perception is not, what he calls, an abstract immediacy (sensation) but implicitly includes mediation (thought). The mind being thus united can only be studied as a whole and for Collingwood this could be done by

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<sup>89</sup> RP, p. 154.

the philosophical sciences, such as ethics, logic and so on. The claim of psychology to study the mind was found by Collingwood erroneous. It was found erroneous not because Collingwood considered –as in his late writings– psychology incapable of studying the entire mind but only what can be termed feelings. In those early writings psychology was found ill-equipped to study the mind because it assumed the methods of natural sciences and treated the mind as something that is not, i.e. matter. The united mind is also found in all Collingwood's later books and essays of the mid 1930's and the early 1940's. In particular, as we have seen, PA and NL, if read together, construct a coherent philosophy of mind and the most extensive treatment of that subject; both works explain the mind in terms of a unity. One difference can be discerned though. In PA the psychological level of experience, which corresponds with the element of pure sensation, cannot be seen as part of the mind as such, but it forms the subject matter of psychology, the discipline that employs the methodology of the natural sciences. In NL, however, the psychological level is an integral part of the mind and should be studied not in a naturalistic but in a historical way.

However the unity of mind cannot be sustained during a brief interlude, the main manifestations of which are to be found in the famous passages of IH. Collingwood in IH divided the mind in spirit and psyche, the former being the subject-matter of history, the latter of psychology. This different view of the mind had a real value for psychology. It was because of this view –the distinction of different elements within the mind– that the psychology of feeling was recognised by Collingwood as a legitimate discipline. It was a recognition that would have been impossible with the previous strong unity of mind that Collingwood advocated in his earlier philosophy. This division of the mind in IH has also affinities with the 1928 philosophy of history lectures, where Collingwood introduced the distinction between conscious and unconscious activities of the mind, the conscious being the subject-matter of history. The similarity is that both in IH and the 1928 lectures the mind is seen as something that has no unity since different activities can be discerned and studied in different ways by different disciplines. However in IH psyche is not an unconscious activity but part of the conscious human life and the basis for the rational life although not a part of rationality.<sup>90</sup> Moreover it is unclear, in 1928, what the boundaries of the conscious and the unconscious activities are, and perhaps emotions are part of consciousness. It is very likely that this was a scheme that Collingwood hadn't fully worked out but only served him as a hypothesis to rethink the structure of the mind and to link it to his historical concerns. In the above writings we are, therefore, faced with a novel appreciation of the mind: in the 1928

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<sup>90</sup> IH, p. 231.

lectures more mildly and ambiguously, in IH more categorically.<sup>91</sup> Compared with the unity of mind strongly present elsewhere in Collingwood's work, IH and the 1928 lectures must, I think, be seen as an aberration which, albeit short-lived, has been vital in all the subsequent exegeses of Collingwood's philosophy. IH, in particular, has provided the material for criticising Collingwood's concept of history as unduly restricted and over rationalistic. What was then the reason for this aberration?

In contrast with any discussion in some other of his works, Collingwood's treatment of the mind in 1928 and in IH was directly related to the problem of history. It was within Collingwood's efforts to provide an answer to how historical knowledge is possible and how historical understanding can be attained. According to Collingwood himself, although he had been working on historical problems for some years, it was only in 1928 in the manuscript he wrote during his vacation at Le Martouret, near Die, that his ideas advanced considerably.<sup>92</sup> It was in 1928 that the concept that all history is the history of thought was formulated and the doctrine of re-enactment was introduced.<sup>93</sup> It appears, therefore, that the new conception of the mind coincides with the introduction of this historical perspective: what created this historical perspective also rendered the unity of mind obsolete.

Trying to define the possibility of historical knowledge through re-enactment, Collingwood paid close attention to the immediacy of the experience. This is what connects the unconscious elements of the 1928 lecture and the psyche in IH: both thought to be the elements of that are carried away by the flow of the immediate experience. Of course everything –thoughts, feelings, sensations– is carried away by the immediate experience. Thus in order for something to be re-enactable it needs to be able to revive itself in a different context, on a different time by a different –often– thinker. And to be able to do so by remaining the same, not just something similar. This led Collingwood in IH to make sharp distinctions between thought and sensation/feeling/emotions.<sup>94</sup> The latter is immediate experience and disappears forever with the flow of this experience. If we try to revive it through memory “at most there reappears something like it” (IH, p. 293). Thought is “both immediacy and mediation” (IH, p. 300) and thus it can be revived in a different context and it will be the same thought not one like it. I believe that the sharp distinction between thought and the rest of the elements of the experience is not satisfactory. It does not fully explain why

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<sup>91</sup> Boucher argues that Collingwood's position, as to the treatment of emotions and feelings, is the same in A as in IH (SPH, p. 322-323). This is even more surprising given that Collingwood was in the process of revising A at the same time he was composing PH.

<sup>92</sup> A, p. 107.

<sup>93</sup> It is not my intention to discuss re-enactment in detail. For some thorough and competent accounts of the doctrine see: Dray; M.H. Nielsen. 1981. 'Re-enactment and reconstruction in Collingwood's philosophy of history', in *History and Theory*, vol. 20, pp. 1-31; HS, mainly pp. 96-109, 312-324; H. Saari. 1984. *Re-enactment: a study in R.G. Collingwood's philosophy of history*.

<sup>94</sup> His argument can be found mainly in pp. 282-302 (§4. History as Re-enactment of Past Experience) and in some parts of the next section pp. 302-315 (§5. The Subject-matter of History).

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emotion and sensation cannot be revived in the same way as thought, since it is through thought that these elements of the immediate experience become known.<sup>95</sup>

Collingwood was soon to free his historical considerations from the restrictions found in IH. Instead of paying attention to –perhaps supposed– differences between thought and sensation/emotion, his later historical theory restores the unity of mind in the effort to attain historical knowledge. It is in a sense the appreciation that the problems that pertain to the understanding of thoughts are not less or less complicated than the ones that pertain to the understanding of emotions and feelings. The unity of mind is not the answer to the fundamental question of how historical knowledge is possible; it is the necessary form that such answers should have.

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<sup>95</sup> For instance: “In the immediate experience of sight, we see a colour; only by thinking can we know ourselves to be seeing it” (IH, pp. 294-295).

## **Chapter III: From Imagination to Knowledge – The problem of art and the problem of history**

### **§ 1. Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to look at Collingwood's philosophy of art.<sup>1</sup> My purpose for doing so is to see how his philosophy of art falls within the broader human understanding, a vital element in Collingwood's philosophy. His philosophy of art is not only an integral aspect of his philosophy of mind but it stands in close connection with history in the epistemology that Collingwood was formulating after SM. After history art is the most prominent element in Collingwood's philosophical system.

We have seen in chapter II how this broader understanding is facilitated by Collingwood's philosophy of mind, where thoughts and emotions are closely connected. In that respect Collingwood's aesthetics is a central element in his philosophy of mind since in PA the connection between thoughts and emotions was propounded in detail. Moreover the place of art in human experience and understanding is almost equal to that of history, since Collingwood considered art a form of knowledge, the knowledge of the individual. This is the significance of Collingwood's aesthetics: art is not a peripheral experience of man but a central element in the understanding of him and vital to civilisation. Collingwood's contribution to the field of aesthetics is his conviction that art is a form of knowledge and his effort to establish this character in his writings. My aim is to show that the epistemological status of art in Collingwood's philosophy was established by a process the origins of which can be found in his very early writings.

I maintain that Collingwood's early aesthetic references support the idea of art as the expression of emotion or feelings, hence art as knowledge. However the traditional view, that he begins with art as imagination and gradually moves to a mature and more developed theory of art as the expression of emotions, eclipses the early epistemological importance of art. Even in SM, where art as imagination has a prominent place, Collingwood's main preoccupation was to answer the question if art can provide genuine knowledge. In the mid 1920's Collingwood, undeniably, gave emphasis to art as imagination. But this, I believe, should be seen as an interval between his main attempts to see art as the expression of emotions and knowledge. In order to clarify these issues I propose to examine chronologically

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<sup>1</sup> Some criticisms of Collingwood's aesthetics revolve around the question whether art is a general term. It falls out my scope to investigate such avenues but a good starting point to explore this and other criticisms is T.J. Diffey. 1995. 'Aesthetics and Philosophical Method', in *PHC*, pp. 62-78.



his early philosophy of art –see how he regarded art in his various writings and the changes of emphasis– and then consider the reason for the changes.

Roughly this early period can be placed between the late 1910's and early 1930's, with most of his extended treatises on art coming from the mid 1920's. A problem with Collingwood's aesthetic writings – especially those in essay form – is that they are scattered in various journals or were left in inaccessible manuscript form. Even after his mss became available, a lot of his small essays on aesthetics among them remained unpublished.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps because of this accessibility factor or because of the tendency to regard the early philosophical attempts as provisional and modified by the later ideas of a thinker on the same subject, Collingwood's early aesthetic views have not, as a whole, received a lot of attention.<sup>3</sup> It might be true that the late work of some thinkers renders obsolete the earlier. This is not the case with Collingwood. The manner he approached any philosophical question was careful and slow. Long periods of gestation usually produced a final idea, the stages of which were not unsuccessful attempts to solve the problem, but vital elements to the formation of the final idea.<sup>4</sup> Thus Collingwood can be seen as frequently modifying and trying to better his theories, without completely abandoning earlier tenets for later ones. With reference to his philosophy of art, the importance of *The Principles of Art*, as his last word on the subject, cannot be fully understood outside a general appreciation of his aesthetics. In that respect his early writings are as important as the later.

I will begin by giving an account of Collingwood's early books on art and those of his essays where, even briefly, he touched upon ideas relevant to art. Some of those pieces are small, delivered as lectures or –although competent essays– remained unpublished in his

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<sup>2</sup> A collection of some of his published essays on art does exist and is a good place to start with Collingwood's early aesthetic writings: A. Donagan (ed.). 1964. *Essays in the Philosophy of Art by R.G. Collingwood*. Indiana UP.

The situation with regard to the unpublished mss has been largely amended with the publication of PE. This book contains many previously unpublished manuscript of Collingwood on issues of art, criticism, culture, anthropology and folktales and facilitates the understanding of the significance of such areas in the general philosophical-historical concern of his. With regard to art it contains a number of useful essays from his early period that will help to realise his aesthetics as an ongoing process.

<sup>3</sup> A critical approach of Collingwood's early philosophy of art or even a comparative approach between early and late stages of his aesthetics is very rare. There is for instance the essay by P. Jones. 1972. 'A Critical Outline of Collingwood's Philosophy of Art', in *Krausz*, pp. 42-67. However the early philosophy of art of Collingwood is solely represented by his two books, the *Speculum Mentis* and the *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art*. Although many of his ms essays were unavailable at the time, still published essays from the mid 1920's could have been used to provide a more thorough and perhaps unconventional idea of Collingwood's aesthetics. The same can be seen in the overview of Collingwood's theory of art by Mink in MHD, chapter 7, pp. 195-238.

<sup>4</sup> I believe this is in accord with Rubinoff's main tenet that in Collingwood's philosophy "there is no radical conversion; that on the contrary there is a strong continuity between the early and later writings" (Rubinoff, p. v). Rubinoff of course was trying to argue against the accusation of a strong scepticism in the later philosophy of Collingwood, that Knox initiated. Albeit the context might be somehow different the principal idea is the same: that Collingwood's philosophy should be seen as consistent without dramatic changes of his stance. In that respect a similarity can be discerned with Oakeshott's philosophy.

lifetime. I intend to discuss all these early essays, in as much as they do not usually receive extended coverage<sup>5</sup>, because they communicate nuances that otherwise would have been unobserved. Seen within his general output on the philosophy of art, they comprise an interesting phase or phases, small and occasionally isolated instances of ideas that they do not correspond to the traditional interpretation of Collingwood's philosophy of art. Thus, examining some of these essays, we realise that the idea of art as the expression of feelings or emotions can be found very early in Collingwood's thought, in fact preceding the doctrine of art as imagination. In addition, some other of his mid 1920's essays present a hybrid character between art as imagination and art as expression. All the essays taken together show that art as just imagination was a rather short lived idea, although imagination never ceased to play a vital role in Collingwood's philosophy of art. Alongside the essays I will also examine the more extended of Collingwood's early references to art, as found in *SM* and *OPA*. Both were formulated at about the same time, in the mid 1920's. *OPA* was published a year after *SM* and in effect it is the same theory that is presented in both books. Indeed the design of *OPA* was also made in the year of the publication of *SM*, in 1924. The remnants of that design can now be found in a manuscript that Collingwood used for his lectures. The theory of art as imagination is propounded in both books but in *SM* art is only one of various forms of experience and its treatment is somehow different from *OPA*. In *SM* Collingwood seeks more to answer the question whether art is knowledge than firmly establishing art as imagination. Lastly I will examine Collingwood's writings and reviews from the early 1930's that show the characteristics developed in the late 1920's, the status of art as expression and knowledge was consolidated.

After presenting Collingwood's early ideas on the philosophy of art it will be apparent that a linear development from imagination to the expression of emotions is not to be found. The early Collingwood tended to see art as the expression of emotions or feelings. Moreover in some of his writings imagination and thought (or expression) are treated together. In some writings art is considered solely as imagination or expression. The various phases and vicissitudes in addressing the problem of art was an ongoing concern. He did not proceed with bold steps and attempts for final solutions but rather with a careful attitude of small modifications, additions and corrections and not infrequently steps back to previous formulations to look at them afresh and to re-evaluate them.

The second part of this chapter will look for the reason for those vicissitudes, which resulted in the definition of art as the expression of emotions in *PA*. The epistemological

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<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the essays see *PE: Editors' Foreword and Note*, pp. xiii-xxi and *Editors' Introduction*, pp. xxiii-cxix. Taylor 1985 and Taylor 1988 also discuss a number of these essays and provide annotation. Taylor's bibliography was not entirely complete: James Connelly has provided additions and corrections to Taylor's listings (*CS*, vol. VIII, 2001, pp. 152-154; *CS*, vol. XII (no 1), 2006, p. 116; *CS*, vol. XIII (no 2), 2007, pp. 118-126).

character of art was an area that had received attention in the history of aesthetics and Collingwood attempted his own solution. That involved reconciliation between imagination and knowledge. The principal problem was that art as pure imagination falls short of providing adequate foundation for knowledge. Imagination was, for Collingwood, an activity that, albeit fundamental, comes before thought. It is a precursor of thought and in some cases it assists thought. It is a very important function and Collingwood never ceased to address that fact. None the less imagination as such cannot provide knowledge. And if art is to become a vital part of human expression and understanding, it needs to be something more than just imagination.

Collingwood's two main attempts to tackle this idea were SM and the PA. However there is also another element that it is worth considering: the essays where Collingwood contrasted art with history, the two areas to which he devoted the major part of his intellectual efforts. The essays are particularly important in that art is contrasted with what Collingwood regarded as the main way to acquire knowledge of the human mind. The significance of this point has been hinted by Louis Mink. In his construction or reconstruction of Collingwood's philosophy on the basis of a dialectic, he maintains that "while the *interior* stages of the dialectic of mind are subject to compression or expansion, the *terminal* stages represent stronger and more definite philosophical claims" (MHD, p. 195). Mink refers to his idea that the four levels of consciousness he identified in Collingwood's philosophy could conceivably be more but only if we add levels in between; we cannot go further than a certain point, the terminal, and this point for Mink are the stages of Art and History. Thus "the philosophy of art and the philosophy of history are accordingly both more important and more developed in Collingwood's thought than his views on religion and on science" (MHD, p. 195). Therefore the intention of Collingwood to contrast these two areas cannot but have a special gravity.<sup>6</sup> These essays, chronologically, fall within Collingwood's two main attempts, in SM and in PA, to solve the problem of art as both imagination and knowledge. Therefore I propose first to look at SM before the relationship between history and art will be explored. Then I will examine how he finally tackled the problem in PA.

The scholarly work that has been done on Collingwood's philosophy of art attends closely to the elements of imagination, language and expression; to the connection it has with his philosophy of mind; and to the difference between his discussion of art in SM and PA.<sup>7</sup> My contribution to the interpretation of Collingwood's aesthetics is the emphasis on the very

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<sup>6</sup> The philosophy of art and the philosophy of history that Collingwood expounded are connected in another way too, since the late versions of both theories recognise the significant role of emotions in the human condition. For a closer examination of this idea see chapter II.

<sup>7</sup> This is mainly the point that Mink makes in MHD. He sees the difference in terms of the "change in Collingwood's vocabulary from "spirit" to "consciousness" [which] was not merely a semantic substitution but a complex conceptual development" (MHD, p. 197).

early character of art as expression of emotions and feelings. Also an alternative explanation as to the differences between SM and PA, described in terms of an epistemological shift.

## § 2. Collingwood's writings on the Philosophy of Art from the 1910's

### a. Words and Tune<sup>8</sup>

In this short essay Collingwood attempted to formulate the connection between a poem or a piece of prose and the music these literary works are being set to. One of his main tenets is that for this transformation to be achieved “the composer must have a thorough and profound apprehension of the meaning of the words he is setting, and that he must somehow express this meaning in his music” (PE, p. 3). And Collingwood further on explains that “[w]e use the word ‘meaning’ in the widest possible sense, to include both grammatical and logical structure on the one hand and (what properly considered is perhaps hardly to be distinguished from these) emotional colouring or atmosphere” (PE, pp. 13-14). The details of how, in Collingwood's theory, the composer achieves this, need not concern us here. For now it will suffice to say that the aim of the composer is to express in musical language a meaning that has been initially manifested in a language composed of words and in doing so to express also the emotional element that this meaning carries within it. Of course the composer does not express something that is outside him, a meaning with which he is in a form of mystical communication. He expresses the meaning as filtered through his own experience and understanding; he expresses, that is, his own emotional element.

Art as expression of emotions is a position traditionally thought to be of a much later date and in many respects a development of his earlier theory, where he regarded art essentially as imagination. This, in my knowledge, is the very first example that Collingwood treats art as the expression of emotions.

### b. Ruskin's Philosophy<sup>9</sup>

Collingwood did not use this lecture to present his theories about art. Published in 1922 but initially delivered in 1919, is a very early example of his thought and perhaps a stage when he didn't have developed ideas about art himself. He is more concerned with presenting a mode

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<sup>8</sup> R.G. Collingwood. 1918. ‘Words and Tune’. (This was a short piece not published during Collingwood's life. Now it is collected in PE, pp. 3-17).

<sup>9</sup> R.G. Collingwood. 1922. *Ruskin's Philosophy*. An Address delivered at the Ruskin Centenary Conference, Coniston, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1919. Kendal.

of thinking which he calls historicism and it was that mode of thinking that, according to Collingwood, Ruskin's mind was congenial to. However the Ruskin lecture is important in that it is not in accord with the "art as imagination" position that is associated with the early aesthetic views of Collingwood. Here art is the expression of one's feelings<sup>10</sup>, the familiar theory of art that Collingwood was to present fully only in his 1938 book *The Principles of Art*. Although we do not get an extensive reference to what art is, the passage in question portrays clearly the idea of art as the expression of feelings:

Art is expression, and it cannot arise until men have something to express. When you feel so strongly about something –the joys or sorrows of your domestic or national life: the things you see round you: your religious beliefs, and so on– that you must at all costs express your feelings, then art is born (p. 34).

Like "Words and Tune", the Ruskin lecture shows that the very early ideas of Collingwood about art do not correspond with the familiar "art as imagination" tenet of few years later. It might, of course, be said that those early stages are no more than a sketch of what art might be; but they are the very early ones, different from the theory articulated in Collingwood's books of the mid 1920's and show affinities with his much later ideas about art; as such they have a very interesting value.

### § 3. Collingwood's writings on the Philosophy of Art from the 1920's

#### a. Jane Austen<sup>11</sup>

Collingwood had a fascination with Jane Austen. He delivered lectures on her literary output on several occasions and he thought highly of her competence as a writer. When compared with the most able of the classical prose writers such as Boccaccio, Cervantes, Fielding, Balzac, Dickens, Henry James, Dostoyevsky, Thomas Hardy and so forth, Austen is found to be "the greatest of them all" (PE, p. 21). Collingwood's lectures on Austen provide an analysis of her works, her character and her literary gifts but in so doing they do not deal with the issue of the nature of art as such. In the 1921 lecture we only get passing remarks that

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<sup>10</sup> At this stage Collingwood hadn't made a distinction between feelings and emotions. Therefore the expression of feelings can be taken to mean or to include expression of emotions too.

<sup>11</sup> There are two manuscripts containing Collingwood's lectures on the novelist Jane Austen. I will deal first with the early one of which we have a certain date of 1921. It can now be found in PE, pp. 21-33. For Collingwood and Jane Austen see P. Smallwood. 1997. 'From Illusion to Reality: R.G. Collingwood and the Fictional Art of Jane Austen', in CS, vol. IV, pp. 71-100. For Collingwood and literary criticism in general see P. Smallwood. 2001. "The True Creative Mind": R.G. Collingwood's Critical Humanism', in *British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 41, no 3, pp. 293-311.

could give us some idea about Collingwood's understanding of art but not something so concrete or developed as to call it philosophy of art. We are thus told that Austen's "imagination illuminates her characters" (PE, p. 25) and that she was a "writer in whom the working of the imagination was so direct and spontaneous" (PE, p. 28). And contrasted to the work of imagination we have "an unimaginative person" (PE, p. 25) that in the attempt to present a realistic view "records the misunderstood facts which he half-sees" (PE, pp. 25-26). This is inferior to Jane Austen, who wasn't content just to write down what she saw as the external behaviour of her friends and her family but was able "to see in their behaviour a whole world of subtle meanings and to make that world her home" (PE, p. 26).

The above comments do not constitute a philosophy of art but they do point in a direction that Collingwood was soon to follow in a methodical and extensive manner. They anticipate the more robust and lengthy exposition –substantially different from the views on art he held in the "Words and Tune" and in the Ruskin lecture– of art as imagination as found in his two books that I will discuss next.

### b. *Speculum Mentis*

In this book Collingwood discusses art at length, as one of the provinces of the mind, a form of concrete experience with claims to true knowledge. The other provinces he investigates are religion, science, history and philosophy, all of them with similar claims to yielding true knowledge of the world. This is only a starting point, an assumption, that Collingwood uses to proceed with his analysis, to show, that is, that these provinces are only abstractions: it is the symptom of the ills of the modern, post-medieval, life; the false idea that the mind is divided into different areas that independently can produce true knowledge. His main effort is to reunite the mind, to show how all these provinces are not autonomous and mutually exclusive but instead they constitute a whole and the efforts to artificially divide this whole produce grave consequences.

In SM Collingwood maintains that art is imagination, the activity where its object is not real or unreal:

The aesthetic experience cares nothing for the reality or unreality of its object. It is neither true nor false of set purpose: it simply ignores the distinction. (...) Its apparent assertions are not real assertions but the very suspension of assertion. (...) This non-assertive, non-logical attitude is imagination in the proper sense of the word. The word is sometimes used with the implication that the imagined object is necessarily unreal, but this implication is illegitimate; the correct implication is that in imagining an object we are indifferent to its reality or unreality (p. 60-61).

Imagination therefore is an activity quite different from other cognitive or thinking activities:

The artist does not judge or assert, he does not think or conceive, he simply imagines. (...) The artist never transcribes facts 'as they are'. He only, at most, transcribes them 'as he sees them' and whenever the artist says *see* he means *imagine* (p.61).

For Collingwood an artist's "apparent statements are not statements, for they state nothing; they are not expressions, for they express no thought. They do not express his imaginations, for they are his imaginations" (p. 63).

