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## From Realism to Rapprochement: The Autobiographical Interpretation of Collingwood's Philosophy

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FROM REALISM TO RAPPROCHEMENT:  
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL INTERPRETATION  
OF COLLINGWOOD'S PHILOSOPHY

by  
Glenn C. Shipley

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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1983

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I owe a greater debt than words can express to my wife, who has suffered the fate of a "dissertation widow" with love and good humor; to my children, who accepted their father's frequent disappearances to work on his "dissertation book;" and to my mother, who knows what it means to go it alone to finish a lifetime project, and who taught me all those things which I rely upon without thinking, so that I can now be free to rely upon my thinking.

## LIFE

The author, Glenn C. Shipley, is the son of Herman Shipley and Frances (Brachle) Shipley. He was born November 15, 1938, in Villa Park, Illinois. He is married to Marilyn (Sheridan) Shipley, and is the father of Gregory, William, and Mark Shipley.

He graduated from St. Alphonsus Grammar School in 1952, and from St. Michael High School in 1956, both of Chicago, Illinois. In September of 1956 he was enrolled at Loyola University of Chicago under a Loyola University Competitive Scholarship. In 1962, as a member of the United States Air Force, he attended the Armed Forces Language Institute at the University of Indiana in Bloomington. In 1965 he returned to Loyola, from which he received, in February of 1967, the degree of Bachelor of Science with a major in philosophy.

He began graduate study in philosophy at Loyola University under a Graduate Assistantship in February of 1967, and in March of 1967 was awarded a three year National Defense Graduate Fellowship (NDEA Title IV). In June of 1971 he received the degree of Master of Arts. He was awarded an Arthur J. Schmitt Dissertation Fellowship for the academic year 1972-1973.

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## LIST OF IN-TEXT REFERENCES

In this dissertation references to Collingwood's published philosophical works are made in the fashion that has become accepted by Collingwood's interpreters. The references are made in-text, by abbreviation of the title of the work followed by the page or pages on which the reference is found. These abbreviations are as follows:

- A An Autobiography. London: Oxford University Press, 1939.
- EM An Essay on Metaphysics. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940.
- EPA Essays in the Philosophy of Art. Edited by Alan Donagan. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964.
- EPH Essays in the Philosophy of History. Edited by William Debbins. New York: University of Texas Press, 1965.
- EPM An Essay on Philosophical Method. London: Oxford University Press, 1933.
- FR Faith and Reason: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion. Lionel Rubinoff, editor. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968.
- IH The Idea of History. T. M. Knox, editor. London: Oxford University Press, 1946.
- IN The Idea of Nature. T. M. Knox, editor. London: Oxford University Press, 1945.
- NL The New Leviathan. London: The Clarendon Press, 1942.

- PA The Principles of Art. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1938.
- RP Religion and Philosophy. London: Macmillian and Company, 1916.
- SM Speculum Mentis. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1924.

In addition the following standard works on Collingwood are also given in-text references:

- CEPC Krausz, Michael, editor. Critical Essays in the Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.
- CRM Rubinoff, Lionel. Collingwood and the Reform of Metaphysics. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970.
- FYC Johnston, William M. The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967.
- LPC Donagan, Alan. The Later Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962.
- MHD Mink, Louis O. Mind, History, and Dialectic: The Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969.

PART I

THE PROBLEM OF INTERPRETING

COLLINGWOOD'S PHILOSOPHY

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: COLLINGWOOD AND HIS INTERPRETERS

#### 1. Collingwood: His Life, His Writings, and His Era.

Robin George Collingwood (1889-1943) was the youngest of four children and the only son of W. G. Collingwood (FYC, 6). His parents were artists, amateur archeologists, and friends of John Ruskin. The elder Collingwood was first Ruskin's student, later his personal secretary and confidant, and after Ruskin's death in 1900 he became his biographer. The young Robin grew up in an atmosphere heavily influenced by the Ruskinian ideal of the universal man (FYC, 1, 17-36, 143-46).<sup>1</sup> Like Ruskin himself and also the young J. S. Mill, Collingwood was educated at home until he was thirteen (partially due to the poverty of his parents); and also like Mill, he was started on classical languages at an early age--Latin at four and Greek at six (A, 1). He was able to read the English proofs for his father's books by the age of five (FYC, 7), and by the time he started at Rugby at thirteen he could

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<sup>1</sup>An appreciation of the degree to which Collingwood valued Ruskin's thought can be gained by a reading of Collingwood's own assessment of it in his early essay, "Ruskin's Philosophy," delivered as an address at the Ruskin Centenary Conference, 1919, but published in 1922 and reprinted in EPA, 1-41.

read and speak German and French almost as easily as English (A, 6). At Rugby he taught himself enough Italian to read Dante in his spare time (A, 7). As a child he also accompanied his parents on archeological expeditions: he claims to have attended his first "dig" as a three-week old infant --in the toolbag of his parents (A, 80).