This is the first substantial comment of Collingwood on art. It is not a treatise on art as such, since art is considered here only as one of the spirit's provinces, in its claim to yield true knowledge and in its relation to the unity of the spirit. None-the-less it is a lengthy exposition and an important one of the idea of art as imagination and where all references to art as expression are absent. The few comments of the Jane Austen lecture aside, this is the first time that Collingwood places the essence of art in imagination.

### c. *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art*

This is Collingwood's first book exclusively devoted to art philosophically considered and examined. Still as in SM "art is only one of a number of activities; and to answer the question what art is can only mean placing it in its relation to our other activities" (OPA, p. 8). Collingwood mentions the other activities: religion, science, history, philosophy, the same as in SM, and he considers the spirit as a unity, where all the activities give only partial knowledge and their claim to be knowledge of the ultimate reality is erroneous. However the scope of the book is not to consider all activities equally and the comparative examination of all the activities takes a very small part of the book, the bulk of which deals specifically with art.

Art once more is imagination:

In art there are always a subject and an object, a contemplator and something contemplated. But the subject's activity, the object's nature, and the character of the relation between them have certain peculiarities which distinguish the case of art from other cases. What the subject does is to imagine: the object is an imaginary object, and the relation between them is that the individual or empirical act of imagining creates the object (OPA, p. 11).

And Collingwood further clarifies what is the character of an imaginary object:

An imaginary object ... is not an unreal object but an object about which we do not trouble to ask whether it is real or unreal. The imaginary is not the opposite of real, but the indifferent identity of the real and its opposite (OPA, p. 13).

And again:

art is not based upon a previous perception of real objects. We do not first ascertain what the object really is and then modify it to by allowing our imagination to play upon it. We first imagine; the attempt to ascertain what the object really is involves the attempt to criticise our own imagination, and hence assumes that we have already imagined (OPA, p. 16).

The attitude towards the object is what distinguishes thinking from imagining:

To imagine is to refrain from making a distinction which we make whenever we think: the distinction between reality and unreality, truth and falsehood. Therefore imagining is not a kind of thinking, nor is thinking a kind of imagining, for each negates the specific nature of the other (OPA, p. 13).

This book, although published in 1925, sprung from ideas that Collingwood explored in 1924. A version of these ideas was in lecture-notes<sup>12</sup> format and they substantially present the same argument of OPA. Regarding the object and the essence of art we are, thus, told that:

The object of art is an object which is not judged to exist. It is indifferent to art whether its object exists or not ... (and) the *not being judged to exist* is not an accident but the essence of the object of art. This object is essentially *imaginary*, and art, qua cognition, is imagination (p. 51-52).

And the same idea is present as to the difference between imagining and thinking:

Imagination does not mean fancying that which does not exist, for to do this is to be guided by the distinction between existence and non-existence, and that means that imagining would be only one kind of thinking. It means taking up a certain attitude to objects irrespectively of whether they exist or not. The imagined object may be real: but to imagine it is to pay no attention to the question whether it is real. Our thoughts are sometimes true and sometimes false: if then we take all the thoughts that come into our mind and consider them irrespectively of the distinction between true and false, we are imagining. Everything we imagine either *is so* or *is not so*: but to imagine it means refraining from asking which it is (p. 52).

SM, OPA and the lecture notes show Collingwood's position on art as imagination in its most developed form. They constitute the basis of regarding art as imagination to be Collingwood's initial aesthetic doctrine. I have tried to show that this is not an uncontested

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<sup>12</sup> These notes are now collected in PE, pp. 49-80. They were delivered in 1924 and formed the abbreviated version of notes that eventually lead to the writing of the OPA. See PE, p. 49, explanatory note.



thesis if we take into account his very early aesthetic ideas where art is closer linked to expression and imagination does not receive any mention. However art as imagination was a tenet that received more sustained and detailed attention and was the main idea in Collingwood's first book length treatment of the philosophy of art.

d. Plato's Philosophy of Art<sup>13</sup>

In this paper Collingwood argued that Plato had indeed a very serious philosophy of art and that his contribution to aesthetics had been significant. Arguing in that way Collingwood tried to challenge the orthodoxy in the platonic scholarship, the view, that is, that Plato launched an attack on art, at least in the passages found in the Republic, because he had misunderstood or misconceived the nature of art. Collingwood analysis intends to show that art for Plato has not as its aim the reduplication of perceptible objects as many of Plato's commentators thought it was the case; instead he maintains that Plato had a theory of art as imagination. We are told that for art, or for the aesthetic experience, the "right name is imagination, and that of its objects is phantasms or images ... sheer appearances apprehended and indeed created –if that can be said to be apprehended and created which does not exist at all, but only appears – by an activity resembling, if not identical with, dreaming" (p. 161). And again that art "is imagination, whose object is an image or phantasm, and whose emotional character derives from the fact that this phantasm is not the real but a symbol of the real" (p. 169).

By ascribing this theory of art as imagination to Plato, Collingwood is not only describing or elucidating an issue in the history of philosophy; he also agrees with that theory, which, as we have seen, was occupying an important position in his own writings at the time.

e. The Place of Art in Education

The role of art in education was a subject dear to Collingwood.<sup>14</sup> He advocated an early involvement of children with artistic education. This artistic education would primarily have the form of encouraging children to practise any type of art for themselves; not just to become acquainted with the history of art or with the works of the past, great masters. The reason why Collingwood thought necessary that such an artistic education ought to take place is that he considered art "an activity, one of those fundamental forms of mental activity...a mode of acting; a necessary mode, in so far as every mind that is a mind at all acts in this way" (PAE, p. 439). Now the "ordinary name for this mode of acting is 'imagination'" (PAE, p. 439-440)

<sup>13</sup> R.G. Collingwood. 1925. 'Plato's Philosophy of Art', in *Mind*, vol. XXXIV, no 134, pp. 154-172.

<sup>14</sup> Collingwood commented on the advantages of an artistic education in other of his writings too. See for instance the next two pieces: the essay *Art and the Machine* and the lecture *Aesthetic*.

and we are told that “[t]o be an artist is to create for oneself a world of imaginary objects whose function is to express to oneself one’s own mind” (PAE, p. 440).

In the mid 1920’s the view that art is imagination was a familiar position of Collingwood’s. But in this essay we see that the function of imagination is different; it is connected to the expression of the mind, a theme that he was only later to explore and the formulation is highly reminiscent of that of Collingwood’s later philosophy of art:

The art of literature... is the art of speaking one’s mind; and speaking one’s mind, whether to oneself or to another, is the same act as making up one’s mind. The thought that before utterance lies obscure and unrealised in the dark places of the soul, in ‘the chaos of preordination and the night of its forebeing,’ comes into living existence in the act of expressing it: a person who has not, somehow and in some kind of language, *said* what he means, does not yet *know* what he means, and strictly cannot be said to *have* a meaning. Thus the act of imagining, which is the act of uttering language, is not an embroidering of a pre-existent thought; it is the birth of thought itself (PAE, p. 440).

Imagination therefore is not the activity that does not make, or does not care to make, a distinction between the reality or unreality of its object but the “creative activity which by bringing language into existence reveals thought to itself” (p. 442). It is a stepping stone and not so much an activity that has its own manifestation as an end. Although it appears to have a life on its own, its function is eventually to help thought come into existence and this is obvious by what Collingwood says about the division of art:

all art falls into two great divisions: poetry and prose. (...) Poetry is pure imagination; prose is imagination as controlled by and consciously expressive of thought. (...) We begin by imagining, and in imagining we discover our thought – a thought that did not actually exist till discovered (PAE, p. 442).

Thus for instance the aim of the literary education would be to “enable the pupil to express his own thoughts clearly and intelligibly, and to understand the expressed thoughts of others” (PAE, p. 444) and the same for drawing, painting and modelling where the end is the production of a drawing “whose purpose is to express thought” (PAE, p. 444). This is not to deny the freedom of art and to assume that it has a utilitarian purpose, its function being only as a means to an end. Instead it is to see imagination as something that is linked to other processes of the mind, associated with the birth of language and the facilitation of thought. In that sense art begins as imagination and ends to be almost anything.

f. Art and the Machine<sup>15</sup>

In this essay Collingwood explores the place of art in a machine-orientated and dominated age, the consequences of art being mechanically reproduced, the debasement of taste and the value of art in life and in education. It is when he talks about education that we get a glimpse of what art is about, a description very close to his understanding of art as expressed in his essay on education in 1926.

Collingwood maintains that a child that has received training in the arts “will be able to do something better with its emotions than to stimulate them artificially. It will be able to express them, and so to understand the expressions of other people” (PE, 304).

Where in the 1926 education essay Collingwood, with almost the same wording, spoke about art as expression and understanding of thoughts, in this essay he talks about art as expression and understanding of emotions. This position has close affinities with his remarks in his very early essay “Words and Tune” and his lecture on Ruskin, where in both art was seen as expression of emotions or feelings. It is also identical with his 1930’s position where art is the expression of emotions.

g. Aesthetic

This lecture was part of a series of lectures that had as their focus the mind as seen in different ways from different academic disciplines. It was an able essay and a lucid exposition, with a great scope on many aesthetic issues. One review regarded it as the best contribution.<sup>16</sup> Collingwood presented the mind in connection with aesthetic. The mind in that respect is an imaginative activity. Collingwood defended imagination as a healthy activity, “an activity which instead of impeding the formation of knowledge actually advances it up and, in fact, constitutes its initial stage” (Aesthetic, p. 210-211). This was against the psychoanalytic

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<sup>15</sup> R.G. Collingwood. ‘Art and the Machine’. (Unpublished during his lifetime, now it can be found in PE, pp. 291-304). Taylor’s bibliography places it among the dated manuscripts and gives approximately 1926 as the year of composition (Taylor 1988, p. 55). Connelly gives a possible date of 1926, following perhaps the suggestion of Taylor (CS III, p. 194). The bibliography of van der Dussen mentions it as undated too (HS, p. 452). For arguments about a later date and more information about the dating of that essay see PE, p. 291, explanatory note. I believe a late date can be reasonably supported by internal elements of the essay, not the least because of the tenet of art as expression of emotions. I have, however, placed it after the 1926 education lecture and before the 1927 lecture at King’s College only for purposes of convenience since Taylor’s bibliography provides a date. In relation to art this essay is interesting regardless of an earlier or later date. The affinities between this essay, PAE and the KCL lecture of 1927 have been pointed out, for instance by Connelly in CS II, p. 183.

<sup>16</sup> In the reprinted version in CS 1996, p. 195, the quotation from the *Oxford Magazine*, 24/10/1929, a review by H.H. Price: “Mr R.G. Collingwood’s paper (Aesthetics) is undoubtedly the ablest piece of work in the book. We have never seen so clear and straightforward an exposition of what may roughly be called the Crocean view. He ends with the entertaining suggestion that Nature, like art, is created by the human imagination. And to our immense relief he never once uses the word ‘expression’”.

doctrines that tended to mistrust imagination and to regard it solely as pathology. Therefore art, the aesthetic experience, is imagination:

We all know that the work of the artist consists in using his imagination, and that the whole business of an artist is to be imaginative (Aesthetic, p. 205).

And as we have seen before imagination sees its object neither as real nor unreal:

[the] distinction between reality and unreality is a distinction which the aesthetic consciousness does not make... [and] to refrain from making that distinction is to imagine; and imagination may be defined as a kind of attitude towards objects in which we do not use the concepts of reality or unreality (Aesthetic, p. 206).

This position is identical to the one presented in SM and OPA. The date, however, that this lecture was delivered makes it rather interesting. It came only one year after PAE but in certain respects the central idea about art in both essays is substantially different. Imagination in PAE is neither an activity that is indifferent to the reality or unreality of its object, nor it is an activity that has no connection, as we were told in SM, with the expression of thought. Instead imagination facilitates, gives birth to thought through language and its function is to create a world that will help the person himself to express his own mind. The idea of imagination as a necessary conduit to expression of thought is only made explicit in PAE for the first time. In SM the idea is rejected altogether. However there is something to be said about the relation between imagination and thought in OPA. There Collingwood maintained that:

Thinking is making a distinction between truth and falsehood; but this presupposes a phase of consciousness in which this distinction is not made. That which we deny or think false must be first imagined, or there is nothing to deny: that which we assert or think true must first be imagined, or else we could not ask whether it was true without assuming that it was true. Hence the relation between imagination and thought is that thought presupposes imagination, but imagination does not presuppose thought (OPA, p. 14).

Imagination in that sense is linked to thought but in a different way. Here thought is provided by imagination with an object for reflection but there is no temporal aspect in that operation. That is, there wasn't an act of imagination first and then thinking comes and makes the distinction between truth and falsehood. If that had been the case then there wouldn't be any free activity of imagination but just a precursor of thought. Imagination would have been an error that would wait the advent of thinking to correct it. Instead both activities exist independent of each other at the same time and one (imagination) supplements the other (thinking) but not the other way around.

In PAE, on the other hand, imagination is still a free activity but in this case it is prior to thought. Imagination doesn't supplement thought, doesn't provide thought with any assistance. Imagination and thought do not exist independently, but imagination generates, creates thought, which comes into existence because imagination brings language into existence and the linguistic utterance is the expression of thought.

Given the above, the position in the 1927 lecture seems to be closer to the tenet found in SM, where thinking and imagining were two distinct and unconnected activities. It is a surprising position in that it restates a version of Collingwood's art as imagination theory at a period where he had begun to be preoccupied with art as a form of expression of the mind and not only imagination.

#### *h. Form and Content in Art*<sup>17</sup>

After the King's College lecture this is his next essay on art. Collingwood's aim was to reflect on artistic endeavours and their relation to their subject. Thus initially he distinguishes between the attitude of classical artists who care about the form of their work and the attitude of romantic artists who pay attention to the content. This distinction is later to be found problematic and all art is subsumed under a combination of both tendencies, classical and romantic.

In this essay art as imagination is nowhere to be found. Instead all the references are about art as expression:

The subject of a work of art... is something distinct from the work, something which the artist is generally said to describe or represent in the work; and in the case of romantic art, it is because the artist has been impressed by this other thing that he proceeds to express himself in the work of art (p. 337).

And further on when the two artistic tendencies are found to be complementary:

Good romantic art does succeed in expressing itself (...) A merely romantic artist would be a person whose inspiration was only expressed –if this can be called being expressed– in rantings and mouthings and meaningless gestures. It is the classical element in his art that keeps him out of that morass and makes him able to create something that really expresses him. Art may therefore be at once romantic and classical. In deriving inspiration from its subject, it may be romantic; in converting that inspiration into expressive form, it must be classical (p.340).

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<sup>17</sup> R.G. Collingwood. 1929. 'Form and Content in Art', in *Journal of Philosophical Studies*, vol. IV, pp. 332-345. The theme of the classical and the romantic art, form and content, has been explored elsewhere as well, e.g. Collingwood's contribution, 'The Showman's speech', in *The Fothergill Omnibus*, London: Eyre & Spottiswoode (1931), pp. xi-xvii. Reprinted in CS, 1995, vol. II, pp. 192-196.

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In elaborating that point Collingwood maintains that if art had a perfect form without content it would be a “perfectly expressive language with nothing to express” (p. 342). For Collingwood the attention to form and structure is not enough because art is not some kind of skill or an activity that we engage with and given the proper training and perseverance we become able to master it and perhaps excel in it. Art is predominantly our “attempt to express something, to give outward and visible form to the way in which we are impressed by the things we come across in the course of our experience” (p. 342). That the artistic expression has an outward and visible form, a manifestation beyond a personal and esoteric expression, was still an element in the way Collingwood understood and described art. Collingwood also presented a case of art as an autonomous and self-contained experience where the artistic expression is “in need of no explanation beyond itself” (p. 343).

Art is, therefore, expression. But what kind of expression? Collingwood refers, for instance, to Beethoven who managed “to express his thoughts in his music” (p. 337). But this is mainly what Beethoven himself thought about his music. Instead, what art expresses is once again feelings. Moreover at this stage Collingwood hadn't distinguished between feelings and emotions, thus the expression of feelings is also synonymous with the expression of emotions. Thus we are told, for example, that “Wordsworth writes a poem to express the excitement he feels” (p. 336), that when a scenery “looks forlorn and sombre, and you paint it to express that feeling” (p. 342) or that “A strong emotion may be the first step towards a poem” and the work of the artist is to “devise ways of expressing it” (p. 344).

In this essay Collingwood describes the process of expression in similar terms to PA. Feelings or emotions are not a very specific and defined subject that the artist puts in one form or another. They are not, that is, properly understood before their expression. Their expression is at the same time the formulation or the de-codification of those feelings. Before their expression feelings and emotions are “only obscure emotional perturbations, and do not take the shape of a “message,” a conviction to be imparted to others or brought clearly before himself [the artist]” (p. 345). Therefore it is only through the expression that feelings and emotions come into life, since the artist “until he has learnt to speak, he has nothing to say” (p. 345).

Art as expression of emotions or feelings receives in this essay a definite status. Apart from Collingwood's very early formulations, it is the first time that expression is mentioned without any reference to imagination. Furthermore certain elements that preoccupied Collingwood's philosophy of art are to be found in this essay, some to remain in later discussions, some to be modified. The object of art as something tangible will become something that exists only in the artist's mind, the distinction between emotions and feelings non-existent here will be of paramount importance later on, while expression as the process of clarifying feelings and emotions that before were almost unknown will remain constant.

#### § 4. Collingwood's writings on the Philosophy of Art from the 1930's

##### *a. Aesthetic Theory and Artistic Practise*<sup>18</sup>

This essay was on aesthetic theory and its relation to what artists do. Again this essay is not about the character of art as such. Early on Collingwood makes it clear that here he is concerned with finding out whether any theory about art can help artists to do their job better and improve other people's appreciation and understanding of art or whether the theory is of no consequence to the actual artistic endeavour. However Collingwood is not satisfied with exploring whether aesthetic theory is descriptive or normative and he shows why it is problematic to regard it either way. Instead he proposes a third alternative to how aesthetic theory and artistic practise are related. In doing so he ventures to use an historical example, the art of the middle part of the nineteenth century: naturalism. In describing the main features of naturalism he is, at the same time, expressing his dissatisfaction with the attitude of reverence towards nature that this form of art exhibits. Thus we get his own ideas about the nature of art. Whereas naturalism sees the copying of nature as the main task of all art, Collingwood maintains that, for instance, drawing is not the reproduction of shapes found in natural objects but "the construction of expressive and significant shapes" (PE, p. 92). Drawing means "setting down lines that are worth setting down because they are significant, or expressive, or beautiful" (PE, p. 106). And the same for literature, whose function is not to describe "an actual scene or event" but instead to describe "scenes or events in such a way as to give them a value in relation to a coherent whole with a formal and expressive character of its own" (PE, p. 92).

Art as expression is therefore the concept that Collingwood continues to use. Moreover the connection of expression with imagination hasn't been lost. Imagination, as in some of his previous essays, is the womb, the place where expression comes from. The importance of imagination to expression only becomes stronger as Collingwood's philosophy of art develops. In this essay the case of Thomas Hardy, who in his novels "conceived life as a drama whose actors are spiritual forces within the mind of man" (PE, p. 107) is characteristic and indicative of this connection:

The art of Hardy, like that of Cézanne, is an art that can no longer be described in terms of nature and the copying of nature. In order to describe it, we must appeal to the conception of the artist as constructing in his imagination an object whose purpose is to be significant or expressive, and which achieves that purpose just so far as it is genuinely constructed in the imagination – an intuition and therefore an expression (PE, p. 107).

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<sup>18</sup> R.G. Collingwood. 1931. 'Aesthetic Theory and Artistic Practise'. (It can now be found in PE, pp. 81-112).

b. Jane Austen<sup>19</sup>

This the second lecture on Jane Austen. We have already seen that Collingwood delivered in 1921 a lecture on the same topic. Examined together these two lectures provide a useful illustration of the aesthetic shift of Collingwood. They share substantial similarities but they diverge when it comes to the character of art. Collingwood's idea of art as imagination was present in the first lecture, while in the second lecture he talks about expression. He maintains, for instance, that under Jane Austen the novel "reaches maturity and discovers a structure adequate to express the novelist's entire experience of life" (PE, p. 36). He also makes the same point when he talks about Austen's precocity and the balance between content and form:

Many able writers begin writing late; but that is because they are driven into an art whose form does not come natural to them by something they want to express: the content takes precedence over the form and balance is never achieved (PE, p. 38).

One cannot but feel that the following process described by Collingwood anticipates his later and more detailed formulation of art as the expression of emotions and of the corruption of consciousness:

The problem in all her books is the problem of knowing one's own mind. Every one of her heroines is placed in a situation where a resolute and fearless facing of her own motives is demanded of her. The catastrophes are one and all caused by failure to distinguish one's real thoughts and desires from those which one idly supposes oneself to have; and the happy endings take place invariably by a moral crisis in which these illusions are swept away and the heroine is left face to face with her real self (PE, p. 47).

It is only through the genuine and conscious expression of one's own mind –which if it had been left unnoticed, the illusion (the corruption of consciousness) would have prevailed– that the "conversion of the soul, as Plato would call it, from illusion to reality" (PE, p. 47) takes place.

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<sup>19</sup> The second lecture that Collingwood delivered on Jane Austen can now to be found in PE, pp. 34–48. It is undated and for an idea about its estimated composition date see PE, p. 47, n. 23 and P. Smallwood. 1997. 'From Illusion to Reality: R.G. Collingwood and the Fictional Art of Jane Austen', in *CS*, vol. IV, p. 95, note 2.



### § 5. Some of Collingwood's reviews on aesthetics

Collingwood also expressed his ideas about the philosophy of art through his reviews<sup>20</sup> of works of aesthetics. I will here present four of his reviews. Two are from 1926, one from 1931 and one from 1932.

The review<sup>21</sup> was of a book about the romantic theory of poetry and the contrast of that theory with the aesthetic views of Croce<sup>22</sup> (the full title of the book is: *The Romantic Theory of Poetry: an examination in the light of Croce's Aesthetic*). As opposed to the romantics, Croce, Collingwood argues, had correctly identified the vital question in aesthetics, "What is art?", and proceeded to answer that "art is intuition which is at the same time expression" (p. 190). A satisfactory answer for Collingwood since it "takes up into itself everything in the romantic view that is worth preserving, and suffices to destroy the rest" (p. 190). That means that "intuition, or expression, is both matter and form: matter, in so far as there is something to express, form in so far as it gets itself expressed in an expressive way" (p. 191). The mistake of romanticism, according to Collingwood's analysis, was its preoccupation with only one aspect of art, "it sees the necessity of the matter but either does not see or actually denies the necessity of the form" (p. 191). Collingwood explored the theme of matter and form, of classical and romantic art elsewhere too.<sup>23</sup>

From the same year comes this review<sup>24</sup>, where Collingwood considering some aesthetic views of Samuel Alexander –a philosopher of whom he had a very high opinion– emphasises Alexander's notions of imagination and expression. Alexander's contention was that "there is no artistic experience without a 'physical embodiment' of itself in words, pigments and so forth" (p. 196); at the same time "this physical embodiment may only be imagined, and consistently assumes that an imagined sound (e.g.) is just as physical as one played on an actual trumpet" (p. 196). With this in mind Collingwood argues that Alexander

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<sup>20</sup> Some of Collingwood's reviews on the subject have been reprinted in 'A Selection of Collingwood's Writings in Aesthetics' (compiled and introduced by James Connelly), in *CS*, 1995, vol. II, pp. 182-212. This selection excludes other of his reviews on aesthetics on the ground that "did not possess sufficient merit or interest to warrant their reissue" (Connelly, *CS* 1995, p. 182). Having read those reviews I feel that the decision is justified.

<sup>21</sup> Review of E.R. Dodds, 'The Romantic Theory of Poetry', in *The Oxford Magazine*, May 27<sup>th</sup> 1926, pp. 494-495. Reprinted in *CS*, vol. II, 1995, pp. 189-192 (My references come from this reprint).

<sup>22</sup> The affinities between Croce's and Collingwood's philosophies of art have been discussed. See for instance J. Hospers. 1956. 'The Croce-Collingwood Theory of Art', in *Philosophy*, vol. XXXI, no 119, pp. 291-308; and the reply, A. Donagan. 1958. 'The Croce-Collingwood Theory of Art', in *Philosophy*, vol. XXXIII, pp. 162-167.

<sup>23</sup> See footnote 19.

<sup>24</sup> Review of Samuel Alexander, 'Art and the Material', in *The Oxford Magazine*, May 27<sup>th</sup> 1926, pp. 496-497. Reprinted in *CS*, vol. II, 1995, pp. 196-198 (My references come from this reprint).

is mistaken in maintaining that his thesis is different from Croce's, who takes the artistic experience to be mental and the physical embodiment to be only the communication aspect between the artist and the public. Mental in this sense means imaginative and according to Croce (and also Collingwood who defended the same thesis in his own writings) "artistic experience is the intuition of an object which may be imaginary, because intuition does not worry about the distinction between real and unreal" (p. 197). Therefore the thesis of Alexander and Croce (and Collingwood as well) is the same.

Regarding the artistic expression Alexander thought "it expresses a passionate excitement about the subject-matter" (p. 197). Collingwood says that Alexander's position "is certainly true as against the view he is criticising, which is that the artist first has an 'image' in his mind, and then writes to express it: he is right in maintaining that the work of art does not in this way pre-exist to its own expression" (p. 197).

Both the above reviews support a view of art as being imagination and expression simultaneously. They were written in 1926, the year that Collingwood also wrote the essay on art and education. In all those writings art is viewed as a relationship between imagination and expression.

From the early part of the 1930's comes a review<sup>25</sup> of a book of Ducasse who argued that the "function of art, relative to the artist, is to express feeling" (p. 204). In this context expression "means objectification or objective self-expression: that is, the creation of an object –whether a 'real' object or an 'imaginary' object, does not matter– capable of 'yielding back the feeling of which it was the attempted expression'" (p. 204). His theory had common elements with Croce's view of art as intuition and expression and Collingwood thinks that up to a point the theory that Ducasse has propounded is correct, that in "some sense it is true that art is objective self-expression" (p.205). However when it comes to the question what is the feeling that art expresses, Collingwood found Ducasse's theory to be emotionalistic, thus "the term feeling is harmless, even beneficial, when it is merely an algebraical symbol for 'that which is expressed'; but when it takes on a positive meaning of its own, the result is a theory of art whose emphasis lies wholly on emotion" (p. 205). The problem for Collingwood is that art and the appreciation of it, seen though the spectrum of emotions, becomes just a matter of the senses and thus "judgment is reduced to taste ... [and] criticism, except as a mere expression or personal and momentary predilection, vanishes; and the feeling of any given individual, at any given moment, about any given work of art, is an ultimate court from which there is no appeal" (p. 205).

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<sup>25</sup> Review of C.J. Ducasse, 'The Philosophy of Art', in *Philosophy*, vi, 1931 (July), pp. 383-386. Reprinted in *CS*, vol. II, 1995, pp. 204-207 (My references come from this reprint).

Likewise, the actual meaning of ‘expression’ is another point that Collingwood found Ducasse’s theory incorrect. For Ducasse expression is something different from the theory of Croce, who holds the view that “to express our feelings is to intuit them, to arrive at illumination concerning them” (p. 206). Collingwood’s objection with Ducasse’s formulation is that only the expression of feelings seems not to be enough to reveal us what are the feelings we have expressed because “it is not speech that illuminates our minds to themselves, it is subsequent reflexion on the things said” (p. 206). This for Collingwood is incorrect and “based on insufficient analysis of the relation between ‘having something to say’ and ‘knowing what it was that I had to say’” (p.206). Collingwood maintains that Ducasse is not clear and uncertain about two things. The first is whether “we begin by not knowing what it is we have to say” or whether “we begin by knowing it, but knowing it less clearly” (p. 206). The second is whether or not “we have feelings before we express them” (p. 206).

Through Collingwood’s criticism of Ducasse’s aesthetic theory we can see the importance of expression. For Collingwood expression is the ultimate aim: before expression there is nothing to be expressed, or as Croce would put it, “we do not know what we have to say before we say it” (p. 206), and after expression there is nothing to be further clarified by an extra function. Ducasse presented a theory of art where the essential elements are present but in matters of detail or clarification he was confused: he saw expression as only a temporal point in the process of the objectification of feeling and he allowed for other stages to exist before and after expression.

Lastly in his 1932 review<sup>26</sup> Collingwood is content to see the main tenets of Reid’s theory as being “in line with the classical tradition of aesthetic” (p. 209). The basic points of that theory are that “beauty is just *expressiveness*; that the aesthetic attitude is a *contemplative* attitude, and that what distinguishes it from other kinds of contemplation is its *imaginative* character” (p. 209).

However Collingwood recognises a problem with the idea of expressiveness. Thus when it is said that the “aesthetic object ‘expresses’ such things as joy, sorrow, excitement, power” (p. 209), the meaning is that these things “exist not in it, but in us” (p. 209). However “for the aesthetic experience, they appear to exist in the object” (p. 209) and the aesthetic theory is trying to explain this paradox by answering the question “how can the aesthetic object, which is *out there*, express feelings that are *in me*?” (p. 210) or in other words “how my feelings can get into the object” (p. 210). Collingwood thought that this way to treat the problem of art was endemic to aesthetic theories of his times that followed theories of knowledge which placed their emphasis on perception. Trying to answer the question in this

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<sup>26</sup> Review of L.A. Reid, ‘A Study in Aesthetics’, in *Philosophy*, vii, 1932 (July), pp. 335-337. Reprinted in *CS*, vol. II, 1995, pp. 208-212 (My references come from this reprint).

way is a mistake but there is “one condition on which the aesthetic experience ... is possible, namely, that the aesthetic object can be identified with *language*, i.e. with objects created by us for the purpose of expressing our feelings” (p. 210). That involves starting from different premises and asking a different question and this, Collingwood argues, is what Croce’s theory does which has “the merit of starting from the question, ‘How is aesthetic experience possible?’ and of answering that it is possible if every aesthetic object is somehow a kind of language, and the aesthetic experience in general more like talking than perceiving” (p. 210).

### § 6. Art as imagination and knowledge in *Speculum Mentis*

Mink points out that what Collingwood tried in SM, in relation to art, was to solve the problem or the paradox of art being imagination and knowledge (or expressive, in the sense of revealing the truth) at the same time.<sup>27</sup> This aim was also present in PA which should be seen as “his final answer to the same question which in *Speculum Mentis* was posed but not satisfactorily answered: how is it possible for art to be both imaginative and expressive?” (MHD, p. 198).

Art claims to be knowledge; it claims to be truth, “a truth identified indeed with beauty but not thereby ceasing to be truth” (SM, p. 39). And in that artists are unanimous, art is “the one and only key to the riddle of the universe, the sole true revelation of the mystery whose concealment is the perennial torture of the human intellect” (SM, pp. 39-40). Art, moreover, is not just a type of knowledge but knowledge in its entirety. As with the other forms of experience art is “claiming not only to give truth, but to give the absolute or ultimate truth concerning the nature of the universe, to reveal the secret of existence, and to tell us what the world really and fundamentally is” (SM, p. 41).

This is then what artists claim to be able to do or aim at achieving: the starting point of their quest is the certainty that art is knowledge, the only way to know things and they go about trying to achieve it. However as we have already seen<sup>28</sup> Collingwood in SM considered art as imagination and he observes that:

Art makes for itself two claims. First, that it is the activity of pure imagination; secondly, that it somehow reveals the truth concerning the ultimate nature of the real world. Now for pure imagination there is no real world; there is only the imaginary world (SM, p. 87).

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<sup>27</sup> MHD, p. 196.

<sup>28</sup> See §3, b of this chapter.

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Imagination as such is not concerned with the reality or unreality of its object. How then it is possible to accept the claim of art to provide knowledge of the real world when it is indifferent to it? Collingwood also maintains that it is of no use either to restate the second claim and say that art as imagination reveals the truth about the “ultimate nature of the *imaginary* world” (SM, p. 87), because this is superfluous and just reiterates the fact that art is imagination. It is in that respect that Collingwood mentions the idea of Croce who identified expression and intuition. He contends that Croce trying to solve the paradox of art as being at the same time “intuitive (pure imagination) and expressive (revelatory of truth)” (SM, p. 87) only managed to evade the problem by identifying the two:

Intuition and expression have not been reconciled. Expression has merely been reduced to intuition; in other words, expression in the true sense has been ignored (SM, p. 87).<sup>29</sup>

The problem therefore remains and art “destroys itself by its own inner contradiction, by defining itself as at once pure intuition and also expression, imagination and thought, significance without definable signification, the intuitive concept” (SM, p. 90).

How then is this paradox to be solved, if at all? In SM Collingwood considered the claim of each form of experience to exist independently and to provide knowledge and he proceeded to examine the validity of such a claim. From the outset<sup>30</sup> his opinion was clear: it was during the Renaissance that the idea of independent forms of experience took shape; it was an idea moreover that created problems. Before there was the medieval mind, the mind of unity, that provided security by recognising a very certain function for all forms of experience, which were living in a harmonious synthesis. But at the same time it kept them under a “comparatively low level of development” (SM, p. 29), not the least because of their interdependence. The Renaissance came with the message of maturity and freedom, meaning that these forms of experience, art, religion, philosophy and so forth, should become independent and autonomous. Indeed they liberated themselves by severing the ties between them, therefore becoming voices incomprehensible and even hostile to each other.

Collingwood observes the confusion among his contemporaries who follow or practise one or the other of these activities. They often fail to justify their existence and to support their function, let alone their claim that by what they do they provide the sole way to knowledge. Collingwood’s is categorical: independently, in isolation those provinces of

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<sup>29</sup> As we will see in the next section Collingwood’s view on Croce was to take a somehow different turn.

<sup>30</sup> Collingwood provides a historical peregrination of the unity and the fragmentation of the human spirit and refers to the modern consequences of such a process. This is mainly found in SM, pp. 15-38.

human experience cannot produce knowledge. Thus his effort was to reunite them and restore the self-knowing mind. He saw a way that they are related, a form of pattern characterised by the recurrence of the aesthetic, the religious and the intellectual activities. These activities have a hierarchy where one stage is transformed into something completely new. In that context Collingwood's own answer to the paradox of art was that there was indeed a contradiction in the claim of art to be imagination and knowledge at the same time, but:

This contradiction is not irreconcilable. On the contrary, its reconciliation is the whole life of thought. The very existence of the mind is a standing synthesis of intuition and conception, immediacy and mediation, the *that* and the *what*. But it is not at the level of art that the synthesis is effected (SM, p. 90).

Art begins as imagination but if it remains imagination then the claim to be knowledge cannot be fulfilled. When art is transformed into religion and religion into science and so forth, then the "synthesis of intuition and conception" can be accomplished. Such an explanation would not satisfy the artists, for it implies that art itself cannot achieve knowledge. For Collingwood art, as every other form of experience, cannot exist in isolation but ought to be a part of the whole, a part of the hierarchical unity of mind.

We could say, therefore, that Mink's position is not entirely correct. Collingwood in SM did occupy himself with the paradox of art being imagination and knowledge at the same time, but he didn't attempt to solve it by reconciling the two. He did not argue that art as such is knowledge. Art is imagination with a certain place within the life of the spirit and thought. Its contribution to the self-knowledge of the spirit is that it helps to the gradual realisation of thought. This is what Collingwood has said elsewhere<sup>31</sup> too: art by being imagination comes before thought, but it is because of that imaginative activity that the birth of thought at some point occurs.

## § 7. The connection of History with Art

We can now move to those writings of Collingwood where art and history are examined together. Collingwood early on explored the relationship between history and art. In one of his early essays<sup>32</sup> he asserts that the "historical consciousness in its ideal nature is the knowledge of the individual. That it aims at being knowledge differentiates it from art, which aims at being imagination" (Debbins, p. 45). Collingwood goes on to show that although

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<sup>31</sup> See for instance PAE.

<sup>32</sup> R.G. Collingwood. 1924/25. 'The Nature and Aims of a Philosophy of History', in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 25, pp. 157-174. (This essay has been collected in Debbins).

history and art are different they none the less have a common element; they both have as object not the universal but the individual. Thus the “object of art is the imaginary individual, whereas the object of history is the real individual” (Debbins, p. 45). In other words the fundamental difference, seen through their strong similarity, is that history being knowledge is the pursuit of truth as opposed to imagination which does not have this function:

All history is art, because to tell a story is art, whereas to tell a true story is history; thus history is art, but a specification of art, art qualified by a condition (truth) which deprives it of a part of its character but not of all (Debbins, p. 48).

Moreover the historian is not deprived of imaginative abilities:<sup>33</sup>

In one sense, the historian must not be imaginative: in another sense, imagination is his most necessary possession. This is not a mere ambiguity in the word imagination. The historian’s imagination is precisely the same thing as the novelist’s imagination; but whereas the artist imagines for the sake of imagining, the historian’s imagination is a disciplined imagination, subordinated to the pursuit of truth (Debbins, p. 48).

Here Collingwood was liberal in his use of the word thought. We have seen elsewhere in his writings on art (writings that chronologically come from the same period) that imagination and thought are completely different things, largely unrelated or that imagination has a connection with thought: it does help the birth of thought but it is not thought itself. Here, however, we are told that there are “various forms of thought (art, science, history, philosophy)” (Debbins, p. 48). We also know that art is imagination and that “historical thinking is a concrete thinking” (Debbins, p. 45). Therefore historical thinking and artistic imagination are both forms of thought. At the same time the historian can use his imagination which constitutes a very important weapon in his arsenal towards his effort to achieve knowledge and attain truth. Why, then, cannot artistic imagination constitute knowledge? Why cannot imagination as a form of thought do what history and science do when, as forms of thought<sup>34</sup> too, both aim at being knowledge? This might create confusion but it should be noted that in this essay, as in most of his writings of the mid 1920’s, Collingwood examined an area of human experience always in relation to other areas. Here history was considered alongside art, science and philosophy. These areas are forms of thought but they “are not species of a genus”<sup>35</sup> (Debbins, p. 48). Thus their characters often

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<sup>33</sup> Collingwood makes comparison between the imagination of an artist and the historian elsewhere too, as for instance in his 1935 essay *The Historical Imagination*, IH, pp. 231-249, especially p. 242. He regarded imagination for the historian not “ornamental but structural” (IH, p. 241).

<sup>34</sup> Collingwood says that “scientific thinking is an abstract thinking, historical thinking is a concrete thinking (Debbins, p. 45).

<sup>35</sup> Collingwood makes the same claim in SM, pp. 46-50. Whereas as species of a genus the five forms of experience “may be indifferently taken in any order” (SM, p. 50), Collingwood instead regarded them as having “a natural order of their own” (SM, p. 50): first comes art, then religion, then science, then history and finally philosophy.

overlap and contain similarities that change in relation to the context and the function that each one performs. For instance:

art and science are contained in history, not excluded from it: yet contained in a form transmuted by their subordination to the historical end. History, on the other hand, is not contained in this manner in art or science; the historical material of a novelist ceases to be history and becomes pure art by being imaginatively handled, and the historical material of a scientist –experiment and observation– ceases to be history by being torn from its context in the world of fact and regarded as so many mere instances of laws. No doubt the artist and scientist must in some sense be historians, just as the historian must in some sense be an artist and a scientist; but not in the same sense. The historian is suppressed in the artist and the scientist; the artist and scientist are preserved but subordinated in the historian (Debbins, pp. 48-49).

Thus the artist within the historian might use his imagination to achieve knowledge, that is to perform an extra function which is questioning whether the story he unravels or narrates is true. That is why the artist is “subordinated in the historian”, because unlike his pure artistic inclination he now has to go further and ask the question about truth. Similarly the artist is content when his story is just a story and the historian is “suppressed in the artist” because the artist is not going to take the extra step to ask whether his story is true. Both use imagination, which is a form of thought, but they directed it towards different aims and they use it in a different way. If all the above areas had been species of a genus they would have to have a similar direction and use their similarities in a more uniform way.

The important point is that although Collingwood makes a distinction between knowledge and imagination, imagination is a form of thought and not a faculty completely unrelated to thought or just the initial stage of it. Art can now be seen as a cognitive activity with an epistemological status not yet achieved but pending further clarification.

### **§ 8. The German tradition and Benedetto Croce**

Collingwood also presented his ideas on the relationship between art and history through his historical exploration and criticisms of philosophers and historians who were concerned with and contributed to the philosophy of history. In that respect of particular importance is his treatment of certain German thinkers and of the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce, who was influenced by some elements –especially that branch of idealism which attached importance to history as a form of knowledge– of German philosophy.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The relevant passages can be found in the IH, Part IV, § 2. Germany, pp. 165-183 and § 4. Italy, pp. 190-204. The latter, although titled ‘Italy’ is exclusively dedicated to Croce since although he “had behind him a certain amount of recent Italian philosophical thought” on the theory of history, this work “he absorbed into his own work so completely that for our purposes it may be passed over” (IH, p.



In his evaluation of Windelband's<sup>37</sup>, the German historian of philosophy, contribution to the philosophy of history, Collingwood asserts that Windelband trying to divide history and science, brought history closer to art but he did so in a not very systematic and conclusive way. History was seen not as a part of the theory of knowledge but rather belonging to the theory of value and thus:

history ends by being extruded from the sphere of knowledge altogether, and we are left with the conclusion that what the historian does with the individual is not to know or think it, but somehow to intuit its value; an activity on the whole akin to that of the artist. But, once more, the relation between history and art is not systematically thought out (IH, p. 168).

The connection between history and art was also attempted by Dilthey in 1883 and Simmel in 1892.<sup>38</sup> For the thought of the former Collingwood had a great admiration and he believed that the “best work done on the subject [i.e. philosophy of history] during this period [i.e. towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century] was that of the lonely and neglected genius Dilthey” (IH, p. 171). However in the end none of those attempts, despite the many interesting and important points they possessed and the advancement they gave to the subject of the philosophy of history, produced results that, to Collingwood's satisfaction, solved the problem.

Within this tradition Collingwood regarded the ideas of the Italian philosopher and historian Benedetto Croce. By the time Croce started occupying himself with the philosophical problems of a theory of history, he was in his late twenties. Up to then he had mainly been a literary critic, antiquarian scholar and archive historian and had already acquired reputation and distinction in those areas. He also had an interest in aesthetics but his philosophical efforts had not been systematic. From those areas of interest it came naturally to him “to connect the problem of history with the problem of art”.<sup>39</sup> This problem had occupied his mind for sometime and “after much hesitation and a whole series of provisional solutions during February or March 1893, after a whole day of intense thought” (CA, p. 53) he sketched his essay in one go in the same evening. The manner in which that essay was written is quite

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191). Collingwood has mentioned Croce's theory of history and its relation with art before, as Dussen points out. In the 1929 lectures on the philosophy of history “Collingwood's treatment of Croce closely corresponds with that in *The Idea of History*” (HS, p. 161). The same lectures also present the ideas of the four German thinkers, see HS, p. 161. Only parts of the 1929 lectures on the philosophy of history are left and they remain unpublished.

<sup>37</sup> Collingwood's analysis on Windelband can be found in IH, pp. 165-168.

<sup>38</sup> About the ideas of Simmel IH, pp. 170-171 and Dilthey IH, pp. 171-177. Collingwood also included Rickert IH, pp. 168-170 and says that “These four people between them started a vigorous movement in Germany for the study of the philosophy of history” (IH, p.175). One of the main principles of that ‘school’ was the distinction between history and natural science and through the idea of history as dealing with the individual they tried to connect the problem of history with the problem of art.

<sup>39</sup> B. Croce. 1927. *An Autobiography*. Oxford Clarendon Press (Translated from the Italian by R.G. Collingwood), p. 53 (Hereafter abbreviated as CA).

characteristic of the then young Croce. He produced his essay under the frenzy and inspiration of an artist, feeling “ease and heat... something close to my heart and coming straight from my heart” (CA, p. 54). The 1893 essay<sup>40</sup> of Croce on the nature of history, on the specific question whether history was a science or an art, was important in many respects and attracted the attention of Collingwood.

In another of his essays<sup>41</sup> Collingwood regarded the ideas of Croce as the only “really fertile suggestion” (p. 12) on the issue, current in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whether history was a science or an art. Collingwood expressed satisfaction in Croce’s idea, in the fact that he “realised that the business of the artist is to ‘see’ individual men, landscapes, tunes, and so forth (‘intuition’), and that the business of the historian is to ‘see’ individual historical events” (p. 12). Croce had in fact, in his first essay on that issue, identified the two: history and art were the same thing. The issue of complete identity poses of course some problems, but still, although Croce’s suggestion “did not solve the problem ... it brought matters to a head” (p. 12).

In IH Collingwood explored in greater length Croce’s position of history as art. He starts from Croce’s 1893 essay where art is “the intuitive vision of individuality” (IH, p. 191) and the connected fact that an artist “sees and represents this individuality” (IH, p. 191). Art, therefore, is not “an activity of the emotions, but a cognitive activity: it is knowledge of the individual” (IH, p. 191).<sup>42</sup> On the other hand Croce maintained that “history is altogether concerned with concrete individual facts” (IH, p. 191). As a result art and history are “precisely the same thing: the intuition and representation of the individual” (IH, p. 192).

This identity between history and art becomes of course absurd or paradoxical if the element of truth is completely ignored. Art is not concerned with truth, for all the artist does is “to state what he sees” (IH, p. 192). The historian apart from that he has to “assure himself that what he sees is the truth” (IH, p. 192). In Croce’s view this happens because “art ... represents or narrates the possible; history represents or narrates that which has really happened ... the real thus falls inside the sphere of the possible ... and thus history as narration of the real falls inside art as the narration of the possible” (IH, p. 192).

However the problem still exists because “art as such is pure intuition and does not contain thought; but in order to distinguish the real from the merely possible, one must think” (IH, p. 193). To call thus history intuition of the real is a contradiction since “intuition, just because it is intuition and not thought, knows nothing of any distinction between the real and

<sup>40</sup> B. Croce. 1893. *La Storia ridotta sotto il concetto generale dell’ Arte*. (Reprinted in *Primi Saggi*, Laterza, 1919).

<sup>41</sup> R.G. Collingwood. 1930. *The Philosophy of History*. Historical Association Leaflet No 79, pp 1-16 London. (It is reprinted in Debbins, pp. 121-139).

<sup>42</sup> It seems that Collingwood’s position as it was expressed in the “*Human Nature and Human History*” lecture of the same year, 1936, permeates the philosophy of history lectures too. Hence the acceptance of emotions as a non cognitive activity that does not constitute knowledge is not surprising.

the imaginary” (IH, p. 193). It took Croce some time to solve this problem. Even in his 1902 book on Aesthetic<sup>43</sup> he identifies history with art and Collingwood points out that when Croce had to answer “how history differs from the pure imagination of art, he answers it in the old way, by saying that it distinguishes as art does not between the real and the unreal” (IH p, 194).