From Rugby Collingwood won a scholarship to University College, Oxford, which he attended from 1908 until he graduated in 1912 with "Firsts" in both Classical Moderation and Literae Humaniores. He was hired as a tutor at Pembroke College while still wearing his scholar's robes from final examinations.<sup>2</sup> By 1913 he was given an independent hand at excavations on Roman ruins in England, and was already being regarded by Haverfield (his Oxford mentor in the subject) as his successor. After the outbreak of war in 1914 he entered the British Admiralty Intelligence where he remained until the end of the war in 1918. During this time he wrote the manuscript for Religion and Philosophy, which was published in 1916.<sup>3</sup> In 1918 he married Ethel Graham, moved his quarters to a country house, and began an extremely active academic life as lecturer and tutor in both philosophy and Roman and British History. In 1934 he was relieved of some of this burden of tutoring and teaching when he was appointed to the

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<sup>2</sup>R. B. McCallum, "Robin George Collingwood," Proceedings of the British Academy, XXIX (1944), p. 463.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 464.

chair of Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy. From 1918 to 1934 he published four books--Roman Britain (1923, revised edition in 1934), Speculum Mentis (1924), The Archeology of Roman Britain (1930), and An Essay on Philosophical Method (1933)--and numerous short articles and monographs.<sup>4</sup>

The last-mentioned book was produced during a leave of absence from his teaching responsibilities in 1932, due to a prolonged illness (A, 117-18)--the beginning of the ill-health against which the remainder of his life was to be an heroic struggle (FYC, 12). Between 1935 and 1941, when he resigned his professorship, Collingwood managed to find time to do the writing on archeology, history and philosophy that form the bulk of his later published writings--Roman Britain and the English Settlements (1936, with J. N. L. Myres), The Principles of Art (1938), An Autobiography (1939), and An Essay on Metaphysics (1940).<sup>5</sup>

Most of the material posthumously published as The Idea of Nature (1945) and The Idea of History (1946) was also written during this period, in the form of lectures (IN, v; IH, v-vi). The New Leviathan (1942), the final work published during his lifetime, was written under extreme stress, Colling-

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<sup>4</sup>T. M. Knox, "Notes on Collingwood's Philosophical Work, with a Bibliography," Proceedings of the British Academy, XXIX (1944), pp. 469-75.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



wood's state of health rapidly deteriorating, and England being torn by war; its final chapters, he notes, were written during the bombardment of London (NL, v; LPC, 316). In 1939 Collingwood felt well enough to sign on as First Mate on a sailing yacht, the Fleur de Lys, for a trip from the coast of France to Greece and the Greek islands--the other members of the crew being mostly Oxford students. His account of that journey--the First Mate's Log--was published in 1940 by Oxford University Press in a limited edition. In 1942 his marriage with Ethel Graham was dissolved at his wife's request (they had two children, a son and a daughter), and he married Kathleen Frances Edwardes, who bore him a daughter (EPH, x-xi). But his health never fully regained its vigor, and he was forced to retire to Coniston, to the house he inherited from his father, where he died in 1943 of pneumonia.<sup>6</sup>

The years through which Collingwood lived and worked at Oxford were among the most violent and revolutionary that Europe has seen, and certainly the most profoundly threatening that England has endured. His work spans the first half of the twentieth century, bracketed at one end by the First World War and the Russian Revolution, and at the other by World War II and the Fascist holocaust. At Oxford the intellectual climate was no less subject to violent upheavals. When Collingwood began there in 1908, the 19th century British

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<sup>6</sup>McCallum, p. 468; cf. IH, xxi.