In that book Croce suggested that knowledge has two forms: a) intuitive, aesthetic knowledge or expression, b) intellectual knowledge or concept. He denied that history (or historicity as he calls it) could be a third form of knowledge. He argues, instead, that “historicity is not form, but content: as form it is nothing but intuition or aesthetic fact” (Aesthetics, p. 26), i.e. identical with art. Therefore since, according to Croce, intuitive knowledge is Art, history “is included in the universal concept of Art” (Aesthetics, p. 27). Like art the domain of history is “the this and here, the individuum omnimode determinatum” (Aesthetics, p. 27)<sup>44</sup>, the individual is the common consideration of history and art. Croce, as he did in his 1893 essay, proceeds to identify differences between history and art. Art in this case is taken in the narrow sense, as opposed to the general concept of Art as being the intuitive form of knowledge. Croce argues that in the intuitive-aesthetic knowledge the spirit initially finds itself in a position where it cannot distinguish the real from the unreal and thus historical intuition from non-historical intuition. This distinction only occurs later on and then we have the concepts of “external and internal, of what has happened and what is desired, of object and subject” (Aesthetics, p. 28). Hence these concepts give form to the distinction between “historical and non-historical intuition, the real from the unreal, real imagination from pure imagination” (Aesthetics, p. 28).

The solution to the problem was given in 1909 in Croce’s book on Logic<sup>45</sup> where the doctrine of the individual or historical judgment was put forward and history was “no longer conceived as mere intuition of the individual; it does not simply apprehend the individual, in

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<sup>43</sup> B. Croce. *Estetica come scienza dell’ espressione e linguistica generale* (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1902, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. 1912. According to Brown the editions after the third are basically unchanged: M.E. Brown. 1963. ‘Croce’s Early Aesthetic: 1894-1912’, in *Journal of Aesthetic and Art Criticism*, XXII, pp. 29-41, endnote 23.) The second edition of the English translation is trustworthy and was made in 1922 by Collingwood although the name of Douglas Ainslie still appears as the translator: B. Croce. *Aesthetic as science of expression and general linguistic* (Henceforth abbreviated as Aesthetics).

<sup>44</sup> In contrast Collingwood had maintained that “historical thought is in one way like perception. (...) But what we perceive is always the this, the here, the now. (...) Historical thought is of something which can never be a this, because it is never a here and now. Its objects are events which have finished happening, and conditions no longer in existence. Only when they are no longer perceptible do they become objects of historical thought” (IH, p. 233). Thus Collingwood would disagree that the *domain* of history is “the this and here”. However there is scope to see history as “the this and here” if we, perhaps, refer to history as the thing that happens in the mind of the historian and in that respect Croce’s dictum that “all history is contemporary history” can acquire its temporal dimension in the present. See R.G. Collingwood. 1921. ‘Croce’s Philosophy of History’, in *The Hibbert Journal* XIX, pp. 263-278. Reprinted in Debbins, pp. 3-22.

<sup>45</sup> B. Croce. 1909. *Logica come scienza del concetto puro*. English translation by Douglas Ainslie in 1917: B. Croce, *Logic as the science of the pure concept*. London: Macmillan.

which case it would be art; it judges the individual” (IH, p. 196). Thus the 1893 essay was “the seed which in opening and developing would lead ... after many years of research and rethinking to conceive the judgement of the individual, i.e., historical judgement, the ultimate and unique form of thought”.<sup>46</sup>

The importance that Collingwood attached to Croce’s theory helps to shed light on what he perceived himself as the function and nature of history and art at that time. Collingwood’s essays on Croce come from the 1930’s. The notion of history as having a strong epistemological status is becoming stronger and stronger. But is art following the same direction? I think in certain respects it does. The 1930’s were a period that art for Collingwood was no longer imagination. Also siding with Croce in denying that art was an emotional activity but instead a cognitive one, Collingwood seems to be looking for a more substantial place for art within the human experience. His position, as we have seen, in 1936, regarding the various elements of the human mind, was that emotions, feelings, sensations, appetites and so forth, all are associated with the non-rational mind; they don’t belong to the thinking mind. Art is intuition of the individual and although intuition is different to thinking –if thinking is taken to mean the activity that distinguishes the real from the imaginary– still art is dealing with the individual in certain ways and is thus knowledge of the individual. It is the kind of individual –the imaginary as opposed to the real– that distinguishes art from history. It seems that compared to the previous essay of Collingwood the situation has been turned in this direction: art as imagination was not knowledge but still was a form of thought. Now art as intuition is a cognitive activity, but still not thinking as such, since it doesn’t make a distinction between the real and the imaginary. However the intuitive grasp of the individual makes art knowledge.

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<sup>46</sup> B. Croce. 1996. ‘In Commemoration of an English Friend, a Companion in Thought and Faith’, in *CS*, vol. III, p. 179 (Translated from the Italian by L. Rubinoff and A. Franklin. The original commemoration: ‘In commemorazione di un amico inglese, compagno di pensiero e di fede’, was first published in 1946, *Quaderni della ‘Critica’*, vol. 2, pp. 60-63).

### § 9. Art as imagination and knowledge in *The Principles of Art*<sup>47</sup>

*The Principles of Art* was Collingwood's last and most wide-ranging piece of writing on art. Elsewhere expression and, in a lesser degree, imagination were treated as things already familiar that needed no in depth analysis and definition. But in PA a systematic effort was made to define these concepts as closely as possible. In fact the definition of the concepts, that in the end build Collingwood's theory of art, is the most painstaking and lengthy part of the book.

Collingwood first explored what art is not but often confused with<sup>48</sup>, and then goes on to maintain that art proper is expression and imagination.<sup>49</sup> This was done, in Book I, in a provisional way accepting, that is, a terminology about art that is close to what most people, tolerably competent in art matters, think when they talk about art. This preliminary examination concludes that:

By creating for ourselves an imaginary experience or activity, we express our emotions; and this is what we call art (PA, p. 151).

Still there are more things to be done since we don't know what imagination is, what emotion is and "what is the nature of the connexion between them, described by saying that imagination expresses emotion" (PA, p. 152).<sup>50</sup>

By an examination of the activities of feeling and thinking<sup>51</sup> Collingwood finds that there is something in between, "a special activity of mind ... and that this is what we generally call imagination, as distinct from sensation on the one hand and intellect on the other" (PA, p. 171). Collingwood maintains that imagination is very important and deserves more attention, it is the activity "without which, according to Aristotle, intellection is impossible" (PA, p. 171) and according to Kant it "forms the link between sensation and understanding" (PA, p. 171) and is "an indispensable function' for our knowledge of the world around us" (PA, p. 192).

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<sup>47</sup> The aim of this section is not to provide a complete exposition of Collingwood's theory of art, but only to examine how he attempted to solve the problem of the relation between imagination and knowledge. For competent expositions of Collingwood's late philosophy of art see: MHD, chapter 7, pp. 195-238; SPT, chapter 4, pp. 119-140; Donagan, chapter V, pp. 94-133. Also M. Oakeshott. 1938. 'Review of *The Principles of Art*', in *Cambridge Review*, June (reprinted in CS, 1997, vol. IV, pp. 189-192); R. Wollheim. 1972. 'On an Alleged Inconsistency in Collingwood's Aesthetic', in *Krausz*, pp. 68-78; A. Ridley. 1998. *R.G. Collingwood: A Philosophy of Art*. London: Orion Books (a review of this book by J. Dilworth. 1999, in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 57, no 3, pp. 390-392).

<sup>48</sup> See PA, pp. 15-104.

<sup>49</sup> For art as expression see PA, pp. 105-124; for art as imagination, PA, pp. 125-153.

<sup>50</sup> The subsequent discussion will be facilitated by an understanding of the levels of experience that Collingwood presented. I have given a synopsis of them in Chapter II, § 4, b.

<sup>51</sup> See PA, pp. 157-171.

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Traditionally imagination was confused with sensation and this confusion was not entirely unjustified because sensation and imagination, although different, “are closely related” (PA, p. 202). However what actually happens is that the “activity of consciousness ... converts ... crude sensation into imagination” (PA, p. 215). Consciousness and imagination can be regarded in certain respects as synonymous; but the difference is that consciousness “effects the conversion” and imagination is “that which has undergone it” and thus it is “the new form which feeling takes when transformed by the activity of consciousness” (PA, p. 215). The relation between imagination and sensation is now clearer:

imagination is a distinct level of experience intermediate between sensation and intellect, the point at which the life of thought makes contact with the life of purely psychological experience (PA, p.215).

Moreover since sensation and intellect are not directly related, “it is not *sensa* as such that provide the data for intellect, it is *sensa* transformed into ideas of imagination by the work of consciousness” (PA, p. 215). *Sensa* is the common element between imagination and sensation. Thus:

From one point of view, imagination does not differ from sensation: what we imagine is the very same kinds of things (colours, &c.) which present themselves to us in mere sensation. From another point of view, it is very different through being ... tamed or domesticated (PA, p. 222-223).

By domestication Collingwood means that with the activity of imagination we have an awareness of those *sensa* and in some sense we exercise a control over them. As mere sensations our awareness of them is non-existent, they just force “themselves upon us unawares” (PA, p. 222).

This is how Collingwood described the activity of imagination. Still the relation between imagination and expression needs to be established. This is the role of language which “comes into existence with imagination, as a feature of experience at the conscious level. It is here that it receives its original characteristics, which it never altogether loses, however much it is modified ... in adapting itself to the requirements of the intellect” (PA, p. 225). Language is imaginative and expressive. At the level of imagination or consciousness is an “imaginative activity whose function is to express emotion. Intellectual language is the same thing intellectualized, or modified as to express thought” (PA, p. 225). Therefore art as

imagination and expression is language<sup>52</sup> and is generated at the level of imagination or consciousness.

The double function of language, however, creates some questions since:

In one sense language is wholly an activity of thought, and thought is all it can ever express; for the level of experience to which it belongs is that of awareness or consciousness or imagination, and this level has been shown to belong not to the realm of sensation or psychical experience, but to the level of thought. But if thought is taken in its narrower sense of intellect, language together with imaginative experience as such falls outside it and below it. Language in its original nature expresses not thought in this narrower sense, but only emotions (PA, p. 252).

The implication, then, is that, when language is modified and from imaginative becomes intellectual and expresses thought, this stage would be indifferent to art. However Collingwood argues that this not correct:

Even if art never expresses thought as such, but only emotion, the emotions it expresses are not only the emotions of a merely conscious experient, they include the emotions of a thinker; and consequently a theory of art must consider the question: how, if at all, must language be modified in order to bring the expression of these emotions within its scope? (PA, p. 252).

We have already seen how according to the different levels of experience and their structural relation, elements from the level below are retained at the level above and also modified in order to form the character of that level. Thus for the first level of consciousness or imagination the emotions of the previous psychical level are transformed and expressed through language. For the second level of consciousness, the intellect, language is modified as to express thought. However, since each level retains elements from the previous, the level of intellect contains emotions too. The linguistic expression of intellect's emotions and thoughts is, according to Collingwood, is one and not two acts: through the expression of emotion thought is expressed too.<sup>53</sup>

The problem then is how art –which as imagination belongs to consciousness, the level of experience below intellect– can express other than psychical emotions, i.e. the emotions found at the level below consciousness. Because “all other emotions are generated at levels of experience subsequent to the emergence of consciousness, and therefore (it might be thought) under the eyes of consciousness. They are born, it might seem, in the light of consciousness, with expressions ready-made for them at birth. There can, therefore, be no need to express them through works of art” (PA, p. 293). It appears that, according to the above line of thinking, “no work of art, if it is a genuine work of art, can contain in its

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<sup>52</sup> PA, p. 273.

<sup>53</sup> PA, p. 267.

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subject-matter anything that is due to the work of intellect” (PA, p. 293). This is however not entirely accurate:

Art as such might contain nothing that is due to intellect, and yet certain works of art might contain much that is due to intellect, not because they are works of art, but because they are works of a certain kind; that is, because they express emotions of a certain kind, namely, emotions that can arise only as the emotional charges upon intellectual activities (PA, p. 293).

Works of art therefore do not only contain and express the emotions that came from the psychical level but “may also include elements drawn from other levels, in which case these levels, too, will contain elements of which, until we find expression for them, we are not conscious” (PA, p. 293). And Collingwood continues:

If we examine almost any work of art we like to choose, and consider what emotions it expresses, we shall find that they include some, and those not the least important, which are intellectual emotions: emotions which can only be felt by an intellectual being, and are in fact felt because such a being uses his intellect in certain ways. They are the emotional charges not upon a merely psychical experience, nor upon experience at the level of mere consciousness, but upon intellectual experience or thought in the narrower sense of the word (PA, pp. 293-294).

And this, Collingwood believes, is inevitable:

For even if a certain emotion is, as I put it, endowed at birth with its own proper expression, this is only a way of saying that the work of expression has already been done in its case; and if done, done by the artistic consciousness. And every emotion is, if not born with the silver spoon of expression in its mouth, at least reborn in that state on the occasion of its second birth as idea, as distinct from impression. Since the emotional life of the conscious and intellectual levels of experience is far richer than that of the merely psychical level, therefore (...) it is only natural that the emotional subject-matter of works of art should be drawn mostly from emotions belonging to these higher levels (PA, p. 294).

Collingwood, in order to support his view that works of art do express intellectual emotions (which is the same as to say that they express thought, since the expression of emotions and thoughts at the level of the intellect is a single act), compares the poetic expression and the philosophical expression in an attempt to find in what their difference consists.<sup>54</sup> It cannot be founded on any distinction “between language expressing emotion and language expressing thought, for all language expresses emotion” (PA, p. 296) or on a distinction “between language in its original form, as expressing the emotions of consciousness, and intellectualized language, as expressing intellectual emotions” because the poet not only expresses intellectual emotions but “these are what he normally expresses” (PA,

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<sup>54</sup> Collingwood had also compared philosophy and poetry in his *An Essay on Philosophical Method* (1933, Oxford Clarendon Press), pp. 199-220.



p. 296). Other ways<sup>55</sup> to distinguish philosophy and poetry are also found problematic. In essence, Collingwood argues, the distinction between philosophical and poetical or artistic writing<sup>56</sup> is an illusion and “once it is realized that art and language are the same thing, this distinction vanishes” (PA, p. 298).

PA was Collingwood’s last effort to solve the problem of art being imagination and expression at the same time. Art, that is, being seen as imagination and knowledge. And Collingwood claims that art is indeed knowledge, because art is truth. It is to amend his previous position in OPA and SM and do “penance for youthful follies” (PA, p. 288, note 1) that he now says that art “is not indifferent to truth; it is essentially the pursuit of truth” (PA, p. 288). But the truth of art is of a peculiar kind:

the truth it pursues is not a truth of relation<sup>57</sup>, it is a truth of individual fact. The truths art discovers are those single and self-contained individualities which from the intellectual point of view become the ‘terms’ between which it is the business of intellect to establish or apprehend relations. Each of these individualities, as art discovers it, is a perfectly concrete individual, one from which nothing has yet been abstracted by the work of intellect. Each is an experience in which the distinction between what is due to myself and what is due to my world has not yet been made (PA, p. 288).

And therefore “Art is knowledge; knowledge of the individual” (PA, p. 289). Contrary to that Mink maintains that an element that must “be given up is Collingwood’s attempt ... to claim for art the status of knowledge” (MHD, p. 223), since “in the sense in which there can be second-level knowledge, we do not know our own emotions” (MHD, p.224). Mink refers to the idea that, because of the dialectic, at each level of experience we have can have, strictly speaking, knowledge of the level below, but not of the level we are. The lower level becomes object of the higher level and this is how we become to know it. Therefore at the level of imagination or consciousness an artist “becoming *conscious* of emotion by expressing it is not in any proper sense coming to *know* emotion” (MHD, p. 224). This would be attained by an act of a higher level of experience, in the case of PA, the intellect. I think this interpretation takes the idea of the dialectic a step too far.

In Collingwood’s view consciousness is a form of thought. What produces an artistic utterance “is an act of consciousness, and hence an act of thought” (PA, p. 287). In order for consciousness to be a form of thought it must have characteristics of thought. Truth is one of them, since thought is always the distinction, or the efforts to distinguish, between truth and

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<sup>55</sup> PA, pp. 296-297.

<sup>56</sup> For Collingwood the same “applies equally to historical and scientific writing” (PA, p. 298).

<sup>57</sup> Collingwood maintained that intellect (one of the two forms of thought, the other being consciousness) “is concerned with the relations between things” and its truth is a “relational truth” apprehended by “arguing or inferring” (PA, p. 287).

falsehood. The artistic utterance is therefore “necessarily an attempt to state the truth” (PA, p. 287).

Now, Collingwood thinks that, due to misapprehension, consciousness and art might be regarded as having nothing to do with truth. This can happen if for some reason it is assumed that “intellect is the only possible form of thought”, which is to say that truth can only be apprehended by “arguing and inferring” (this is what intellect does) and therefore to conclude that “whatever does not contain arguments cannot be a form of thought, and therefore cannot be concerned with truth” (PA, p. 287). Given that consciousness “as such, and therefore art as such, not being intellect, does not and cannot argue” (PA, p. 287), the inference will be that art is not concerned with truth. Therefore art cannot be a form of knowledge.

This confusion or misapprehension aside (mainly the idea that thought only argues and infers in the attempt to attain truth and knowledge), there is no reason why consciousness is not a form of thought. Therefore to each form of thought corresponds a form of knowledge: consciousness or art is knowledge of the individual; intellect is knowledge of the relation of those individualities between them. Therefore Mink’s objection can be rephrased as follows: the level of consciousness cannot have knowledge of the relations between those individualities; when they become objects of the next level, intellect apprehends or establishes those relations. But consciousness, and thus art, must have knowledge of those individualities. If the individual hasn’t been apprehended by consciousness then the job of intellect would seem impossible: intellect would be required to establish relations between individual things that have not been apprehended in their individuality, relations, that is, between unknown things.

Therefore art or consciousness is knowledge. But knowledge of a peculiar kind. Perhaps the main confusion arises from the fact that what Collingwood calls knowledge at the level of consciousness is something that wouldn’t be instantly recognised as knowledge by everyone. Some might even be reluctant to call it knowledge altogether. Collingwood was not. He considered the truth of art a peculiar type of truth, which is not truth of relation but truth of the individual. Hence the knowledge of the individual is a peculiar kind of knowledge. What is this knowledge and how does consciousness or art obtain it? We know that intellect apprehends truth and knowledge by arguing and inferring. How does consciousness or art apprehend them? For an answer it would help us to have a more precise idea of what Collingwood exactly meant by the individualities or the individual that truth discovers. Mink maintain that it is not clear what these individualities might be, but his view is that they “could be nothing other than states of psychical feeling, modified by becoming objects of consciousness” (MHD, p. 224). Collingwood describes it as follows:

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The individual of which art is the knowledge is an individual situation in which we find ourselves. We are only conscious of the situation as our situation, and we are only conscious of ourselves as involved in the situation. Other people may be involved in it too, but these, like ourselves, are present to our consciousness only as factors in the situation, not as persons who outside the situation have lives of their own (PA, p. 290).

Therefore knowledge of the individual is self-knowledge and consciousness is exactly that: self-knowledge. Collingwood makes it more clear in the following passage:

Theoretically<sup>58</sup>, the artist is a person who comes to know himself, to know his own emotions. This is also knowing his world, that is, the sights and sounds and so forth which together make up his total imaginative experience. The two knowledges are to him one knowledge, because these sights and sounds are to him steeped in the emotion with which he contemplates them: they are the language in which that emotion utters itself to his consciousness. His world is his language. What it says to him it says about himself; his imaginative vision of it is his self-knowledge (PA, p. 291).

Moreover this self-knowledge is also a form of creation and self-realisation:

But this knowing of himself is a making of himself. At first he is mere psyche, the possessor of merely psychical experiences or impressions. The act of coming to know himself is the act of converting his impressions into ideas, and so of converting himself from mere psyche into consciousness. The coming to know his emotions is the coming to dominate them, to assert himself as their master. ... Moreover, his knowing of this new world is also the making of the new world which he is coming to know. The world he has come to know is a world consisting of language; a world where everything has the property of expressing emotion (PA, p. 291).

It is clear therefore that for Collingwood the act itself of the transformation of feelings into emotions is an act of knowledge. From simply being sentient, we become aware. As a matter of fact this knowledge seems to be the only way to make sure that the transformation was indeed successful. Mink accepts that this operation does occur at the level of consciousness. What he denies is that it constitutes knowledge. And this was Collingwood's main objection: there is no reason whatsoever to assume that consciousness by not being intellect cannot be a form of thought, the pursuit of truth and thus a form of knowledge. Because consciousness can be denied the status of thought and knowledge only by not being seen as performing something which is a recognisable form of knowledge, that is something akin to the intellect. But knowledge, in Collingwood's view, cannot be expected to have only one form, that of the intellect.

Hence art is not a precursor of knowledge. It is the birth of thought and knowledge. And Collingwood summarizing says that the aesthetic experience is:

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<sup>58</sup> Collingwood's distinction is that theoretical is an "activity in ourselves which produces a change in us but none in our environment"; and practical an activity which "produces a change in our environment but none in ourselves" (PA, p. 289).

a knowing of oneself and of one's world, these two knowns and knowings being not yet distinguished, so that the self is expressed in the world, the world consisting of language whose meaning is that emotional experience which constitutes the self, and the self consisting of emotions which are known only as expressed in the language which is the world. It is also a making of oneself and of one's world, the self which was psyche being remade in the shape of consciousness, and the world, which was crude *sensa*, being remade in the shape of language, or *sensa* converted into imagery and charged with emotional significance (PA, p. 292).

### § 10. Conclusions

Collingwood's early aesthetics has often been regarded as the stage where art was defined as pure imagination. Isolating SM and OPA and reading them without any of his other aesthetic writings, a clear idea that Collingwood thought only of art as imagination might indeed be formed. If we add to these two books the 1921 lecture on Jane Austen, the 1925 essay on Plato and the 1927 KCL lecture, we are presented with an even stronger case for seeing art as imagination.

However this interpretation becomes less definite if we start taking Collingwood's other writings into consideration. In fact the very early essay "Words and Tune" and the published lecture on Ruskin mention the artistic effort as aiming to achieve expression. Moreover, in both of these writings the artistic expression is the expression of emotions or feelings. However brief and rudimentary the coverage of the nature of art in these essays might be, still they represent an outline of the idea that Collingwood was later to develop more fully. Art as expression of emotions or feelings was, thus, Collingwood's initial answer to the question "what is art?"

After these very early essays Collingwood develops a philosophy of art, where art is conceived as pure imagination. This is his position in all of his writings on art from the early 1920's until 1925. But from the next year the situation is different. 1926 can be seen as the point where expression becomes more and more important. PAE and the reviews of that year show the same preoccupation with all the elements that would come to form Collingwood's final theory of art: imagination, expression and language. In PAE, as we have seen, imagination brings language into existence and thus helps the expression of thought; and this is art. The 1926 reviews of Collingwood show his appreciation for Croce's aesthetics. Collingwood regraded Croce as the person who correctly identified the fundamental questions of aesthetics. Moreover the attempted answers to these questions were on the whole satisfactory, with imagination (or intuition) and expression being what art is mainly concerned with. In that context expression was synonymous to knowledge, not the expression of feelings or emotions.

Then we have the 1927 KCL lecture, which appeared after a period that art as expression was Collingwood's principal direction. No mention of expression is to be found here; instead art is once more pure imagination. This is a rather surprising position but only if we assume that a linear development of Collingwood's philosophy of art is to be expected. But we have seen that Collingwood's method of approaching problems does not consist of clear-cut stages where the new one supersedes entirely the previous. It is the effort to define the appropriate concepts for the specific problem. Once the appropriate concepts have been found then no element is superfluous, incorrect or in need of being replaced. Occasionally some concepts become more prominent than others, or they become dormant and do not participate for some time in the problem. But they are not abandoned. In that respect the disappearance in 1927 of expression and the return of imagination as the main function of art is not strange.

The 1927 lecture, however, is the last time that art is defined as just imagination. From now on imagination is one of the elements in the question of art, but not the sole one or even the most important. Actually just one year later in 1928, in Collingwood's essay on *Form and Content in Art*, expression of emotions or feelings (still synonymous in Collingwood's terminology) becomes once more the epicentre of art, whilst imagination is entirely absent. The 1928 essay is the last piece that Collingwood wrote on art during the 1920's. The writings from the early 1930's show that imagination and expression were what Collingwood kept exploring and that Croce's theory of aesthetics was still influential. The culmination of the theories of imagination and expression occurred in PA.