idealist movement begun by T. H. Green, with F. H. Bradley and B. Bosanquet its most respected spokesmen, had just about spent itself, and a realist reaction headed by Cook Wilson was already in full swing (A, 15-21). By the time he retired his professorship in 1941 realism had given way to logical positivism (A, 52). H. J. Paton writes that at Oxford, in the period between the wars, "Collingwood and I were the only representatives of our generation--a slender bridge between predecessors at least ten years older and successors at least ten years younger."<sup>7</sup>

In his Autobiography Collingwood corroborates this remark when he writes that in the area of archeology he was the only remaining Oxford resident trained by Haverfield as a Romano-British specialist, and therefore felt an obligation to keep alive that branch of studies which was left vacant when Haverfield died in 1919, because most of his students had died during World War I (A, 120).

In such highly troubled waters Collingwood felt himself to be the vessel not only of Oxford Romano-British archeology but also of philosophy. In philosophy the burden was even greater, and in carrying it (alone, he felt) Collingwood was buffeted by all the prevailing winds of his era. Conse-

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<sup>7</sup>H. J. Paton, "Fifty Years of Philosophy," in Contemporary British Philosophy, Third Series, ed. by H. D. Lewis (New York, 1956/1961), p. 345.

quently even though his early works (Religion and Philosophy, Speculum Mentis, and even the Essay on Philosophical Method) have led to his rejection by contemporaries as a latter day idealist, the body of his later writings continues to arouse the interest of people of very different philosophical persuasions--perhaps because many of the sources of these persuasions were also influential on Collingwood himself.

Thus in the last of his books published during his lifetime, The New Leviathan, one finds evidence relating him to most of the major contemporary schools of thought. For example: (1) pragmatism: "Reason is always essentially practical; because to be reasonable means to be interested in questions beginning with 'why'; and this happens because people crave for reassurance against the fallibility of their knowledge" (NL, 14.31); (2) phenomenology and existentialism: "Man as mind is whatever he is conscious of being" (NL, 1.84; emphasis his); (3) linguistic analysis: "Language is not a device whereby knowledge already existing in one man's mind is communicated to another's, but an activity prior to knowledge itself, without which knowledge could never come into existence" (NL, 6.41); and (4) even Marxism: "Is there nowhere such a thing as 'purely theoretical thinking'? There is; but it is not real thinking, and it does not lead to real knowledge . . . . Real thinking . . . always starts from practice and returns to practice; for it is based on 'interest' in the thing thought about" (NL, 18.13).

Perhaps because such diverse inclinations are reflected in his philosophy, he has been claimed for, and damned by, most of these same schools of thought--and this is reflected in the diversity of interpretations concerning his philosophy in the growing body of secondary literature about him. Here one finds him claimed not only by representatives of the traditions just mentioned, but also (incredibly enough) logical positivism, radical empiricism, idealism, cultural anthropology, and systems theory. His roots have been located in Ruskinean moralism, German Hegelianism, English and/or Italian idealism, and Cook Wilsonian realism. Affinities have been found between his philosophy and that of Ryle, Strawson, Wittgenstein, Dewey, Husserl, Kierkegaard, Barth, and Sartre. And his best work has been said to be in history, the philosophy of history, esthetics, the philosophy of mind, metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, and the history of ideas.

In spite of all these affinities, and in spite of the remarkable breadth of his interests in this age of specialization, he fits neatly into none of the contemporary schools of thought, and succeeded in developing no appreciable following of his own (cf. MHD, vii-viii, and FYC, vii, 137-46). This is at least partially a matter of choice on Collingwood's part: he sought no following, refused to engage in public debate, and preferred taking his case in writing directly to the public (A, 56, n. 1, and A, 118). It is also partly due to the

circumstances of his life: with positivism and analytic philosophy coming into prominence in his own university, and Fascism and Communism vying for dominance in the political arena around him, Collingwood's attempts to steer an independent course led to his estrangement from nearly all of his contemporaries. Even those close to him felt a little irritated at him for being "rather too quick in claiming all knowledge as his portion"<sup>8</sup> and often those who disagreed with him to his face were told, as it were, to "bathe in Jordan."<sup>9</sup> And finally, his isolation is very much the result of the diversity and incompleteness of his output, which makes it difficult to find a single insight that unifies all of his multifaceted output, or even to find a capstone to complete the arch.