One thing needs to be said about the connection between imagination and thought in Collingwood's early philosophy of art. Throughout his art writings Collingwood contrasted imagination and thought. In that context we find three terms that are almost synonymous: thought, knowledge and expression. Thought is the attempt to differentiate between truth and falsehood. When thought attains truth it is knowledge. Expression is the revelation of truth and thus knowledge. In most of these writings Collingwood only hinted at the exact relation between imagination and thought: in places the relationship was found to be one where imagination assists the birth of thought, while elsewhere, for instance in SM, the question was how art can be imagination and knowledge at the same time.

Of special importance are Collingwood's essays where art and history were contrasted. In one of them Collingwood found history and art alike because both are concerned with the individual. Art was imagination and concerned with the imaginary individual, since imagination is indifferent to the reality or unreality of its object. History on the other hand was knowledge of the individual, since history asks whether its object is true. In the same essay Collingwood also maintains that art as imagination is a form of thought next to history, science and philosophy. This is a deviation from Collingwood's other

writings, such as OPA, where he had considered imagination and thought separate things, imagination helping the birth of thought but isn't thought. But if now art as imagination is a form of thought it follows that it pursues (like history, science and philosophy as forms of thought do according to Collingwood) truth. But how is this possible since imagination is indifferent to truth by being indifferent to the reality or unreality of its object? Collingwood's answer is that although art, history, science, and philosophy are forms of thought they are not species of a genus. They have common characteristics but they are not directed towards the same aims. The historian must be imaginative but his imagination is subordinated to the pursuit of truth; the scientist generalises like the historian but he does it for different purpose, and so forth. Thus history, science and philosophy as forms of thought pursue truth and are knowledge. Art as a form of thought is indifferent to truth and is imagination and not knowledge. In this essay, therefore, Collingwood came close to connect art as imagination with knowledge but he reserved his final ideas for later on.

In the writings of Collingwood where he examines the relation between art and history through some reflections on other people, the case of Croce stands out. For Croce art is the intuitive vision of individuality and the artist sees and represents this individuality. Croce moreover identified intuition and expression (knowledge) and thus claimed for art the status of knowledge, knowledge of the individual. However the problem is that intuition as such is not thinking and cannot distinguish between the real and the imaginary. Collingwood in SM argued that Croce's attempt of synthesis was problematic since it only manages to reduce expression to intuition.<sup>59</sup> In Croce's solution "the opposition vanishes and the terms collapse into an undifferentiated or immediate identity" (SM, p. 87). However after SM Collingwood came to see Croce's theory as substantially correct. In the essays on the relation between art and history, Collingwood seems to accept the identification between intuition and expression or to put it in other terms between imagination and knowledge. Also, he often took Croce's ideas as a model to judge other aesthetic theories. The main idea, therefore, after SM and before PA is that Collingwood was looking for a synthesis between imagination and knowledge. He didn't attempt a systematic approach to that problem but through a few essays and comments on other people we can see how he saw that question. At one time art was imagination and a form of thought but not knowledge since it didn't pursue truth. Later it was knowledge, although it was uncertain how intuition, by not being thought, could distinguish between the real and the imaginary and thus attain truth. The only thing that remained constant was that art's concern was the individual.

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<sup>59</sup> Mink maintained that Collingwood's effort to provide art with an epistemological status was "no doubt an uncritical reflection in his thought of his sympathy for Croce's aesthetic" (MHD; p. 223). In the light of Collingwood's criticisms of Croce's theory in SM, I believe that Collingwood's position was far from being uncritical.

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But why does Collingwood change his views on art? The reason, I believe, is the difference of emphasis in his philosophy regarding the character of knowledge. In effect Collingwood saw knowledge in two ways. One is where the individual modes of experience, without themselves being knowledge, contribute to the whole which thus becomes knowledge. The other where any mode of experience can, individually, be a form of knowledge. SM is the clearest manifestation of the first way, and the reason why the idea of art as expression in the very early essays of Collingwood changed. SM is the first attempt of Collingwood to present a coherent philosophy, his philosophy of the Spirit. The united spirit is much more important than the individual modes of experience that make up the whole spirit. The confusion and disorientation of our civilisation is, according to Collingwood, a result of the spirit's division. The divided spirit is a diseased spirit. The individual modes of experience are to be blamed for that because of their erroneous claims to be autonomous, in no need of the other forms of experience. In itself each mode of experience is complete, can attain truth and knowledge. Thus the communication with the other forms has been severed. But Collingwood insisted that there "are no autonomous and mutually exclusive forms of experience, and, what is more, it is no one's interest to assume that there are" (SM, p. 306). The life of the spirit should be seen as a whole and when all modes of experience have contributed their character the spirit will attain self-knowledge. To re-unite the spirit was of primary importance for Collingwood and the way he did it was by examining the validity of the claims of each mode of experience (art, religion, history, science and philosophy) to be autonomous knowledge and showing this claim to be erroneous. In SM, Collingwood's efforts with regard to art was not to show how it can be imagination and knowledge at the same time, but instead to show the place of art in the whole spirit. Art is always pure imagination and as such is the initial stage of the spirit's process. Art assists the birth of thought which, later on in the life of the spirit, will become the self-knowledge of the spirit.

Art was, thus, defined as imagination within the special aim of SM: to present the united spirit as the only way to self-knowledge and to show that the individual modes of experience can only contribute to that aim, without them being autonomous forms of knowledge. In the subsequent writings of Collingwood art, whenever it was discussed separately, retained its character as imagination. But as we have seen 1926 can be considered the year that expression (i.e. knowledge) becomes important. It is also the year that Collingwood started lecturing on the philosophy of history for the first time. Around this time, therefore, we can place Collingwood's preoccupation with establishing individual areas of human experience, such art and history, as epistemologically sound. His more systematic treatment of individual problems moved him away from the idea of a spirit with incomplete modes of experience. Now history and art can be autonomous and yield knowledge. In the specific case of art this meant that something had to be done in order to reconcile art as

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imagination and art as knowledge. This was one of the aims of PA.



## Chapter IV: Fairy tales, Magic and Anthropology

### § 1. Introduction

In this chapter my aim is to study the later writings of Collingwood on fairy tales, magic and anthropology<sup>1</sup> since they occupy a unique position in Collingwood's exploration of a broader human understanding. In his study of fairy tales Collingwood's main concern was the enlargement of historical knowledge. Fairy tales are an aspect of human life and culture that, if approached in a proper way, can yield historical evidence and augment historical knowledge. The previous chapters –on psychology, on the unity of mind and on art– provide the context of specific philosophical ideas of Collingwood that came to bear on his arguments in the folklore writings. These chapters paved the way for the idea of human understanding I explored in this thesis by showing the problematic role of psychology, the necessary connection of thoughts and emotions, and the shift in Collingwood's epistemology from the dialectical Forms of experience to the historical consciousness. This last chapter also testifies to this epistemological shift.

Collingwood's fairy tale writings are significant in that they can be seen as an illustration of the effectiveness of the historical method and the possibilities of this method if employed in other areas of human pursuits. They are also significant in their own right because they are an unusual topic for philosophical reflection and because they discuss the elements of magic and emotions found in fairy tales, which Collingwood emphasises are tales of enchantment. Magic is the element that allows the student of fairy tales to understand them. Magic is about emotions, which thus become a motive-reason for a wide spectrum of human actions and utterances. The understanding of emotions is necessary in order to understand those utterances. Given that the fairy tale writings were composed before PA, they are an important step in the subsequent formulation of Collingwood's thought: both his theories of art and history strongly emphasised the function of emotions in the human condition. Collingwood through these writings also contributes to the re-orientation of anthropology towards a historical perspective and he extends his concern to the general state of civilisation,

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<sup>1</sup> The main treatment of those writings are: HS, pp. 183-191; SPT, pp. 196-206; AHS, pp. 303-325; Taylor 1985, pp. 17-21; Taylor 1988, pp. 73-77; W. James. 1997. 'Tales of Enchantment: Collingwood, Anthropology and the 'Fairy Tales' Manuscripts', in *CS*, vol. IV, pp. 133-156 (Hereafter abbreviated as James); P. Smallwood. 2000. 'Historical Re-enactment, Literary Transmission, and the Value of R.G. Collingwood', in *Translation and Literature*, vol. 9, part 1, Edinburgh UP, pp. 3-24 (Hereafter abbreviated as Smallwood); M.E. Rudzik. 1990. *Folklore and History: An Analysis of an Unpublished Manuscript by R.G. Collingwood*. PhD thesis, Toronto; S. Giusti. 1993. 'Collingwood's Unpublished Writings on Folklore', in *Storia, antropologia e scienze del linguaggio*, VIII, pp. 23-41. See also the Editors' Introduction, in PE: 1. Smallwood, pp. xxiii-lv; 2. James, pp. lvi-xci; 3. Boucher, pp. xcii-cxix.

threatened by the extreme character of utilitarianism and the suppression of facets of the human experience such as art, magic and religion.

In the fairy tale writings Collingwood continued to see psychology as a problematic way to study the human mind. Psychological theories had been constructed and used to study fairy tales and magic as elements that could say something about the mind of the people who created them. Collingwood commented on the results of such a study and concluded that psychology erred because it adopted a naturalistic methodology not appropriate for a subject that Collingwood thought of as historical. In PE Collingwood, therefore, still contrasted psychology with history in the study of the human mind and once more he concluded that psychology is a flawed and unsatisfactory way to study the historical mind.

The unity of mind was also relevant to Collingwood's folklore essays because it is through the unity of mind that the significance of emotions became clear in Collingwood's later writings. In PE Collingwood asserts that the study of fairy tales as historical evidence entails the study of magic, as fairy tales are about magic. Magic, like art, is for Collingwood an emotional activity. In PE the emotional element is contrasted with the intellectual, magic being an activity of the emotions. But this doesn't mean that magic as an emotional activity excludes thought which jeopardises the unity of mind. Collingwood's study of fairy tales and magic precedes his final ideas on art and magic as found in PA, where he established more clearly a close connection between thoughts and emotions. The fairy tales study stands as an important place where emotions, through magic, were recognised as a healthy motive for action. At the same time the historical study of fairy tales must necessarily include the element of thought and thus magic must in some sense be a thinking activity too. The unity of mind can, therefore, be seen as integral to Collingwood's folklore writings.

Art too is of importance in these writings, since magic as the expression of emotions is a very similar –if not identical– activity to art. The relation between art and magic was worked out by Collingwood both in PE and in PA. In PE Collingwood in effect considered magic and art to be the same thing; both express emotion, although to be distinct from each other they express emotion in different ways. In PA magic is not the expression but the arousal of emotions. Hence it is interesting to see the implications of these two different ways of perceiving magic and to contrast them with art. In that respect the epistemological claim of Collingwood in PA is particularly relevant. In PA art for Collingwood was knowledge of the individual, in effect the same things as history. Since Collingwood wanted to use fairy tales as a source for historical knowledge, magic, as an emotional activity and the principal feature of fairy tales, should be able to contribute towards that aim. I believe the way magic was treated in PE can sustain such a claim, but the magic of PA cannot.

In what follows I will present Collingwood's interest in fairy tales and the way he linked them to magic; his idea of a method to study magic that is a hybrid between

anthropology and history; his conception of magic; and lastly the connection between magic and art. Thus we will be able to see how all these issues point to a wider understanding of human utterances, through fairy tales, magic, a novel use of anthropology and an emotional attitude that can yield genuine knowledge.

## § 2. Fairy tales

The choice of Collingwood to study fairy tales might seem an odd one. However for someone with his interests there is no sphere of human activity otiose or irrelevant to the effort of understanding the human mind. Let alone the fields of folklore and fairy tales, that constitute a unique –and vanishing– aspect of human culture.<sup>2</sup> Certainly every study and endeavour is a combination of influences, inspirations, personal predilections, the sense of the direction that contemporary inquiries take and also what Oakeshott had characterised as “the perception of where in the world of contemporary speculation is the point from which advance may best be made”.<sup>3</sup>

Boucher argues that Collingwood’s interest in such studies has “roots in his early fascination with fairy tales. His favourite book as a child was Joseph Jacobs, *English Fairy Tales*” (AHS, p. 308). Smallwood locates Collingwood’s interest in the folk tales in various areas: a response to “the literary and critical consciousness of his time” (PE, p. xxv); the personal experiences of Collingwood as a child in a house where fairy tales were an important element and his father, W.G. Collingwood, a marvellous story teller;<sup>4</sup> the ideas of John Ruskin;<sup>5</sup> the tales and the poems of W.B. Yeats that drew from the myths and legends of ancient Ireland;<sup>6</sup> the advancement of folktale scholarship at the times of Collingwood<sup>7</sup>, where even Benedetto Croce’s interest in the work of Giambattista Basile might have a place.<sup>8</sup>

Another reason is, I think, the nature of the fairy tales and the difficulties they present to the historian who wants to use them as historical evidence. This is reminiscent of

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<sup>2</sup> All his commentators agree that the folklore writings can also be considered as an answer by Collingwood to his concerns for a civilisation in crisis. See, for instance, PE, p. xxvii, p. lxii, p. lxiii, SPT, pp. 205-206. van der Dussen argues that they also show how Collingwood “‘put into practise’ his ideas about history in the field of the social sciences, demonstrating how the methods used in these sciences had prevented the understanding of so-called primitive societies” (HS, p. 183).

<sup>3</sup> From the review (p. 84) of Collingwood’s IH by Oakeshott, published in *English Historical Review*, 62 (1947), pp. 84-86. Oakeshott argued that this was a quality of a genius that Collingwood possessed and which led him to pursue the problem of historical knowledge (p. 84).

<sup>4</sup> PE, p. xxv.

<sup>5</sup> Smallwood mentions the introduction that Ruskin wrote in 1868, for an edition of German stories reprinted from the brothers Grimm, where he stressed the historical value of fairy stories: PE, p. xxvi.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. xxvii.

Giambattista Vico's historical method, that Collingwood held in high esteem. Like Collingwood, Vico wanted to expand historical knowledge and that is why he "was peculiarly interested in what he called the history of remote and obscure periods, that is, in the extension of historical knowledge" (IH, p. 67). Vico's choice, according to Collingwood, was not accidental but he "studied distant and obscure periods precisely because they were distant and obscure; for his real interest was in historical method, and, according as the sources are scanty and dubious and the subject-matter strange and hard to understand, the importance of sound method becomes plain" (TPH, p. 6). And Vico not only studied those distant periods, but he studied unusual aspects of them, thus showing "how etymology, mythology and legend may be used as documents; instead of accepting legend and myth as fact, or rejecting them as fable, he attempts to interpret them as documents revealing the mind and manners of the age that created them" (TPH, pp. 6-7). With regard to etymology:

He shows how linguistic study can throw light on history. Etymology can show what kind of life a people was leading while its language was coming into existence. The historian is aiming at a reconstruction of the mental life, the ideas, of the people he is studying: their stock of words shows what their stock of ideas was; and the way in which they use an old word metaphorically in a new sense, when they want to express a new idea, shows what their stock of ideas was before that new one came into existence (IH, pp. 69-70).

And:

He makes a similar use of mythology. The gods of primitive religion represent a semi-poetical way of expressing the social structure of the people who invented them. Thus, in Greco-Roman mythology, Vico saw a representation of the domestic, economic and political life of the ancients. These myths were the way in which a primitive and imaginative mind expressed to itself what a more reflective mind would have stated in codes of law and morality (IH, p. 70).

Collingwood, therefore, chose fairy tales to serve both the above purposes: to suggest a solid method by studying a field rather alien to the historian or the philosopher; and to treat this unusual field as a way to attain historical knowledge.

The fairy-tale writings, however, have been seen as having a much broader scope than the immediate area of history. In fact his questions "may not look like 'history', but of course Collingwood is not limiting himself to the orthodox notion of what history might be. By using 'fairy tales' or oral literature as a source of evidence about the human past, he is in fact extending the conventional scope of historical investigation beyond the material factuality of relics or written texts to the more intangible realm of spoken language as a vehicle for the transmission of social forms of experience" (James, p. 144). How Collingwood tackled his subject is suggestive of his originality. The organic impression his essay creates can easily divert from the fact that his connections are far from expected or commonplace. As, for

instance, when he sees fairy tales linked to magic or when he approaches magic through anthropology and the contemporary ‘primitive’ societies and not through the historical literature of magic. Thus the fairy tale essay is a mosaic of diverse but well-linked themes which justly generate the feeling that “they go beyond the bounds of what might conventionally, even today, be regarded as the specific field of ‘folklore’ studies or even ‘anthropology’” (James, p. 141). Smallwood also points to the often neglected significance of the folktale studies to criticism, critical history and literary theory<sup>9</sup> and “Collingwood’s emphasis can be seen as consonant with the distinctive *critical-prophetic* atmosphere of the 1930s, a time of revaluation of the literary-critical and literary-historical past and its relevance to present civilization and current human needs” (PE, pp. xxviii-xxix).

Given the breadth of Collingwood’s undertaking, certain elements and directions might appear omitted. Thus it has been suggested that he was “not in these essays attempting a comprehensive contribution to scholarly or historical knowledge of folktale and, despite his detailed research, only a few tales are actually named” (PE, p. xxxiii)<sup>10</sup> and although “starting with fairy-tales, Collingwood did not in fact get very far with his study of this subject ... His analysis is really a prolegomenon to anthropology” (HS, p. 191). This position is not entirely accurate because Collingwood had probably progressed further both with his readings and with the development of his ideas but he didn’t finish his essay in a way suitable for publication.<sup>11</sup> According to the plan of his book he intended his last chapters to focus on “fairy tales found in the British Isles, and among these to certain classes of theme which I think I know how to interpret” (PE, p. 131).<sup>12</sup> If he thought he knew how to interpret them, then it is reasonable to assume that his analysis had a more definite character than a prolegomenon and his contribution to the scholarship of folktales and anthropology would have been more extensive than the incomplete nature of his writings allows us to think. But even as his study stands, I believe it exhibits evident signs of completeness; for not only does he identify a specific question to ask –what is the historical value of the fairy tales– but his process of answering it was a creative amalgam of different fields and intellectual paths. It is the clear and inventive conception of his endeavour that makes it something more than a prolegomenon.

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<sup>9</sup> See Smallwood, p. 9; PE, p. xxiv. In both these essays Smallwood explores the literary-critical importance of Collingwood’s fairy tales and places him alongside people such as T.S Eliot and F.R. Leavis who were pursuing similar interests.

<sup>10</sup> Smallwood mentions various areas of the fairy tale scholarship that Collingwood didn’t address and contrasts his writings to the approaches of folklorists such as Max Lüthi and Vladimir Propp (PE, pp. xxxiii-xxxv).

<sup>11</sup> There is no definite answer as to why Collingwood didn’t finish the book on fairy tales. Smallwood speculates that Collingwood “set them aside unpublished partly through illness, and perhaps to focus more completely on *The Principles of Art*” (PE, p. xxxii).

<sup>12</sup> This is a quite clear indication that “more material than was written up or has survived was intended” (PE, p. 131, n. 18).

It has also been argued that in his fairy tale study Collingwood “thought it necessary first to clear the ground methodologically ... As such it is in essence a transcendental analysis of the subject, though empirical studies<sup>13</sup> are included in it” (HS, p. 191). His analysis is not, I think, transcendental if the term is taken to mean the abstract formulation of a (historical) method in isolation from a concrete (historical) situation (in this case fairy tales). In my understanding of Collingwood’s attempt, in history there is no logical priority of method over subject matter or the other way around. In the natural sciences the methodology is the tool without which the inquiry cannot proceed. The formulation of the methodology is the indispensable starting point and the second step is the application of the method to a specific field. History doesn’t have a method that conforms to the idea of the natural scientific method. Collingwood’s intention was to study the fairy tales of the British Isles with the task of “interpretation, not comparison” (PE, p. 131). The interpretation of fairy tales will, no doubt, be based on some principles and, as we will see in section § 3, Collingwood defined two such principles: not to ridicule actions and beliefs of people but try to understand them and to treat facts as facts and not as instances, to pay attention, that is, to the individual and particular character of a situation. But the interpretation of a historical fact cannot be said to constitute a method that has been devised in isolation with the historical situation, for we do not have a historical fact and then the interpretation of this fact; the interpretation (or the understanding) is the creation of the historical fact, which before the interpretation is just an undifferentiated event. In that sense Collingwood’s method is the historical attitude to every human action, which means that the method and the action is the same thing. A pure transcendental analysis of a historical methodology is, therefore, something that Collingwood would have found erroneous.

However versatile the effect of Collingwood’s study of fairy tales might be, his intention was primarily to see how they could augment historical knowledge by “suggesting how fairy tales may be used as historical evidence” (PE, p. 115). Defining the fairy tale Collingwood says that it is a story that has two essential characteristics: when it comes to form it is a “traditional story, handed down by oral transmission”; and regarding its content it doesn’t have to be “necessarily about fairies, but about faëry, *féerie*, fays’ work, or enchantment: that its subject matter consists in a general way of elements arising out of the idea of magic” (PE, p. 115). The meaning of traditional is not only that the “authorship has been forgotten” (PE, p. 115) but also that these stories “constitute a social institution carefully preserved by the people” (PE, p. 116).

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<sup>13</sup> Collingwood throughout refers to various fairy tales but it is mainly the Cinderella story where his analysis is more extensive. See PE, pp. 235-259. Also for some commentary, James, pp.148-150, PE, pp. lxxxiv-lxxxvi.

This practise could, therefore, yield stories that have come to us from very old times.<sup>14</sup> None the less preservation means not that the story survives without modifications, but that the main thread remains the same while details might change. Collingwood believes that the changes that occur to any story by the oral transmission over the years are a very important element since any “alteration in the structure, customs, and beliefs of the society that tells it [i.e. the story] will tend to be reflected in the story itself” (PE, p. 117). Therefore by removing modifications and alterations it is possible to reach earlier versions of the story and hence to learn about the people of those times.<sup>15</sup> For using fairy tales as such evidence Collingwood argues that two things need to be assumed and accepted: “that the themes found in fairy tales are organically connected with the customs and beliefs of the people who originated them, and that customs and beliefs are things which have a history” (PE, p. 119). This was not uncontested but Collingwood thought that these two principles hold good against any objection.<sup>16</sup>

Then Collingwood sets out to explore an issue that might create problems if not properly understood: that of diffusion against independent invention.<sup>17</sup> It can be argued that, trying to interpret fairy tales so as to reveal historical information, for example, a story or a theme of a story that has originated in a certain place can give information about that place; but if the theme came through diffusion to that place then the information we get will be for the place of origin and not for the place it came to.<sup>18</sup> After trying to show some difficulties in establishing whether a theme was the product of invention or diffusion<sup>19</sup>, Collingwood argues that such a distinction is not valid: diffusion and independent invention are “elements existing together in the tradition of story-telling and in every other tradition. For the problem does not affect fairy tales alone; it affects all parts of human civilization” (PE, p. 124).

It is the capacity of civilisation for a meaningful cultural interaction between people, where elements from one culture can be adopted by another under the idea that “whatever was borrowed was something capable of incorporation in the existing culture of the borrowers” (PE, p. 124). These elements have a reason that they are adopted, something like the

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<sup>14</sup> PE, p. 117.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118. Collingwood uses the analogy of archaeology and its methods of excavation.

<sup>16</sup> For instance Collingwood mentions the view “held by many psychologists that fairy-tale themes have their origin in ‘the unconscious’, and symbolize certain inward dramas that go on everywhere and always in the human mind” (PE, p. 119). According to such a view the individuality that could give historical knowledge is not present since the “same theme might spring up spontaneously in any part of the world at any date” (PE, p. 119).