But whatever the reason for the difficulty in achieving a clear focus in the surviving portrait of Collingwood's thought, a portion of the blame for this difficulty must be shared by the first interpretative authority to reflect on the whole of Collingwood's output, and to this problem we must now turn.

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<sup>8</sup>Paton, p. 345.

<sup>9</sup>McCallum, p. 466.

2. T. M. Knox and the "Radical Conversion Hypothesis."

Before Collingwood died in 1943 he named T. M. Knox, a friend and former student, as his literary executor. Collingwood's will authorized his executor to publish only as much of his unpublished writings as met high standards--thus leaving to Knox's judgment what the public should see of the unfinished works (IH, v). This material included Collingwood's lecture notes on the philosophy of history, the philosophy of nature, and ethics, and essays on philosophical theology and cosmology with which he closed lectures on ethics and on the philosophy of nature respectively (IN, v; IH, v-vi; CRM, 397). In addition to this material there was an incomplete sketch of The Principles of History which Collingwood hoped to be his magnum opus, but which is now forever lost--and a large number of other unspecified materials, not available for public inspection.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>In 1969 I wrote to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, Oxford, for information about the status of these manuscripts. They forwarded my letter to Collingwood's widow (his second wife), who replied to me as follows: "Dear Mr. Shipley, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, has passed your letter on to me. There are a considerable number of unpublished papers of R. G. Collingwood in my possession. Within the next year or so I hope to deposit these in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. A number of manuscripts will be reserved for some years. The incomplete, unpublished Principles of History is lost. Yours Sincerely, Kate Collingwood." In May of 1972 I received word from the Bodleian Library that they still had not received any of the manuscripts promised to them by Mrs. Collingwood, and stating that they had been unable to contact her by mail. In June of 1979 I received word from the Bodleian Library that they had recently received the manuscripts from Mrs. Collingwood, and that they filled the equivalent of five boxes

Under the titles of The Idea of Nature and The Idea of History Knox published only the nearly completed lectures on cosmology and history. He appended a part of The Principles of History (actually only a portion of the first third of what Collingwood had planned to write (IH, vi) and several completed essays (delivered originally as lectures) as "epilegomena" in The Idea of History, but omitted doing the same for The Idea of Nature on the grounds that Collingwood seems to have become dissatisfied with it: for the sketch of his own cosmology which had closed his original lectures, Collingwood had substituted a shorter concluding passage when he set about revising these lectures for publication sometime after 1939 (IN, v.).<sup>11</sup>

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measuring 14 x 11 x 4 inches "and are packed tight." A partial listing of their contents included translations, letters, lectures, and notes on everything from idealism and realism to the epistemology of logic and English folklore. Most of the material is open to inspection by scholars but, according to the terms set by Mrs. Collingwood, is not to be photocopied.

<sup>11</sup>There is something odd about Knox's editorial judgment in this matter. Knox argues (as we shall see in a moment) that Collingwood's best work was done between 1928 and 1936, and that after his radical conversion to historicism between 1936 and 1938 his judgments were unsound and not to be trusted in matters philosophical. On these grounds Knox published the lectures on the philosophy of history and the philosophy of nature, and included the terminal essays on history that form the "epilegomena" to The Idea of History. But on these grounds the essay on cosmology which closed Collingwood's lectures on the philosophy of nature in 1934 and 1937 is a product of his mature, middle period. But instead of publishing it as an "epilegomenon" to The Idea of Nature Knox accepts Collingwood's later, possible judgment (which is supposedly unsound) to omit this terminal essay. Instead Knox published the short concluding piece which argues that science "depends

When Knox published The Idea of History in 1946 he he added an "Editor's Preface" in which he not only explained significant editorial details about the manuscripts, but also proposed an interpretation of the whole of Collingwood's philosophy, on the basis of which he evaluated the posthumously published works, and placed them in their setting within the context (as he saw it) of Collingwood's entire published output. Therefore the significance of the totality of Collingwood's published works to date has rested upon Knox's judgment in both constitutive and retrospective senses: constitutive because two important works, including their present form, were directly due to his editorial labors; and retrospective insofar as his account of Collingwood's development is both (a) the only evidence that the public has for the "high standards" that Knox used in deciding which works should be suppressed and which deserved publication, and (b) the only justification of these standards, based on the interpretation of the group of writings that Collingwood did publish in his own lifetime, that Knox offered for extending that total output.

Knox's interpretation of Collingwood's development can be outlined as follows:

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on historical thought for its existence" (IH, 177). But this is inconsistent with the editorial policy of The Idea of History.



(1) Dividing Collingwood's writings into three groups, Knox finds in the "juvenilia" (Religion and Philosophy (1916) and Speculum Mentis (1924) evidence of scepticism and dogmatism:<sup>12</sup> religious scepticism insofar as religion is described (in Speculum Mentis) as an erroneous mistaking of imagining for thinking, and philosophical dogmatism insofar as only philosophy is asserted as providing the full truth for which religious assertion is only the symbol (IH, xiv-xv). Knox says that the shift from the earlier work (in which religion, theology and philosophy are identified) to the position in Speculum Mentis marks the ascendancy of a dogmatic strain in Collingwood's thought which "affected its content and . . . was linked with a change in his attitude to religion, always one of his strongest interests" (IH, xv).

(2) By 1932, during the "middle period" (as in Collingwood's masterpiece, the Essay on Philosophical Method of

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<sup>12</sup>Knox does not specify what he means by dogmatism and scepticism. But it seems that for Knox (1) one may understand by "dogmatism" the imposition of an external source or standard of truth on the internal doctrines of a body of knowledge; and (2) "scepticism" to mean the failure or refusal to provide a criterion for truth or falsity within a body of knowledge. That is why historicism is a scepticism for Knox: history cannot provide a criterion of truth or falsity for philosophy. Therefore any criterion of truth which proceeds from, or is grounded in, presuppositions which are themselves unquestioned and/or unquestionable, is dogmatic; and any body of knowledge resting on presuppositions which cannot themselves be judged to be true or false is sceptical. Cf. IH, xvii.

1933) the mature and undamaged mind of Collingwood embraced metaphysics as a separate and distinct study of the one, the true, and the good (IH, xi). This would have allowed for a truth-criterion (hence escaping scepticism) not itself based on the unquestioning acceptance of religious doctrine (hence not dogmatic). Knox thinks this much is indicated in Collingwood's essay, "Faith and Reason," which in assigning independent functions to each faculty escaped the ascription of a monopoly of truth to any discipline (dogmatism) as well as the denial of a truth universal and valid for all thought (scepticism) (IH, xvi).

(3) But in the 1940 Essay on Metaphysics (and the remainder of his later philosophy, his third period) Collingwood lapsed back into the latent scepticism and dogmatism of his youth by denying the independent status of metaphysics (which is reduced to history). His "reform of metaphysics" is based upon reducing the metaphysician's task to the historical work of discovering the "absolute presuppositions" of science in a given era. Since these absolute presuppositions were characterized by Collingwood as (a) themselves neither true nor false, and (b) religious in nature, they indicate a radical change in Collingwood's mature position. This time Collingwood proposed a philosophical scepticism and a religious dogmatism. Absolute presuppositions are dogmatic as unquestionable and religious (that is, held by an act of

"unquestioning acceptance" or of "natural piety"--i.e. faith); and they indicate a kind of scepticism insofar as they rest on no higher criterion of truth and are themselves neither true or false (IH, xv-xvi).

Knox groups The Idea of History and The Idea of Nature in the second, mature period, and The Principles of Art overlapping the second and the third. He claims to have documentary evidence that in Collingwood's second period he still held that metaphysics as an autonomous branch of knowledge was possible, and that in the third period not only is metaphysics declared to be an historical science, but "philosophy as a separate discipline is liquidated by being converted into history" (IH, x; cf. xi-xii).

Unfortunately the work from which these quotations are taken is The Principles of History which was never completed, never published, and is now lost and so incapable of being publicly examined; so there is at present no documentary evidence to verify these statements. Even assuming that Knox is a reliable authority, it is impossible to evaluate these fragments without the full textual context--to see in what ways Collingwood meant them to be taken, or qualified them, or posited them as provisional assertions to be later corrected and modified, etc. In future chapters we shall find direct evidence in Collingwood's writings that he often

employed a dialectical strategy of positing a remark as a starting point, then modifying the remark, and finally contradicting it altogether--all in the span of one essay. Unless we are to remain "scissors and paste" historians, and therefore show that we have not learned even the first lesson that Collingwood wished to teach us, we cannot take Knox's fragments from Collingwood's "nachlass" manuscripts uncritically.