<sup>17</sup> Boucher has explored this idea of Collingwood in relation to discussions about cosmopolitanism and communitarianism. See AHS, pp. 305-307.

<sup>18</sup> PE, p. 120.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 120-123.

satisfaction of a need, and their incorporation is not a blind borrowing but a modification according to the specific need and the special character of the borrower's culture.<sup>20</sup>

For Collingwood the world of fairy tales is the world of magic.<sup>21</sup> It is a world that seems from "our scientific conception of nature, as unnatural and indeed supernatural" (PE, p. 126). For a moment we might feel liberated from our natural constraints since in the world of magic and fairy tales our wishes can come true because it appears that "we could get what we want by merely wanting it" (PE, p. 126) and creates in us that "peculiar fascination of wish-fulfilment fantasies" (PE, p. 126). However by closer inspection we realise that the world of magic is not like that at all, it is not a lawless enjoyment of our desires and wishes. Instead the "land of fairy tales has laws of its own, no less exigent than the laws of nature" (PE, p. 126) and the people who told fairy tales "took these laws no less seriously than we take the laws of natural science" (PE, p. 127). Collingwood emphasises the fact that, since the magical laws of fairy tales are different to what we know as laws of nature, it is a common misunderstanding to regard magic as a form of pseudo-science.<sup>22</sup> This idea however is erroneous since –due to the work of ethnologists on people "among whom magical beliefs like those recorded in fairy tales are current" (PE, p. 128)– we know that these people:

are very far from being stupid or devoid of scientific knowledge. They have enough biology to breed cattle; enough botany to grow crops; enough astronomy to work out an agricultural calendar; enough mineralogy and chemistry to prospect for ores, to smelt copper and tin, and to alloy them into bronze, or to mine and smelt and forge iron, or to find and work clay and fire it into pottery; enough physic to use medicinal herbs, and enough surgery to perform operations, sometimes delicate ones, with flint knives and deer-sinews; enough engineering to construct a plough or a boat; and so forth (PE, p. 128).<sup>23</sup>

It might be true that all of the above might be "accompanied by magic; but they are not performed by magic; they are performed by technical skill based, as all technical skill must be based, on scientific intelligence" (PE, p. 130). Therefore if we want profitably to study fairy tales, then the element of magic should not be taken as a flaw of those people to understand science but as a vital part of their cultural production. The magical themes contained in fairy tales are fragments of "customs and beliefs handed down in traditional

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<sup>20</sup> PE., p. 124.

<sup>21</sup> Collingwood places all fairy tales within the realm of magic. Smallwood mentions that "Collingwood is less interested in all the kinds of fairy tales that exist, that is, than in what Max Lüthi claims is referred to with 'striking unanimity' among folktale scholars as 'the fairytale proper', the fairytale of magic" (PE, p. xxxiii).

<sup>22</sup> PE, p. 127.

<sup>23</sup> In PA Collingwood made the same claim. The people under study by the anthropologist were far more intelligent than he assumed, since they had "extremely complex political, legal, and linguistic systems" (PA, p. 59) and they also possessed an adequate knowledge of nature, for they were able to perform "delicate operations in metallurgy, agriculture, stock-breeding" (PA, p. 59). This is not something that could have been achieved by the use of magic but by the application of scientific knowledge.



stories” (PE, p. 130) and what the historian of those tales does is reconstruct “in his mind the life and thought of the people who have left him this sample of their work” (PE, p. 128). In his efforts the historian is assisted by the existence of magic in living, primitive societies. Thus he can discover what magic means to these people for whom these beliefs and practices are not mere “survivals but an essential part of everyday life” (PE, p. 128). Since the study of those societies traditionally falls within the scope and purview of anthropology, Collingwood’s student or historian of fairy tales can also be, or at least at a certain point should be, an anthropologist with a historical consciousness and approach. The process will be something like that: in order to understand fairy tales we need to understand the basic principle of them: that is magic. In order to understand magic, we become anthropologists who study and try to understand the living beliefs, practises and rituals of people who regard magic as an essential element of their lives and culture. Having done that we can go back and become historians again and see how this understanding of magic can facilitate the understanding of fairy tales. Therefore the phenomenon of magic needs to be understood and not only observed as an external condition because “[a]ll historical knowledge involves the recreation in the historian’s mind of the past experience which he is trying to study” (PE, pp. 128-129). And in order to have understanding a certain degree of familiar ground needs to exist:

If magic were a form of belief or custom peculiar to primitive peoples and absolutely foreign to the mind of civilized man, the civilized historian could never understand it (PE, p. 129).

Attributing to magic a foreign or irrational behaviour will only result in the impossibility of our endeavour to understand the behaviour of primitive people and their magical beliefs.<sup>24</sup> For Collingwood there is only one way to approach fairy tales meaningfully, in other words to understand them:

we must give an account of magic which will show that in its essence it is a thing familiar to ourselves, not as a spectacle, but as an experience: something which we habitually do, something which plays a part in our social and personal life, not as mere survival of savagery, but as an essential feature of civilization (PE, p. 129).

This notion of magic is something that I will explore in § 4. It is also an idea that is related to historical method, the only way to tackle magic effectively.

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<sup>24</sup> PE, p. 129.

### § 3. Fairy tales, anthropology and the historical method

The key element for understanding fairy tales is, according to Collingwood, magic. He also thought that the understanding of magic could be benefited by anthropology's study of the various 'primitive', non-western societies.<sup>25</sup> For, although Collingwood saw magic as something that exists in our societies, our societies tended to suppress, fear and disown it.<sup>26</sup> But in the societies that anthropologists study, magic was a recognised practise, a phenomenon not only alive but respected too. The importance of anthropology in Collingwood's analysis becomes more prominent if we take into account that he developed his theory of magic against a background of theories and approaches, anthropology being just one of them. I will give a very brief description of them.<sup>27</sup>

Collingwood argued that fairy tales had been studied profitably –that is, apart from collection and classification the process of interpretation began– by the German philological school “which regarded them as ‘myths’ describing natural phenomena in poetic or metaphorical language” (PE, p. 130). It was the school of the “anthropological folklorists in the late nineteenth century” (PE, p. 130) that understood fairy tales as “organically connected with certain magical rituals practised by primitive societies” (PE, p. 130). However this school misunderstood the conception of magic and thus their answer was not entirely satisfactory. Lastly it was the psychological school which rightly showed that “the magical element in fairy tales is a symbolic expression, not of the natural phenomena surrounding man, but of the wishes within him” (PE, p. 130). Still psychologists erred in associating this magical element not with the healthy wishes of man but with pathology and mental derangement.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Collingwood maintains that like the archaeologist who studies ancient implements is helped “by the ethnologist, who may be able to point out similar implements now used in a particular way by this or that primitive society” (PE, p. 128), similarly the person who studies fairy tales “must avail himself of the same kind of help” (PE, p. 128).

<sup>26</sup> James mentions how magic has been seen as a phenomenon counter to religion and civilisation; in opposition to reason, orthodoxy and authority; and even as anti-social: James, p. 146; PE, p. lxxxii. Collingwood saw magic and religion as very closely related although a distinction does exist: PE, p. 229-230.

<sup>27</sup> The details of Collingwood's analysis can be found in PE and PA. van der Dussen says that although the treatment of magic in PA is based on the folklore studies it “presents only one element of them and it does not show the context in which they were developed” (HS, p. 183). James also suggests that Collingwood's argument on magic in the folktales compared to the one in PA “is a more sustained and elaborate discussion than in its later published form” (PE, p. lxxxii). In PE he critically explored three approaches to the study of fairy tales and magic: the philological of Grimm and Müller (pp. 132-141), the anthropological of Tylor and Frazer (pp. 141-156) and the psychological of Freud and Jung (pp. 156-177). In PA Collingwood examined the anthropological (pp. 57-61) and the psychological (pp. 62-65) approaches but not the philological one since the focus in PA is magic and the philological school didn't identify a magical element in fairy tales.

<sup>28</sup> Boucher maintains that Collingwood's emphasis on *Totem and Taboo* tends to ignore subsequent works of Freud (SPT, pp. 287-288, n. 43).

Collingwood found the three approaches imperfect. The philological school failed even to identify the magical element of the fairy tales, while anthropology and psychology approached the problem both with success and failure; they realised the connection between magic and fairy tales, but their conception of magic was, for Collingwood, erroneous.<sup>29</sup> Still he favoured the anthropological school. Collingwood thought it is the anthropologist –with a historical consciousness however– that could study magic effectively. For this position of Collingwood there is, I think, a good reason.

Magic, as Collingwood understood it, has the peculiarity that cannot only be studied in the library but also as a living phenomenon, through contact with other human beings. The historic magic of the fairy tales is in the ‘primitive’ societies a contemporary experience and, as a student of fairy tales and magic, the anthropologist is also a mediator between the two worlds. Strictly speaking between the philological and the anthropological school, the former was the historical one, if by historical we emphasise the prominence of written texts. But for the study of magic the historically orientated anthropologist of the field had an advantage over the library-based historian. The same applies to anthropology and psychology: the advantage of field anthropology, of the direct contact with other humans and their customs, against the library-based and detached psychological approach of magic. Of course the school of the anthropological folklorists, that Collingwood described, was not orientated to the field practise of anthropology; they were, too, library-based scholars and perhaps this might have been one of the reasons for their failure to understand magic. But the contemporary anthropological context of the 1930’s, of which Collingwood was a witness, was field orientated. It was, thus, the potential that Collingwood saw of the amalgamation between the new anthropological method and the historical consciousness to provide satisfactory answers to the problems of the human mind.

In that respect it is now useful to see Collingwood’s interest in and affinities with his contemporary anthropological context.<sup>30</sup> Collingwood’s interest in anthropology can be traced early on.<sup>31</sup> However his involvement was more pronounced in the 1930’s. It was a time when anthropology was turning away from the scientific positivism of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to a

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<sup>29</sup> Boucher stresses the importance of metaphysics if anthropology is to be a historical science and he maintains that in effect Collingwood criticised the anthropologists for failing “correctly to identify what was being absolutely presupposed by their subjects” (PE, p. cxv), confusing thus the absolute presuppositions of magic with those of natural science.

<sup>30</sup> For a context of some anthropological ideas see AHS, pp. 303-304, 314-316. Also SPT, pp. 196-198, where Boucher highlights the history of the general terms of reference for culture and civilisation. For information about anthropology in the 1920’s and 1930’s see James, pp. 134-140 and PE, pp. lxiii-lxx.

<sup>31</sup> James, PE, pp. lvii-lix. James mentions RP and other early essay of Collingwood, where he had been critical of anthropologists who adopted an ‘evolutionary’ framework of explanation, a stance that he kept in his later writings too. Smallwood argues that in RP Collingwood’s “analysis of the relations between ritual, religion, and magic ... can be seen as reworked and reviewed in the essays [i.e. the folktale essays]” (PE, p. xxvii). James also points out the recognition of “the ‘anthropological’ qualities even of Collingwood’s published work” (James, 135) by various philosophers from the 1960’s on.

more historical consciousness.<sup>32</sup> Collingwood associated himself with these “newer attitudes and methods” (James, p. 133) of anthropology and might have exercised “some influence on the way it then developed, and is still developing” (James, p. 133). The anthropology of today seems closer to Collingwood’s historical concerns<sup>33</sup> and the modern anthropologist “finds a prophetic quality in Collingwood’s vision of a ‘historical method’ exploring reflexively the ways in which human beings have thought and lived” (James, p. 133). Therefore Collingwood’s involvement with anthropology was more robust than a mere interest and his relevance today significant.<sup>34</sup>

Although Collingwood had a long-standing interest in anthropology<sup>35</sup>, his more systematic involvement occurred in the 1930’s, perhaps also as an influence of his job as delegate of the Oxford Clarendon Press from 1928 to 1941, where he would have had the chance to come across contemporary ethnographic and anthropological literature and even read manuscripts submitted on these subjects.<sup>36</sup>

Collingwood’s response to the anthropology of the generation before his was critical of the naturalistic tendencies of interpretation and of the “parochial utilitarianism in distancing ‘primitive’ humanity from ‘ourselves’” (PE, p. lxiii.). His conception of anthropology was different from people like P.R. Marret and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and closer to B. Malinowski and E.E. Evans-Pritchard.<sup>37</sup> Malinowski is one of the very few names mentioned by Collingwood.<sup>38</sup> Also the connection between Collingwood and Evans-Pritchard

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<sup>32</sup> James, p. 133. The positivistic attitude has been seen in the way anthropology “increasingly distancing itself at the time from naturalistic evolutionary models but moving rather towards ‘Comtian sociology’ as reformulated by Durkheim and applied explicitly by him and his colleagues to the evidence of the ethnographic record” (PE, p. lxxiv).

<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless Collingwood’s example is also of value in alerting us against the dangers of naturalism, since “varieties of the ‘natural science’ approach in anthropology are still with us: especially the new biological sciences which advocate the genetic conditioning of behaviour, and ‘rational choice’ theories in philosophy, politics, economics, and sociology which give primal importance to utility and the individual drive to maximize wealth or power” (PE, p. lxxxviii).

<sup>34</sup> Boucher also emphasises the relevance of Collingwood’s folklore studies to current problems of anthropology and historical interpretation, for although he wrote “in the context of the practise of anthropology in the first part of the twentieth century ... his conclusions are not merely of antiquarian interest, because the problems he identified and to which he gave answers still persist” (AHS, p. 304). Also PE, p. xcii. For Collingwood and the anthropology of today see also PE, pp. lxxxviii-xci. James there discusses, among other things, the attention of modern anthropologists, such as Talad Asad, to the significance of Collingwood’s connection between thought and emotion.

<sup>35</sup> Although as James suggests Collingwood before the mid 1930’s “had not drawn on any anthropological writings or evidence in his publications or in his teaching” (James, p. 138).

<sup>36</sup> James, p. 138; PE, pp. lxxi.

<sup>37</sup> James, pp. 134-5; AHS, p. 317 (Boucher includes Lévy Bruhl as someone whose concerns about anthropology were similar to Collingwood’s). Boucher also places Collingwood’s criticisms alongside those of “Wittgenstein and Oakeshott, who similarly were sceptical about anthropology’s aspiration to become a natural science” (AHS, p. 317). About Wittgenstein also see AHS, p. 321 and PE, p. lxvi.

<sup>38</sup> Collingwood maintained that his present day anthropology was moving away from positivistic principles but that movement was almost silent with the exception of Malinowski’s Durham lectures of 1936 on *The Foundations of Faith and Morals*: (PA, p. 61 and n. 1). Malinowski’s affinity with some of Collingwood’s ideas has been asserted by Boucher who maintains that Malinowski “understands myths in the same way as Collingwood later described Absolute Presuppositions” (AHS, p. 304).

has been seen as particularly strong: both following similar interests and asking similar question and being aware of each other's work.<sup>39</sup> It has also been suggested that Collingwood felt more comfortable with the term 'cultural' rather than 'social' anthropology, 'cultural' being a broader category associated with museum archaeology and ethnology and the work of Edward B. Tylor.<sup>40</sup>

It was, therefore, within an anthropological climate that was changing towards a more historical and humanistic approach, with emphasis on first-hand fieldwork, that Collingwood formulated his own ideas. It has been argued that Collingwood's ideas on anthropology can be found in some of his later works, for example EM, NL<sup>41</sup>, but it is in the fairy tale writings that he draws directly on anthropology. However, both in the fairy tale writings and in PA, Collingwood doesn't present the new anthropology which he largely approved, but the theories of Tylor and Frazer, the school of anthropological folklorists he called 'functional'.<sup>42</sup> Collingwood had justified his choice of emphasis by saying that "the controversies and inquiries which are occupying the minds of anthropologists today ... are of interest not for what they have achieved but for what may come of them; in other words, they are hardly yet appropriate subject matter for historical criticism" (PE, p. 133). Thus when he sees his study as a contribution to and not an estimate of that period<sup>43</sup>, the contribution he means is, I believe, to show that the new anthropology with the historical consciousness and the dedication to fieldwork was taking steps in the right direction to help solidify these steps. The field-working attitude of the anthropologist can be compared with the historian who is not content with the authorities but he tests the evidence for himself. Likewise the anthropologist,

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Malinowski, in his 1936 *The Foundations of Myth and Morals*, thought that the function of myth is as a foundation for belief.

<sup>39</sup> See mainly PE, p. lxxvii, pp. lxxix-lxxx, p. lxxxvii; James, pp. 136-140. It is very unlikely that Evans-Pritchard was aware of Collingwood's anthropology writings (PE, p. lxxxvii) but he knew other aspects of Collingwood's work and he was also positive in his review of the second edition of *Roman Britain* (James, p. 136; PE, p. lxx). Collingwood must have also been familiar with the work of Evans-Pritchard and it is almost certain to have seen the *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* ms and perhaps *The Nuer* (PE, p. lxxii. James, pp. 138-9).

<sup>40</sup> James, p. 134; PE, p. lxxv.

<sup>41</sup> James, p. 135; PE, p. lxx.

<sup>42</sup> This is an idiosyncratic use of the term: James, p. 143 and PE, lxxviii. The term 'functional' was in use in the 1930s "but had been promoted, mainly by Malinowski at the LSE, to mark a distinction between the community-based field studies he recommended and the older evolutionary and comparative library-based studies of Tylor, Frazer and Marett" (James, p. 143). Collingwood used the term "in the sense he found explained in Penniman's overview, where it marked a break from the textual scholars and the philologists on the one hand, and those on the other who sought to place 'myths' in the context of ethnographic evidence about local ritual practise, religious or magical beliefs, and indeed everyday custom" (PE, p. lxxviii). Boucher points out that "the functional school to which Collingwood refers should be distinguished from the later attribution to Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, neither of whom were comfortable with the term" (AHS, p. 318, n. 55).

<sup>43</sup> PE, p. 133.

who goes to the field and establishes close contact with people, is free from formulating theories in the abstract.<sup>44</sup>

Let us now see how the historical method and anthropology could be used together. Collingwood after the critical appraisal of the various attempts to study fairy tales and magic, he proposes the historical method, since the problem is a historical one. Because of the fortunate situation of primitive societies contemporary to our own, magic can be studied as a living practise, empirically, and thus can be studied by the discipline of anthropology. But anthropology ought to adopt the historical method in its inquiries and the anthropologist must be aware that he is studying not a phenomenon but himself in a past condition, to realise, that is, that “our own civilization has come to be what it is by development out of a more primitive one” (PE, p. 180). This historical dimension, the fact that in a sense we can meet our own selves and our own past, is what makes anthropology important:

the civilized man contains a savage within him, in the special sense in which any historical present contains within itself its own past, and must therefore study this savage –not savages in the abstract, but the savage that he himself in this sense is– for the same reason for which all history is studied, namely to make possible a rational human life in the present day (PE, p. 180).

Therefore for Collingwood anthropology “is a special case of the problem of self-knowledge; and history is the only way in which man can know himself” (PE, p. 180). Naturalistic methods cannot be applied to a historical problem because history is the knowledge of the individual not the attempt to find uniformity and to establish generalities and universal laws. Thus when these methods try to tackle a historical problem they tend “to slur over details, emphasize similarities at the expense of diversities, and thus reduce to a spurious uniformity things which may well be essentially different” (PE, p. 181). Moreover these methods were developed for sciences that considered legitimate and necessary not to pay attention to details, and therefore when applied to a “historical subject matter, the necessary ignoring of details becomes a neglect of essentials” (PE, p. 181). For Collingwood it is a fundamental mistake to approach a historical problem with naturalistic methods and as a result “instead of yielding historical knowledge, yield a pseudo-history which is merely a magnified projection of the would-be historian’s desires upon the blank screen of the unknown past” (PE, p. 182).

Moreover, Collingwood argues, the detachment of the subject from the object, which is a presupposition of the naturalistic method, in the case of the historical subject matter

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<sup>44</sup> James says that Collingwood’s study was “from the perspective of a philosopher whose ‘fieldwork’ was concerned with evidence from remote times, rather than from the living societies of remote places” (James, p. 138).

creates a problematic distance by “the false assumption ... that subject and object are external to each other and that each is the other’s opposite” (PE, p. 182). The anthropologist, or any student of the primitive man, assuming that he is the opposite of his object –the ‘savage’– has “no real knowledge of his subject matter; the emotions that determine his conclusions are therefore emotions concerned with himself” (PE, p. 182). Whatever he has to say about the primitive man is a “mere expression of emotion, not conclusions from evidence” (PE, p. 183). Collingwood maintains that this distinction between subject and object, between the anthropologist and the ‘savage’, only disguises the horror and the “horrid fascination” of the anthropologist for these irrational and primitive elements that he recognises within himself too.<sup>45</sup> For the “historical knowledge, where the object is the subject’s past” (PE, p. 182) it is a familiar notion that the “savage is not outside us; he is inside us” (PE, p. 182) and if anthropology is to understand the beliefs and practises of the primitive people, it must change its emotional attitude towards them and “contemplate the life and mind of the savage without horror” (PE, p. 183). This, for Collingwood, can more easily be done by the field-working anthropologists since “in human contact with human beings, they have learned that there is no such thing as the abstract savage, there are only men and women, living their own lives in their own way and ... living them as decently and rationally as ourselves” (PE, p. 183).

The historical method that Collingwood proposes has two basic rules that he calls the maxim of Spinoza and the maxim of Bishop Butler. The first<sup>46</sup> maxim is “neither to condemn nor to deride the feelings and actions of men, but to understand them” (PE, p. 184).<sup>47</sup> The second<sup>48</sup> maxim is that “every thing is what it is, and not another thing” (PE, p. 186). The first rule, Collingwood contends, will reform the anthropological practise by eradicating every element of contempt, ridicule, disparagement, patronage, that the anthropologist might have towards the people he is studying and by substituting in the vocabulary of anthropology terms that might have a contemptuous connotation with terms that are just descriptive.<sup>49</sup> Understanding in that sense will mean that the anthropologist coming across, in the course of his studies, something that is perplexing “must approach it in the belief that it is intelligible” (PE, p. 185). Attributing the unusual and the perplexing character of a custom or belief to “human folly or perversity is to give up the attempt to understand it” (PE, p. 185). In Collingwood’s opinion Spinoza’s maxim will also have another function: it will help us understand ourselves. Instead of fearing, condemning and denying the savage that all have

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<sup>45</sup> PE, pp. 182-183.

<sup>46</sup> For the precise phrase of Spinoza see PE, p. 184, ft. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Collingwood’s Scheme for *The Principles of History*: “A scientific society will turn on the idea of *mastering* people (by money or war or the like) or alternatively *servicing* them (philanthropy). A historical society will turn on the idea of *understanding* them” (HS, p. 432).

<sup>48</sup> For the precise phrase of Bishop Butler see PE, p. 186, ft 5.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 184-185.

within us, we must understand him as to become “no longer a thing of horror but a friend and helper: no savage, but the heart and root of our own civilization” (PE, p. 186).

The value of the second rule, the maxim of Bishop Butler, is that will help to recognise that “our study is historical, not naturalistic, in character ... that the subject matter about which we are thinking consists of facts taken as facts, not as facts taken merely as instances” (PE, p. 186). The historian, in contrast with the natural scientist who ignores details and peculiarities, is interested in them “because they are peculiarities, and thus reveal the special historical characteristics which make one period of history different from all others” (PE, p. 187). Collingwood provides examples of the tendency of schools of interpretation, that use naturalistic principles, to ignore differences and details and thus provide a picture of the ‘savage’ as having an illogical mind that confuses one thing with another and thus forces erroneous identifications between different things.<sup>50</sup> These schools, therefore, by applying naturalistic principles, misunderstood the myths and rituals of the primitive societies. The attention to detail is a vital element in the method that Collingwood proposes for the study of all these things:

The method is to reconstruct, from all the evidence at our disposal, the social structure in which they grew up. It is thus a historical method: one proceeding not by abstraction and generalization, but by the reconstruction of fact in all its detail (PE, p. 193).