We are therefore left with Knox's arguments, based on available evidence, concerning Collingwood's radical change of mind--which Knox says occurred somewhere between 1936 and 1938 (IH, xi). The failure to acknowledge this change of mind is one of the reasons Knox rejects Collingwood's Autobiography as a reliable account of his development--the other being that in the Autobiography Collingwood seems to wish his readers to believe that he had worked out his theory of absolute presuppositions and the purely historical character of metaphysics prior to 1932 and the Essay on Philosophical Method. Regarding the latter point (1) Collingwood made no such claim in the Autobiography--he says only that "these ideas . . . became clear to me soon afterward," i.e. after returning to Oxford in 1918, and he says nothing about any reduction of philosophy to history (Knox even hedges by calling the claim about the dating of the discovery of absolute presuppositions an "inference" that Collingwood wished his readers to make

from the text); and (2) even if the claim were made, it is arguable that it has its roots in doctrines already present not only in his early period, but in the works of his mature middle period as well.

Supposing that one were to have unimpeachable evidence that there was a radical change of mind as Knox says there was: what reasons does Knox assign for it? In his "Editor's Preface" he gives no less than three: (1) Collingwood's mind changed (beginning in 1932, "tiny blood-vessels began to burst in the brain, with the result that the small parts of the brain affected were put out of action" (IH, xxi); (2) he changed his mind himself (he came to think, like Croce, that "philosophy as a separate discipline is liquidated by being converted into history" because "the sceptical and dogmatic trends, present in Collingwood's earlier thought, triumphed over the temporary defeat they had sustained between 1932 and 1936" (IH, xi)); and (3) Collingwood was an inconsistent, even fickle<sup>13</sup> thinker ("Collingwood believed in the coincidentia oppositorum, as many passages in his writings testify. I am suggesting that his own later philosophy provides a striking illustration of this phenomenon" (IH, xvii). "He brought a powerful mind to bear on whatever happened to be engrossing his energies . . . and he seems to have been in-

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<sup>13</sup>Knox does not use the term, "fickle." The term is mine; the accusation is Knox's.

clined to draw the conclusion that philosophy was simply identical with whatever he happened to be studying most intensively at the time" (IH, xv)).

None of these reasons are acceptable. (1) The ad hominem "brain pathology" explanation, while certainly verified by documentary evidence, is not detailed enough to make any accurate assessment of what portions of Collingwood's brain (to say nothing of his mind or judgment) were affected. The evidence in fact seems to point to brain damage in the motor areas: writing to Croce in January of 1939, Collingwood says that "just a year ago . . . I was partly paralyzed by a stroke which deprived me of the power of speech . . . . I am making good recovery: I can use my hand and foot moderately well, and can speak now well enough for the purposes of my profession" (LPC, 316). Even if we were to assume that Knox's acquaintance with Collingwood was so intimate that he could detect hemorrhagic capillaries in Collingwood's brain as early as 1933, why should we accept such an account as philosophically relevant? Why indeed, when Collingwood was healthy enough to write the "second book in his series," The Principles of Art (the first being the 1933 Essay on Philosophical Method) prior to his first debilitating stroke in 1938, and healthy enough after his stroke to act as First Mate on a sailing schooner which voyaged for some months in 1939 in the Mediterranean--and to write a lively account of

the experience? And why again when he was clear-headed enough to write not only the Essay on Metaphysics, which so scandalizes Knox, but also The New Leviathan, a work which many critics felt would alone earn him a respected place in philosophical literature? John Passmore's two-sentence estimate of the situation is worth quoting:

It is sometimes suggested by Idealist admirers of Collingwood that the brain disease from which he began to suffer in 1933 is reflected in his ultimate heterodoxies. When one contemplates the speculative freedom of these later works, one can only wish that his contemporaries could have been similarly afflicted.<sup>14</sup>

(2) Asserting that Collingwood's youthful scepticism and dogmatism overwhelmed his better judgment is less a change of mind than a relapse; interestingly enough, Knox suggests that both Collingwood's earlier and later philosophy represent lapses into a youthful realism, while it is only his middle period which steered clear of the "shoals of scepticism and the billows of dogmatism" (IH, xviii, xiv). But the clear evidence of the Autobiography is that as of 1939 Collingwood interpreted the whole of his philosophy as a response to the threat of "realism." It is incredible to think, therefore, that his literary executor could seriously entertain the hypothesis that in the end he merely surrendered to its doctrines. Since Collingwood was an historian of unimpeachable ability, who knew well how to use evidence, and was

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<sup>14</sup>John Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy (London, 1957), p. 306 n. 1; quoted by Rubinoff, CRM, 376 n. 17.

fully aware that autobiography is history in which the subject happens to be oneself, if no radical change of mind is recorded in the Autobiography it is unlikely to be because of a lapse of memory, but rather because Collingwood meant to deceive his readers. For what reason? Knox fails to provide us with any.