Thus, the historical method is, for Collingwood, “the only way in which man’s thought and actions can become the object of human knowledge” (PE, p. 193). By reconstruction<sup>51</sup> Collingwood refers to the manner that historical knowledge is possible and that historians attain historical knowledge:

Because history is man’s knowledge of man, not man’s knowledge of an external world, history demands, or rather brings about, a peculiar intimacy in the relation between knower and known. The historian can only understand a thought by thinking it over again for himself. If there is any type of thinking which for any reason he is unable to do for himself, he cannot thus rethink it and cannot understand it historically (PE, p. 193).

In the case of magic and similar practises the historian ought to have “inner experience of these thought-forms” (PE, p. 193), otherwise they will remain for him unintelligible. And for Collingwood magic was something that the ‘civilised’ person, although not fully aware of it, does indeed possess, and it is a familiar, everyday

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<sup>50</sup> PE, pp. 188-192.

<sup>51</sup> This term, and also the almost synonymous rethinking, is similar to what Collingwood elsewhere in his writings expressed by the term re-enactment. In PE the word re-enactment occurs too (p. 153, p. 171).



phenomenon, part of his life, his common activities and his beliefs. Collingwood's programme was to show that this is not a paradoxical statement but a concrete fact.

#### § 4. The phenomenon of magic

Magic is one of those terms that are ambiguous, having escaped proper definition and classification from the scholars and their meaning has shifted over the centuries.<sup>52</sup> Specifically within the anthropological discipline "people have on the whole dropped the term, partly because ... it seems to imply a distinctly alien mind-set" (James, p. 146). However magic has a peculiarity since (unlike other very technical anthropological terms of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century like 'taboo', 'fetish' and 'totem' that came into use from indigenous languages and they are now obsolete<sup>53</sup>) it is "an old part of religious discourse in Europe, is no universal timeless category, and needs to be understood in its context of use" (James, p. 147). Therefore this 'long and complex' history of the term magic has left 'residues of meaning' that allow for its more liberal employment.<sup>54</sup> This is the way that Collingwood uses the term magic, in a "much more diffuse and general way, drawing on some of its older layers of use in European history and literature" (James, p. 147; PE, pp. lxxxiii-lxxxiv).<sup>55</sup> This usage of the term by Collingwood evokes a sense of what can be called 'felt' power.<sup>56</sup>

As we have seen Collingwood formulated his theory of magic after he examined the anthropological and psychological theories that saw magic either as an error in understanding natural laws and scientific thinking or as a form of clinical neurosis. He thought it a mistake to compare magic with applied science or neurosis, and as a result anthropologists and psychologists misunderstood the character of magic and provided theories where magic was in effect absent. We have also seen that Collingwood's criticism to the anthropological approach was directed to the school he called 'functional', represented by Tylor and Frazer. Apart from the 'functional' school, other anthropologists were concerned with magic, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century being a time of efforts to define the term and of technical arguments among anthropologists about it.<sup>57</sup> Malinowski argued that magic should be seen and understood in its

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<sup>52</sup> James, pp. 145-146.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 147; PE, p. lxxxiv.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Given this peculiarity of the term, with its long history in Europe, it is worth considering that Collingwood approached magic in the anthropological way, that is, as a living practise by contemporary societies and not through a historical exploration. For instance Lynn Thorndike's monumental study, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, would have been available to him (at least the first two volumes, covering the first 13 centuries, published in 1923).

<sup>56</sup> James, pp. 147-148; PE, p. lxxxii, p. lxxxiv.

<sup>57</sup> James, p. 146; PE, p. lxxxii.

cultural context and distanced himself from Frazer and Freud.<sup>58</sup> He saw, however, magic as “a failure to comprehend nature” (AHS, p. 322), as “a society’s impotence in the rational control of nature” (AHS, pp. 324). Evans-Pritchard was critical to Malinowski’s interpretation and argued that “magic, rather than ‘producing changes favourable to man in the objective world’, provided an explanation of misfortune and a means to combat the mystical forces that bring it about” (AHS, p. 304). It is with Evans-Pritchard that Collingwood’s ideas have been seen as having particular similarities. Evans-Pritchard’s Cairo lectures<sup>59</sup> in 1932-3 have a lot in common with Collingwood’s writings on magic but also “significant differences of emphasis” (PE, p. lxxxiii). One of their differences is the justification of ‘primitive’ people’s rationality, which for Evans-Pritchard was catholic.<sup>60</sup> Collingwood would dissent from supporting a full rationality in explaining all the action of the ‘savages’, magic being one of them.<sup>61</sup>

The emphasis on the total rationality of actions has often appeared against theories that have perceived actions and customs unfamiliar to the observer as completely irrational. And these ideas are not a part of the past, as Boucher has shown using the study of the Languedoc peasants by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, who presupposed that beliefs in witchcraft are false and manifest a collective form of delirium.<sup>62</sup> Collingwood believed that for such serious misunderstanding to occur there must be a reason and we shouldn’t exclude even the possibility that “we, as ‘civilized’ people, are really terrified of magic” (PA, p. 64-65) and that our fear might take the “shape of a very strong disinclination to think about the subject in a cool and logical manner” (PA, p. 65).

Let us now see the basic elements of Collingwood’s theory of magic. Magic, in Collingwood’s understanding, was approached in a rationalistic, intellectual way<sup>63</sup> that resulted in a failure to grasp its essence. To that endeavour he gives a different reply:

we shall do better if we seek the source of the idea not in the savage’s intellect, but in his emotions. And since we can understand what goes on in the savage’s mind only in so far as we can experience the same thing in our own, we must find our clue in emotions to whose reality we can testify in our own persons (PE, p. 196).

As an example to demonstrate that magic is an emotional activity, Collingwood uses the connection between people and material objects, linking it to the famous example of

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<sup>58</sup> AHS, p. 316.

<sup>59</sup> For information of these lectures see James, pp. 136-137 and PE, pp. lxxxii-lxxxiii.

<sup>60</sup> James, p. 146-147; PE, p. lxxxiii.

<sup>61</sup> AHS, p. 322.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 322; PE, p. cxvi.

<sup>63</sup> This doesn’t mean that magic was not a rational activity but only that the emphasis was one-sided. Surely magic for Collingwood was a rational phenomenon. As Boucher put it the “types of behaviour that fall under the general description of magic must be comprehensible as rational, purposive activity” (AHS, p. 317).

Tylor.<sup>64</sup> Collingwood argues that we “all have a feeling –not an intellectual idea, but an emotional one” (PE, p. 196) about material things we like or have made or that signify something for us. Through these objects we can express our attachment to someone, to a situation, or even our hatred or disappointment towards certain persons.<sup>65</sup> These emotions, Collingwood maintains, “have been felt *semper, ubique, ab omnibus*” (PE, p. 198). The basic principle behind this type of relationship between people and things “is the idea of certain material objects as ... outposts or deposits of one’s personality in the external world: an idea which arises spontaneously, without any theoretical or intellectual basis, from our emotional nature” (PE, pp. 198-199).

From this principle Collingwood contends that a theory of magic can be constructed. Two elements need to exist in order to have a magical ritual. These elements can exist independently but as such they don’t constitute magic yet; it’s only when they have a certain connection that the role of magic can be established. The first element is a person who has such an attachment to a material object so that if this object should be damaged, he will suffer some kind of injury, which, in Collingwood’s view, is a serious emotional injury, not to be ridiculed as a fictitious, unreal one.<sup>66</sup> The second element that needs to exist is another person harbouring hostile emotions towards the first person and by damaging the object itself (being aware of the relationship between it and the person he hates) or an effigy of that person he will express or release his hostile emotions.<sup>67</sup> These two elements when combined in a certain situation “become genuinely magical” (PE, p. 200). This occurs when the act of hatred is “performed in a society where ... the established habits ... are such that the victim knows or fears that the agent is acting in this way, and consequently sustains injury in the shape of mortification and whatever consequences that implies” (PE, p. 200). Collingwood argues that this is a “complete magic act; not a mere harmless release of emotion, but an actual assault upon the victim”, since the victim “loses confidence in himself, forfeits the respect of others, and may develop the symptoms of disease” (PE, p. 200). In that situation the “agent’s belief that he is really injuring the victim ... is ... well founded: because the victim is emotionally vulnerable, the injury he sustains is a genuine one” (PE, p. 200).

Collingwood concludes that this specific example of magic –the connection between ourselves and some object and the harm we sustain through the magical damaging of the

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<sup>64</sup> Collingwood refers to that example both in PE, pp. 195-196 and in PA, pp. 59-61.

<sup>65</sup> PE, pp. 196-198.

<sup>66</sup> PE, p. 199. Collingwood, as in PA, attaches a very important role to the consequences that such an emotional situation might have for a person. It is a real injury since it can often produce “as a symptom some physiological disturbance hardly different from the symptom of organic disease” (PE, p. 199).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

object— is not the only one that has an emotional basis; that magic is emotional “is true not of one type of magic only, but of all magic” (PE, p. 201).<sup>68</sup>

Having, thus, constructed a theory of magic that applies to primitive societies, Collingwood investigates whether magic is also present in civilised societies. Because although both ‘savages’ and ‘civilised’ people share the emotional element that makes magic possible, this doesn’t necessarily mean that the expression of these emotions through magical practises is still a living practise within civilised societies. In fact it seems that in our civilisation magic is “the exception rather than the rule” (PE, p. 205). This however is odd since magic “is an expression of emotion, and grows up naturally and inevitably from its emotional roots” (PE, p.205), thus what exists in primitives societies should exist among civilised too. Collingwood argues that what indeed has happened is not that magic is absent from our societies, but that the emotional element has been suppressed by the utilitarian attitude, “the habit of justifying every act, every custom, every institution, by showing its utility ... the only kind of value that a thing can have” (PE, p. 206), that our civilisation for several centuries had been cultivating. Things not easily justified within the utilitarian spirit are treated with suspicion and this is particularly obvious in activities where the emotional element is dominant. This is the reason, Collingwood contends, why art and religion are “things not altogether respectable” (PE, p. 206) in our societies; this is the reason why the savage and his magical practises as “the systematic and organized expression of emotion” (PE, p. 207) frighten the civilised man: in them he sees something familiar but he has convinced himself he is not allowed to embrace it. In the end the civilised man faces a situation where the utilitarian principles are so dominant that they disguise the truth about our lives and our emotional states: magic, instead of being something alien, incomprehensible and the mistake of an unscientific mind, is a way to “resolve emotional conflicts in the agent and so readjust him to the practical life for which these conflicts render him unfitted” (PE, p. 208). And this way to resolve our emotional conflicts is a real, living, everyday phenomenon of our civilisation.<sup>69</sup> Magic and its emotional element “can be verified as existing, and even sometimes as giving rise to definite customs, in and among ourselves” (PE, p. 221).

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<sup>68</sup> To justify his claim Collingwood gives various examples and his own interpretation; see PE, pp. 201-205.

<sup>69</sup> Collingwood provides various examples of civilised habits and manners that support a magical character. These are not unusual or marginal cases, but recognisable manifestations of our ordinary lives: washing our hands before meals, our clothing and hats, our attitude towards tools and machines etc. See PE, pp. 208-221.

## § 5. Magic and Art

### *a. Magic and Art in the Folktale writings*

We have seen so far that Collingwood's interest in fairy tales as historical evidence necessitates the understanding of magic, since magic is the essential element of fairy tales. We have also seen that the study of magic can be better pursued by anthropology, since magic is a living phenomenon in the societies anthropologists study. We have also seen the rudiments of Collingwood's theory of magic and his understanding of magic as the expression of emotions. This brings us to the significant issue of magic's relation with art and the role of emotions in human understanding.

Having defined magic as expression of emotion, Collingwood observes that the "expression of emotion as such is the essential business of art" (PE, p. 225).<sup>70</sup> He contends that art and magic are indeed related, a relation that can be testified in palaeolithic cave art, medieval architecture and other areas where the religious or the magical motive –for Collingwood argues that religion and magic are closely related too– can be found behind the artistic work.<sup>71</sup> Why art and magic are thus related can be explained by the fact that they are "to this extent the same thing, that each is essentially the expression of emotion" (PE, p. 226). Of course magic and art are different too, since "[a]ll magic is art, but all art is not magic" (PE, p. 226). Magic uses artistic works (such as songs, dances, drawings etc.) for its purposes, but these works don't have to be –and usually are not– good works of art, since what they need to serve is the magical element and not the aesthetic one.<sup>72</sup> Thus magic is "a special modification of art ... a special way of expressing emotion" (PE, p. 227). The difference is not only that magic as an expression of emotion is a bad or mediocre form of art. Magic is art in that it uses artistic ways for certain purposes and although the generic purpose –expression of emotion– is the same, art and magic differ in the specific purpose, in the way that each one expresses emotion.

For art the expression of an emotion is the discharge of it through the work of art, achieving, thus, a feeling of alleviation or catharsis.<sup>73</sup> Magic doesn't want such catharsis, the expression of emotion should not discharge it but "crystallize" it so that it can be later discharged through action.<sup>74</sup> Collingwood argues that these two different ways to express emotion correspond to two different ways we can consider an emotion: "in itself, as a peculiar

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<sup>70</sup> Collingwood was properly to define art as the expression of emotion in the PA. The reference here, in a work written before 1938, indicates that his ideas about art and emotion were already established.

<sup>71</sup> PE, p. 226.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 226-227.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 228.

and self-contained experience; or ... in its relation to practical life, as a motive for acting in a particular manner” (PE, p. 228). Art considers an emotion in the first way, magic in the second:

The artist ... expresses his feelings<sup>75</sup> as self-contained experiences: the question which interests him is what these experiences are, and his construction or enjoyment of a work of art is the creation or discovery of a form of expression which serves to answer that question. ... [In magic] feelings are expressed not as pure experiences, not simply because they are feelings we discover in ourselves on a certain type of occasion ... but as the motives instigating us to act in a certain type of way (PE, p. 228).

*b. Magic and Art in the Principles of Art*

Collingwood explored the connection between magic and art was in PA as well. In PA, however, magic was not the expression but the arousal of emotion, the evocation of certain emotion “for their practical value” (PA, p. 57). The expression of emotion was reserved only for art. Collingwood presented his theory of magic against the anthropological theory that linked magic to science, or pseudo science, and the psychological theory that linked magic to neurosis. Against those theories Collingwood proposed that the “only profitable way of theorizing about magic is to approach it from the side of art” (PA, p. 65). He detected that unlike magic and science or magic and the pathological condition of neurosis “the similarities between magic and art are both strong and intimate. Magical practises invariably contain, not as peripheral elements but as central elements, artistic activities like dances, songs, drawing, or modelling” (PA, p. 65). If magic is akin to art, its methods do not constitute art proper but what Collingwood has designated as craft. This because magic has an aim, a preconceived end, to the accomplishment of which all the above elements (dance, songs etc.) are used. And for magic this end “is the arousing of emotions” (PA, p. 65). Collingwood argues that even if it is nor very obvious that magic’s aim is “always and solely the arousing of certain emotions” (PA, p. 66) there are non the less cases that it is clear such as in the tribal war-dances or the various agricultural rituals of peasant societies.<sup>76</sup> Moreover Collingwood believes that there is an element of control and manipulation so that the emotions “aroused by magical acts are not discharged by those acts. It is important for the practical life of the people concerned that this should not happen; and magical practises are magical precisely because they have been so designed that it shall not happen. The contrary is what happens: these emotions are focused and crystallized, consolidated into effective agents in practical life” (PA, p. 66). And

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<sup>75</sup> Collingwood here still uses emotion and feeling interchangeably. Later in the PA and the NL he will make a distinction between them.

<sup>76</sup> PA, p. 66.

Collingwood goes on to say that this character of magic –the practises that aim to arouse emotions– clearly observed in certain instances, is the character of magic in general; magic doesn't have any other function if not the arousing of emotions:

I am suggesting that these emotional effects, partly on the performers themselves, partly on others favourably or unfavourably affected by the performance, are the only effects which magic can produce, and the only ones which, when intelligently performed, it is meant to produce. The primary function of all magical acts, I am suggesting, is to generate in the agent or agents certain emotions that are considered necessary or useful for the work of living; their secondary function is to generate in others, friends or enemies of the agent, emotions useful or detrimental to the lives of these others (PA, pp. 66-67).

For Collingwood the emotional element is something very strong indeed and for everyone who understands “the effect which our emotions have on the success or failure of our enterprises, and in the production or cure of diseases, it will be clear that this theory of magic amply accounts for its ordinary everyday employment in connexion with the ordinary everyday activities of the people who believe in it” (PA, p. 67). The emotional effect when considered in its negative form, that is as aiming to damage morale, it can potentially have dramatic consequences to the extent that it “might produce diseases of various kinds and even death” (PA, p. 67).

When it comes to the question of how the magical practises produce these special emotional effects Collingwood's answer is, by representation:<sup>77</sup>

A situation is created ... representing the practical situation upon which emotion is to be directed. It is essential to the magical efficacy of the act that the agent shall be conscious of this relation, and shall recognize what he is doing as a war-dance, a plough-ritual, or the like. This is why, on first approaching the ritual, he must have it explained to him, either by word of mouth (which may take the form of initiatory instruction, or of an explanatory speech or song forming part of the ritual itself) or by such close mimicry that mistake is impossible (PA, p. 68).

This is an interesting point, the fact that a certain, or a strong, degree of familiarity, of understanding and of acceptance needs to be present in order for the magical practises to have the desired effects. It might be argued that the anthropologists or their informants or any other outside the initiated circle, when witnessing the magical rituals did not –or could not– share the emotional elements that the participants, knowing more of the meaning of the ceremony, did.<sup>78</sup> For the anthropologist himself the ritual would be devoid of meaning and wouldn't have any effect on him.

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<sup>77</sup> For more about representation see PA, pp. 42-56.

<sup>78</sup> At least not on purpose. The same or similar emotion might have been evoked accidentally, that is not for the same purpose. It is a more interesting idea the possibility of the initiated and the outsider to have experienced the same or similar emotion for the same purpose. I take that as something not too far

One more question needs to be asked about Collingwood's theory of magic in PA. The production or evocation of the emotion is specific; Collingwood mentions that magic's function is the representation and evocation of "some emotions rather than others" (PA, p. 69). The specific practical activity, towards which we want to direct the effects of the emotion, requires specific emotion or emotions. We might assume that for a battle the emotions of courage, fearlessness and so forth need to be evoked and not that of happiness, fear and so on. How are we to evoke a specific emotion, instead of any other emotion, that a specific practical activity requires? I believe an answer can be better given from what Collingwood says in PE. There the distinction between art and magic was that art apprehends emotions as a pure experience, while magic apprehends emotions as a motive for action and not as an experience, not simply as something that "we discover in ourselves on a certain type of occasion" (PE, p. 228). This happens precisely because if we were to apprehend an emotion as a pure experience then for the purposes of a war we could not have been certain that a war dance would bring forward our fearlessness and bravery since it "might very well have expressed<sup>79</sup> our fear of wounds and death" (PE, p.229). Thus the purpose of the magic is to make this distinction clear by initiation and instruction and by the appropriate ceremonies to make sure that the proper emotions for the situation will be evoked. The ultimate proof of the efficacy of the magical ritual will be the warrior's bravery in the battle, the farmer's enthusiasm in cultivating his land and so forth.

We might also consider the situation where the emotion that ought to be evoked is already present in the agent. In the case, for instance, of a generally fearless warrior it appears that there is no need to evoke in him the emotion of courage before the war. In that case no harm is done by performing the ritual anyway. Besides it might be argued that most magical practises have a collective character and those members of the group that might already be in the emotional state that the magical ceremony wants to arouse, should still partake in the ritual for the sake of solidarity within the group. Through participation, the collective spirit is reinforced and the stronger ones might serve as a good example for the weaker.

### *c. Some considerations*

Summarising then Collingwood, in PA, saw magic as "a representation where the emotion evoked is an emotion valued on account of its function in practical life, evoked in order that it may discharge that function, and fed by the generative or focusing magical activity into the

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fetched, in which case a stronger emotional unity could be attributed to humans. Collingwood has explored something along these lines in the PE.

<sup>79</sup> Expression was Collingwood's context in PE. However the evocation of an emotion faces the same danger too.



practical life that needs it" (PA, p. 68). The value of magic and the theory Collingwood developed in order to explain it, have not a limited application. They are not, that is, only concerned to explain a phenomenon that anthropologists observed in 'savage' societies or a disturbing remnant in the low strata of civilised societies. Moreover Collingwood's view frees magic from any negative connotation within the above context, let alone from the psychological associations between magic and the pathological condition of neurosis. Instead Collingwood believes that:

magic is a necessity for every sort and condition of man, and is actually found in every healthy society. A society which thinks, as our own thinks, that it has outlived the need for magic, is either mistaken in that opinion, or else it is a dying society, perishing for lack of interest in its own maintenance (PA, p. 69).

This is the theory of magic Collingwood presented in PA. In that book it was within the context of art that he did so. Magic can be contrasted with art because of the use of artistic activities in magical practises and ceremonies. Also they were contrasted because both art and magic are concerned with emotion. Thus there was enough scope for magic and art to be treated together. However in the case of art the emotion is expressed while in the case of magic is aroused. The difference between arousing and expressing emotion can lead to a distinction between art proper and pseudo-art. In that context magic is a form of pseudo-art.

In PE Collingwood contrasted art and magic on similar grounds. Magic uses artistic ways for its purposes and both are concerned with emotion. However the difference was not as sharp as in PA: both activities were the expression of emotion. The difference was that in art the expression of emotion is discharged and thus effects a catharsis, while in magic it should not be discharged by the expression as such but used to be discharged later in some practical activity. Magic in this context was art but a special modification of art, a different way of expressing emotion. In PE art and magic are more closely connected than in PA.

The different contexts within which Collingwood developed his idea about magic are important in understanding the difference of emphasis. In PE he explored how fairy tales can be used as historical evidence and thus be able to provide us with historical knowledge. The main element of fairy tales being, in Collingwood's interpretation, magic then magic in PE can be seen within a historical context, that is as something that can give historical knowledge by informing us about the mind of the people who created fairy tales. We should not forget that this was the main objective in Collingwood's study of magic: the understanding of fairy tales. The historically minded anthropologist should study and understand the living societies where magic is still an everyday phenomenon. Then this understanding will facilitate an understanding of the people who created and told fairy tales.

In PA, in contrast, Collingwood's aim was to distinguish between art and forms that were often confused with art. Magic was one of them, since the use of artistic ways (dances, songs, modelling) for purposes that involve emotions could very well create a confusion as to whether magic is art or not. Collingwood's painstaking analysis was, therefore, to show how this confusion, if studied carefully, could be dispelled. First he showed that the presence of artistic activities as such couldn't indicate that something is or isn't art: all forms of pseudo-art do use artistic activities, and in some cases so well that can be practically indistinguishable from art proper. It is the use of these activities that will tell us whether they serve an artistic or a non artistic purpose: if they are used as means to a preconceived end then they constitute craft and not art proper; and magic is a craft, since the artistic element of the magical ceremonies has a purpose that has been defined in advance. Second thing that Collingwood showed was that art proper was an emotional activity and since other forms of pseudo art involve the emotional element, the distinction was the way the emotion would come forward: in the case of art proper it was by expressing it, in the case of non art it was by arousing it. Magic belongs to the latter category, since the ceremonies were performed with the preconceived purpose of generating specific emotions in the participants. And as a pseudo-art magic cannot have a genuine claim to be knowledge, unlike art proper whose aim is the attainment of knowledge through the expression of emotions.

One point of criticism of Collingwood's theory is that magic apart from being an emotional activity –or emotive– is also instrumental in the sense that “the participants also regard their rites as effective means of achieving such ends as making rain or making the crops grow”.<sup>80</sup> This is erroneous. The only instrumental function that magic can have is to assist with the conduct of the practical aspects of life by generating the appropriate emotions for the occasion: a war dance will boost the morale of the warriors so to fight more successfully; but it will not substitute the actual fighting of the battle. If this occurs then we do not have magic but the perversion of it. Collingwood is clear about this distinction both in the PA and PE. He says for instance that there are cases that ‘savages’:

believe, or seem to believe, that magic can do things which we ‘civilized’ men believe to be impossible, like making rain or stopping earthquakes. I am quite prepared to think that they do entertain such beliefs; savages are no more exempt from human folly than civilized men, and are no doubt equally liable to the error of thinking that they, or the persons they regard as their superior, can do what in fact cannot be done. But this error is not the essence of magic; it is a perversion of magic (PA, 67-68).

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<sup>80</sup> H. Saari. 1998. ‘R.G. Collingwood’s Emotivist Theory of Magic’, in *CS*, vol. V, pp. 90-108 (Hereafter abbreviated as Saari), p. 96. Saari bases his analysis and criticism of Collingwood’s theory mainly on PA.

In PE<sup>81</sup> Collingwood refers to this perversion more extensively and argues that “it is this perversion of magic to which, when we speak of magic, we sometimes exclusively refer” (PE, p. 231). For Collingwood this perversion is:

the false belief that when we have expressed the emotions instigating a certain course of action we have as good as done the corresponding action itself: the belief that the fruits of action can be enjoyed by means of merely expressing our desire for them (PE, p. 231).

When this perversion arises the magical ceremonies act as a substitute and not as a preparation for the action; magic becomes pseudo science in that people believe they can achieve their ends by absurd means; and people are persuaded that by magic they can do things that cannot be done at all, like manipulating natural phenomena.<sup>82</sup>

Another criticism of Collingwood’s theory of magic is that he incorrectly sees the arousal and the expression of emotion, in those involved in the ceremonies, as two things that exclude each other, where in fact in most cases of magic the two exist together.<sup>83</sup> This cannot be correct because in expressing an emotion we don’t know what this emotion is until it is expressed. The arousal of emotion is the deliberate arousal of a certain emotion and not of another, in which case there would be the danger of arousing the wrong emotion for the occasion and the subsequent course of action would be disastrous. Moreover there is an evident conflict between expressing and arousing and emotion: the expression of the emotion has a liberating effect on us and its expression is not followed by a further action. But arousing an emotion is not the end of our business but the beginning: the emotion should lead us to further action. If the expression was also the function of a magical ceremony then there would be the danger of “discharging, through an act of aesthetic creation, the feelings which ought to remain alive as motives to practical action” (PE, p. 233). Therefore the expression of an emotion would result in discharging and will create the illusion of us having achieved our aims. This, for Collingwood, is also the perversion of magic.

Lastly an interesting point is how and if magic –as an emotional activity– is related to thought. In PE Collingwood indeed contrasts the emotional aspect of magic with the

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<sup>81</sup> PE, pp. 230-234.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231. There is however one case of magic, Collingwood contends, that the ritual itself could be enough to achieve the result without any other form of action. This is when the magical activities are directed to another human being: by the expression of hostile emotions through the magical ceremonies the emotions of that person will suffer as well (PE, p. 232).

<sup>83</sup> Saari, pp. 100-103. The difference of how magic is conceived in PE –expression of emotions– and PA – arousal of emotion– might create certain confusion. However since Saari’s account is based on PA, I consider his argument problematic, given that the distinction, in PA, between expression and arousal is fundamental. In PE magic’s ‘expression’ cannot be the same as what Collingwood meant by ‘expression’ in PA; Collingwood in PE didn’t distinguish between expression and arousal but only argued that magic and art express emotions in a different way.

intellectual principles according to which the anthropologist and the psychologist approached magic unsuccessfully. Does this mean that magic is only an emotional activity and has nothing to do with thought? This is certainly not the case in PA, where Collingwood propounded a theory of mind, where thoughts and emotions are intimately connected. Therefore when Collingwood refers to art and magic as activities that pertain to emotions, this cannot mean that they are not related to thought.<sup>84</sup> Moreover as I have tried to show in chapter II, the unity of mind was present in most of Collingwood's writings, with the exception of IH. Although this connection is not overtly present in the folklore writings, Collingwood does say that the historian of the fairy tales must reconstruct the 'life and thought' or the 'experience'<sup>85</sup>, and it has been argued that in this "movement from 'thought' to 'experience' (as potentially including emotion) the subject matter of history has opened up" (PE, p. xli) and that "Collingwood seems to open a way for the re-enactment of emotions in their interdependence of 'thought'" (Smallwood, p. 15).<sup>86</sup>

I think it is fair to argue that the exact relation between thoughts and emotions and the applicability of the doctrine of re-enactment was something not very well developed in PE. The unfinished state of these writings might be one reason. Most important, however, is that the folklore writings should be seen as a part of Collingwood effort to expand historical understanding. Fairy tales, in order to provide historical evidence, must be a product of the thinking mind, the implication being that magic cannot be an activity devoid of an intellectual element.

## § 6. Conclusions

Collingwood's writings on fairy tales can be seen in certain respects –and outside his archaeological studies– as a work very close to what might be considered proper history. Fairy tales for Collingwood are a manifestation of the human mind and as such they can be used as historical evidence and enlarge our historical knowledge and understanding. I believe that one of the main reasons that Collingwood chose fairy tales was because of the difficulties they present to the serious historical study. In that respect he is similar to Giambattista Vico, who studied distant and obscure periods of history and difficult subjects in order to advance the historical knowledge and method.

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<sup>84</sup> I think Saari is right when he argues that "Collingwood does not make explicit in his discussion of magic that magical rites also express thoughts" (Saari, p. 107, n. 3).

<sup>85</sup> For instance PE, p. 128, p. 129.

<sup>86</sup> Dray has similarly suggested that the idea of re-enactment in connection with "forms of human experience other than action–appetites, emotions, or beliefs, for example" (Dray, p. 324) is something of a 'loose end' and that a "useful source in this connection might be what is said about understanding in the writings on folklore" (Dray, p. 324, n.1).

Fairy tales had been the focus of attention and systematic study since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and Collingwood investigated three attempts of interpretation: the German philological school of Grimm and Müller, the anthropological school of Tylor and Frazer and the psychological school of Freud and Jung. He found that all three contributed to the study of fairy tales but their conclusions were not altogether satisfactory. For Collingwood the main, and common in all three schools, mistake was the methods they adopted, which were heavily influenced by positivistic and naturalistic principles. The problem of these methods was that they were prone to generalisations and treated their subject as an external phenomenon to be observed in the same way as the phenomena in nature. As a solution to this problem Collingwood proposed the use of the historical method which favours the attention to individual facts and the understanding of the subject not as a phenomenon outside us but as an experience we commonly share in our capacity as humans.

Collingwood believed that in order to understand fairy tales we need to study and understand magic since magic was the basic ingredient of fairy tales. The anthropological and psychological schools saw the connection between fairy tales and magic but gave, Collingwood argued, an incorrect account of magic either as an error in the understanding and application of natural science or as a form of neurosis. Therefore if such an idea of magic was to be applied in fairy tales it would no doubt result in considering the makers of fairy tales as people whose concept of the world was naïve, absurd and deranged. However anthropology was regarded by Collingwood a valuable ally of the historical method in the study of magic. This help was not to come from the 'anthropological folklorists' that Collingwood criticised, but from his contemporary anthropology, which was dedicated to fieldwork and to close contact with the people under study. Collingwood knew from his archaeological work that the use of analogy, if used intelligently, could assist the archaeologist. The ethnographic record could point to similarities between archaeological artefacts and those found in the 'primitive' societies that the ethnologist studies. The study of magic can follow the same principle. As an activity that is present in various societies –in many respects different than the modern western ones– can be effectively studied by the field anthropologist who possesses the historical consciousness that Collingwood propounded. This study and understanding of magic will help the student of fairy tales too. Moreover magic cannot only be found in 'primitive' but among modern societies as well. The anthropologist can more easily study magic in primitive societies, where it is something accepted and openly practised. In modern societies, however, magic wouldn't be readily recognised not because, as Collingwood argues, it is genuinely absent but because it has been suppressed. But for the resourceful and acute observer the manifestations of magic in a modern society are plentiful.

The ubiquity, Collingwood thinks, is a result of magic's character. Magic, as an emotional activity, doesn't perform a function necessary only to certain societies and

civilisations, but facilitates an emotional response to our lives that is vital for all. That is why magic can be found everywhere. When modern societies renounce magic as obsolete and unfamiliar they do considerable harm to their emotional well being, while the 'primitive' people by embracing magic make possible the healthy expression of their emotions.

Collingwood's theory of magic as the expression of emotions brought magic very close to art. In PE they are almost the same thing, they only differ in the way they express emotion: magic's expression is a motive for further action, art's expression is a self-contained experience with no further end. In PA, however, magic is not art proper but an activity which, due to the similarities with art proper, is often confused with it. Art proper is the expression of emotions and through this expression art becomes knowledge: the knowledge of the individual, in effect the same things as history. Magic now is not the expression but the arousal of emotions. It seems that the distinction that Collingwood made in PA between art and non art entails the distinction between knowledge and non knowledge. The expression of emotion is an intentional process<sup>87</sup> but also a process that cannot beforehand tell which emotion will be expressed. Only by expressing the emotion we come to know it. Magic –and for that purpose also amusement (pseudo-art)– arouses specific emotions for ends that have been pre-conceived. The arousal of emotions is intentional but it is also known what kind of emotions we need or desire to arouse. If the wrong emotion is aroused then the end result will not have been achieved.

I believe it is not entirely clear what the difference is between Collingwood's two ways to define magic: magic as expression of emotions in PE, magic as arousal of emotions in PA. Both have in common that there is a practical motive involved in the expression or the arousal of the emotion and thus the emotion to be expressed or aroused has to be specific. It could be argued, therefore, that magic in PE (expression of emotions) is effectively the same thing as magic in PA (arousal of emotions) and since magic in PA is not knowledge, the same applies to magic in PE. But to argue like that is, I think, rather misleading and reads back to PE concepts articulated in PA. The difference in the meaning occurs because Collingwood uses his theory of magic in two different contexts, for two quite different purposes.

Magic in PA is utilitarian while art is not and arouses specific emotions while art does not. On the other hand the arousal of emotion in magic is different to the arousal of emotion in pseudo-art or amusement. Magic stimulates emotions with the intention to help our everyday life affairs and thus has a practical, useful function. But the excitement of emotion by amusement is not useful but only enjoyable and acts as a substitute for the release of real life emotions. Magic, as formulated in PE, is a more detailed and comprehensive theory with

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<sup>87</sup> Boucher argues that the emotions that magic expresses must be put "into the category of the criteriological human sciences, that is, thought as a self-critical and self-referential activity, setting itself purposes and devising ways to enact them" (AHS, p. 324).

the aim to help us understand fairy tales. Fairy tales, Collingwood asserts, can be used as historical evidence and augment our historical knowledge. Thus magic, the essence of fairy tales, cannot fall short of being a form of knowledge.

For the same reason magic cannot exclude thought and the folklore writings can be seen as a manifestation of mind's unity. Collingwood's reference to magic in PE as an emotional and not an intellectual activity, rather alerts against the intellectualism of the anthropological and psychological interpretations of magic. The intellectualism was the distance created between the 'civilised' student and the 'savage' and the subsequent inability of the former to understand the customs and beliefs of the latter. Collingwood maintains that the historian of fairy tales, through his understanding of magic, will come to know and understand the whole life, the thought and the experience of the people who created those fairy tales. Therefore the historian by understanding magic will understand much more than the emotional element in it: he will understand the mind of those people. And a mind without thought doesn't exist.

The folklore writings are a clear manifestation of how Collingwood perceived human understanding to be: every appearance of the unified mind. He suggested an unusual area – fairy tales– to enlarge our historical knowledge and he also realised how fairy tales and magic can convey the fundamental place of the emotional element in human actions. It is also of note that Collingwood chose fairy tales, a human utterance most civil and urbane. In the realm of fairy tales the mind finds itself not surrounded by fantasies but by possibilities to construct and comprehend its world.

## CONCLUSION

In my thesis I have argued about the central role of human understanding in Collingwood's philosophy. To do so I have examined four major areas: the role of psychology, the unity of mind, the role of art and the case of fairy tales as a source of historical knowledge. The way I see these areas linked in an overall theme relates to how they construct a coherent idea of human understanding. I contend, therefore, that the contribution and originality of my study consists in connecting these areas in such a way as to recognise human understanding as a shift from the knowledge of the united spirit to the knowledge of the historical consciousness. The historical consciousness is the highest form of human understanding. In consequence we should understand Collingwood very differently from writers who placed human understanding within a naturalistic framework, reduced mind into matter and attempted to explain it in terms of methods developed for the sciences of matter. Also Collingwood's approach is very different to that of the social sciences that –heavily influenced by the scientific methods– regarded human activities, utterances, conduct and so forth, as instances of more general laws, instances that fall within wider patterns of explanation. Instead, Collingwood's philosophy and human understanding give emphasis to the mental aspect that is not reduced to a mere physical and material dimension and the historical consciousness presents the individual as the only concrete fact.<sup>1</sup>

What the above attempts have in common is the belief in uniformity of human behaviour which is due to an alleged common human nature. If all the parameters of human nature can be found then everything will be understood and become a matter of safe predictions. It seems, therefore, that the naturalistic and the social science's models neglect the historical element of man. They neglect the idea of understanding as an ongoing, unfolding and surprising process, a process of constant creation and discovery. Instead, these models promote ideas of regulation, prediction and so forth. The desire for catholic

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<sup>1</sup> These are elements that can also be found in the works of the Italian Idealists. For Collingwood's relationship with the Italian idealism see: J. Connelly. 1995. 'Art Thou the Man: Croce, Gentile or de Ruggiero?', in *PHC*, pp. 92-114; B.A. Haddock. 1999. 'Collingwood, Croce and the characterization of historical knowledge', in *Humanitas. Studi in memoria di Antonio Verri. Vol. 1*. A cura di Antonio Quarta e Paolo Pellegrino. Mario Congedo editore, pp. 355-368; H.S. Harris. 1995. 'Croce and Gentile in Collingwood's *New Leviathan*', in *PHC*, pp. 115-129; R. Peters. 1995. 'Croce, Gentile and Collingwood on the Relation between History and Philosophy', in *PHC*, pp. 152-167; C.G. Reda. 1995. 'Considerations on Collingwood and Italian Thought', in *CS*, vol. II, pp. 213-232. Collingwood also translated some of de Ruggiero's works in English: G. de Ruggiero. 1921. *Modern Philosophy*. London, Allen and Unwin, (translated by R.G. Collingwood with A.H. Hannay); G. de Ruggiero. 1931. 'Science, History and Philosophy', in *Journal of Philosophical Studies*, vol. 6, pp. 166-179.



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knowledge and understanding of man becomes synonymous with the desire to foresee out of an excessive fear of the future uncertainty and an absurd preoccupation with control.

My thesis examined Collingwood's philosophy as a system and as a form of dialectic of different forms of experience. Therefore my interpretation was closer to the ones, such as Mink's and Rubinoff's, that emphasise these two elements and consider SM a very important book for Collingwood's philosophy. What we found in Collingwood, I believe, is a dialectic where the various forms of experience move from the united spirit to the consciousness of history. All forms of experience operate within history, become autonomous and in order to do so must also be forms of knowledge. Thus interpretations, like Mink's, that deny the status of knowledge for art are different from mine. The idea of dialectic, since it requires seeing a philosophy as a system, is at odds with readings that favour a strict periodisation and categorisation of writings, and approach them selectively. Knox and Donagan both adopted such schemes, attached little attention to SM and as a result their interpretations, I think, suffer. My interpretation also deviated from Dray's. He maintained that –whether Collingwood's philosophical writings are considered parts of a single system that needs to be understood or as attempts, perhaps even unsuccessful, at elaborating such a system– particular issues such as history have been obscured by this preoccupation with larger questions. Dray points out Mink's and Rubinoff's books as such attempts and he argues that the latter book “develops a quasi-Hegelian interpretation” (Dray, pp. 3-4) of Collingwood. Whether Collingwood's philosophy can be interpreted along Hegelian lines is not something that should concern us here, but that Collingwood's philosophy is a system is in my opinion beyond doubt. The particular issue of history, that Dray mentions, certainly became of paramount importance for Collingwood, but it is not history for history's sake that informed his writings. History was after all just one of the forms of experience in SM. Collingwood was, instead, preoccupied with explaining experience and this is why his philosophy is a system. In the end it was through history that he sought to explain the whole of experience: experience can be only understood historically and history is nothing but the manifestations of the various forms of experience.

With psychology, I began in the negative by showing what Collingwood considered an erroneous attempt to understand man as mind. The problem with psychology, as Collingwood understood it, was that it came to study the human mind (and thus compete with philosophy) having adopted the methods of the natural sciences, which were orientated towards a materialistic approach with any area of investigation. But man in his capacity as mind, Collingwood argued, is not matter and thus cannot be studied by a naturalistic science. Psychology, instead, is limited to studying man as body, the physical organism, alongside

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with other sciences (such as physiology) that study man as a material entity. More specifically Collingwood recognised the study of feelings as the appropriate subject matter for psychology.

That the psychology of feeling became possible was the result of how Collingwood developed his understanding of the mind. His early ideas regarded the mind as a unity of immediacy and mediation, that is, of sensation/feeling and thought. He understood the way we experience as an undivided whole. We can distinguish elements within experience but these distinctions are abstractions and if we assume that the elements of the mind can be divided we are mistaken. Therefore to study the mind means to study a unity. His main works that presented this view of the mind were RP and SM. The implication of the unity of mind for psychology was that if the claim to study the mind as matter was mistaken, then psychology altogether should be proclaimed erroneous. And I have tried to show that this is how we should interpret Collingwood's early position on psychology. However in the late 1920's and more clearly in IH, Collingwood developed a different philosophy of mind and as a consequence the psychology of feelings became possible. In the philosophy of history lectures of 1928 he claimed that history, as the study of the mind, should only concern itself with thought in the widest sense, which includes all the conscious elements of the mind. Thus by leaving out the unconscious elements Collingwood sees now the mind as something that can be divided. In IH the division of the mind is also present in the form of rational and irrational elements, the latter including emotions too.

I have tried to show that the view of the divided mind was the outcome of the introduction of the re-enactment doctrine and that it must be seen as an aberration in Collingwood's philosophy of mind. For the unity of mind found in Collingwood's early philosophy re-appears after the interim of 1928 and IH in all his later writings, where emotions are important to the understanding of human actions and belong to the concerns of history, the study, that is, of the mind as a whole consisting of thoughts and emotions. Thus the initial unity of mind is later completely restored, but for the elements that became the subject matter of psychology. In PA Collingwood refers to these elements as the psychical level of experience that includes feelings but not emotions, although an emotional charge is involved. In NL the situation is more complicated since feelings are an *apanage* of mind and within the province of the sciences of the mind and not the sciences of body or matter. But feelings are sometimes connected to the psychological sense of the term body. Hence a certain ambiguity exists as to the absolute boundaries of feelings in NL, but in this book the unity of mind has a very close connection with the unity of mind that Collingwood advocated in his early writings, where feelings-sensations, emotions and thoughts formed an undivided whole.

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So far we have seen that psychology, as the science of thought, fails to provide human understanding; and that the unity of mind shows the way, *how* our experience should be studied if we want to attain understanding. But experience can also be studied *as something*. The unity of mind in SM is a unity of experience in its immediacy and its mediation. But it is also a dialectic unity of the spirit's forms. Thus apart from the general character of experience as a unity of sensation, feeling, thought (immediacy-mediation), experience has also forms that retain the general character of experience: each form is the synthesis of sensation, feeling and thought. The forms that the character of experience takes were, in SM, art, religion, science, history and philosophy. Collingwood considered the claim that each form of experience is knowledge, but argued that alone each is incomplete and cannot yield knowledge. It is only through their gradual, dialectic connection that the spirit is finally united, all the different forms of experience become identical and knowledge is attained.

The character of art that Collingwood defined in SM was Croce's focus of criticism in an otherwise positive review of that book.<sup>2</sup> For he agreed that Collingwood's position was irrefutable when it comes to religion, history and science, but thought his position regarding art fallacious. The preoccupation of Croce with art or Poetry was also to become Collingwood's preoccupation. And it was art that Collingwood explored in relation to an epistemological autonomy. Gradually his theory of knowledge propounded in SM, the dialectic of the various forms of experience, gave way to a theory of knowledge that was constructed around the historical consciousness, history as the only way to know the mind. The various forms of experience now operate within history and are not incomplete forms of knowledge but autonomous and epistemologically valid in their own respect. Collingwood mainly explored history and art as forms of experience, and science and –to a greater extent– religion do not receive similar attention. But as in SM, where the number of the forms of experience was not important, so now the ways that the mind can know itself do not require a detailed classification. All we need to know is that –as in the case of fairy tales where the historical mind knows itself through the activity of story telling– all the ways or forms of experience are expressions and manifestations of the historical consciousness.

For Collingwood the understanding of man is very important since it comes first and upon it rests all other aspects of human life, society and civilisation. To know man is a condition for constructing a civilised life. Collingwood was also convinced that the attainment of knowledge and understanding of man is possible and any uncertainties that question this assumption did not concern his thought. The deep scepticism and relativism that other philosophies put forward was the attitude that Collingwood found harmful. In EM he insisted

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<sup>2</sup> B. Croce. 1996. 'Review of R.G. Collingwood, *Speculum Mentis* or *The Map of Knowledge*', in *CS*, vol. III, pp. 188-193 (translated by Lionel Rubinoff and Alan Franklin: published in *Critica*, 1925, vol. 23, pp. 55-59).

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upon the value of truth and argued against scepticism and relativism, criticising psychology for not using criteria of judgement when studying thought.

Collingwood's views on human understanding are still relevant today. His pronouncements ring true in an intellectual atmosphere that reproduces almost the same perils for civilisation that Collingwood had recognised in his own times to exist. Various post modern interpretations that question truth, fixed meaning and objective knowledge, and modern versions of materialism have real similarities with Collingwood's definition of irrationalism. These interpretations are suspicious towards truth and criteria of judgement and their attempt to understand man poses problems. Moreover they are based on principles that strongly oppose humanistic thought, the belief in human rationality.

Against such interpretations Collingwood's arguments come to suggest, first, that the pursuit of truth is not something that thought can dispense with. The various distinctions between truth and falsehood, good and evil and so forth is the essence of thought and rules or criteria are used in establishing one (truth, good etc.) and avoiding the other (falsehood, evil etc.). The second thing that Collingwood suggests is that knowledge is only partially what natural sciences provide. In fact knowledge and understanding of man as mind and not body cannot be provided at all by the methods of the natural sciences. If we believe so we have misunderstood the nature of our inquiry, which is not naturalistic but historical. In Collingwood's analysis history epitomises human understanding. The historical approach recognises man in his individuality and analyses the unique, historical situation.

This thesis brought together material with a view to presenting Collingwood's ideas as an essentially sincere and thoughtful way to understanding and action. His perception of understanding and action are, furthermore, permeated with the general concept of duty and our obligation towards truth as fundamental conditions of a civilised life. At times, perhaps more often than desired, when these concepts seem to succumb under trends that welcome the convenient, the profitable and the utilitarian, Collingwood's assertions appear germane but demanding, a reminder that civilisation is never at ease.

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