(3) Knox's accusations of deliberate inconsistency and vacillation by preoccupation also cannot go without challenge. While it is easy to find passages which discuss the coincidentia oppositorum (e.g. SM, 197-98, 249), there are others which confine it to the scientific level of thought, where it is contrasted with the synthesis of opposites (e.g. SM, 310). If by a "coincidence of opposites" Knox means the simultaneous affirmation of a pair of contradictory statements, then if Collingwood asserted this he did indeed, as Knox charges, turn traitor to his profession as philosopher. But the burden of proof for this is on Knox: charges of "dogmatism and scepticism" do not constitute sufficient evidence for the simultaneous acceptance of a pair of contradictory statements. But if by "opposites" Knox does not mean contradictories but contraries, then what sense does the charge make that his later philosophy is a prime instance of it? For it is just as true that Collingwood accepted a coincidence of opposites as contraries in his mature middle period--e.g. in the Essay on Philosophical Method, where the



"overlap of classes" is described in terms of relations of opposition and relations of distinction (EPM, 74-75).

Furthermore the charge of inconsistency by pre-occupational vacillation (what I have called "fickleness") is self-refuting. Knox prefaced this remark with the observation that it was the power of Collingwood's mind that caused him to become so engrossed in his subject matter that he simply identified philosophy with whatever he happened to be working on at the time. But the charge does not bespeak a powerful mind but a weak one--drifting this way and that according to what "happens" to occupy it. This suggests an erratic and drifting route for Collingwood's rudderless vessel. Opposed to this charge (perhaps the most insulting that Knox levels at him) we have Collingwood's autobiographical account of the logic of his philosophical program, which leaves little room for topics to merely "happen" to occupy his interest. He writes there that he planned a series of books, beginning with the Essay on Philosophical Method and continuing with The Principles of Art, and that he planned (as of 1939) to devote all his remaining time and energy to completing the series (A, 117-19). The interpreter faced with a choice between Knox's version and Collingwood's own account of the development of his thought might prefer Knox's, but then he must supply convincing reasons for rejecting Collingwood's. But Collingwood's version promises to be systematic, and Knox's

to be haphazard and disjointed. Therefore an interpreter cannot be blamed for choosing Collingwood's on these grounds alone.

But when stripped of its pathophysiological banalities and uncritical appeal to unexaminable evidence, there is a positive service that Knox's Preface performs. Knox shows that one of the crucial problems in Collingwood's mature philosophy, one that may lie deeper than the more apparent problem of the relationship of philosophy to history, is the issue of the functions and autonomy of metaphysics and religion; Knox's "scepticism-dogmatism" argument rests precisely on the relative priority or independence of reason and faith. We shall see in the next section how Collingwood's views on religion and metaphysics set his interpreters at odds with each other. We have Knox to thank for calling attention to this dimension of the problem.

Since Knox's Preface, three principal interpreters of Collingwood's mature philosophy have grappled with its central paradox. Of these three, one--Alan Donagan--accepts as decisive Knox's conclusion that Collingwood's thought suffered a drastic reversal sometime between 1936 and 1938 (LPC, 1). But Donagan rejects Knox's "brain-damage" reason for this reversal, and argues rather that philosophically acceptable reasons must be found for it (which he claims to provide) (LPC, 12-18). Of the other two, Louis O. Mink comes close to

acknowledging a radical change of mind, insofar as he accepts a greatly reduced version of the reversal and locates it much earlier--between 1916 and 1924, when Collingwood discovered "dialectic," first applied in Speculum Mentis (MHD, 20). Lionel Rubinoff, on the other hand, roundly attacks what he aptly calls "The Radical Conversion Hypothesis" initially woven by Knox and later embroidered by Donagan (CRM, 21). Rubinoff dismisses Knox's reference to Collingwood's illness as being "of no philosophical relevance" (CRM, 18), and appears to be the only major interpreter to take the Autobiography seriously.

In the next section we shall take up the interpretations offered by these and several other notable commentators on Collingwood's philosophy, and in the final section of this chapter we shall try to sketch how the interpretation that will be offered in succeeding chapters differs from theirs.

### 3. Collingwood's Interpreters: An Overview.

In 1972 there appeared a collection of fourteen essays (all previously unpublished) entitled Critical Essays on the Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood, edited by Michael Krausz and published by Oxford University Press. Aside from its contents (which represent fairly well the current state of the question concerning his philosophy), the mere appearance of this book could not help but both please and displease the late Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy.

On the one hand it defies his express wishes on the matter. Towards the end of his life Collingwood's ill health forced him to recognize the possibility that he might not be able to finish all the projects that he had set for himself. He therefore wrote his Autobiography "to put on record some brief account of the work I have not yet been able to publish, in case I am not able to publish it in full" (A, 118). In it he wrote this request not to be the subject of scholarly inquiry:

I am nearly fifty, and cannot in any case hope for more than a few years in which I can do my best work. I take this opportunity, therefore, of saying that I will not be drawn into discussion of what I write . . . . Some readers may wish to convince me that it is all nonsense . . . . Some may wish to show me that on this or that detail I am wrong. Perhaps I am; if they are in a position to prove it, let them write not about me but about the subject . . . . And if there are any who think my work good, let them show their approval of it by attention to their own. So, perhaps, I may escape otherwise than by death the last humiliation of an aged scholar, when his juniors conspire to print a volume of essays and offer it to him as a sign that they now consider him senile. (A, 118-19).

The appearance of this volume of essays indicates that it was only by death that Collingwood escaped that "last humiliation."

But on the other hand the book is scarcely a humiliation to the memory of the late Collingwood. On the contrary it illustrates to a surprising degree the extent to which Collingwood's thought is still very much alive--a liveliness that could not have but pleased the philosopher-historian who argued so eloquently for the notion of history as a process of re-

thinking past acts of thought still living in the present (IH, 218). The contributors to this volume realized that they were defying his wishes, but as students of his philosophy they found his works, as one of them so succinctly put it, "too incisive to dismiss and too unclear to adopt" (Mink, in MHD, vii) and therefore demanding interpretation to an unusual degree.

To a reader familiar with Collingwood primarily as the author of The Idea of History, and who accepts the account of Collingwood's development as given by T. M. Knox in the Preface, this collection of critical essays would come as something of a surprise. He would be startled at the wide range of topics on which Collingwood wrote systematic treatises of some brilliance and originality: besides philosophy of history, the topics discussed in essays in this volume include esthetics, philosophy of mind, philosophical method, philosophy of religion, metaphysics, philosophy of nature, ethics, social and political philosophy, and even philosophy of education. He would also be surprised to find no less than half of the essays dealing with Collingwood's views on metaphysics: as we have just seen, Knox had found these views dogmatic, sceptical, and in general scandalously inferior to Collingwood's best efforts in philosophy and history (IH, xv-xvii). He would also be startled at the evidence presented by some of the authors for Collingwood's

anticipation of issues the importance of which have only recently begun to be appreciated: a case in point being Stephen Toulmin's essay comparing Collingwood to Thomas Kuhn, whose essay, The Structure of Scientific Revolution, is still being seriously debated by philosophers and historians of science (CEPC, 201-21). The central thesis of the latter was discussed by Collingwood some twenty years earlier in An Essay on Metaphysics (cf. EM, 48, 74-76).

But it is disconcerting to encounter the evidence, cited by many of the contributors to this volume, supporting Knox's argument for the ultimate inconsistency of Collingwood's philosophy. What is disconcerting about it is that it still appears to be impossible for the reader to assume any consistent or even comfortable posture toward this prickly and ill-assimilated man. As represented by his three principal interpreters (Donagan, Rubinoff, and Mink) he remains something of a puzzling figure. Did his attempts to work out a reconciliation between philosophy and history fail insofar as at various times he subordinated the one to the other--especially in his final, allegedly historicist phase? Are Collingwood's earlier "idealist" reflections on the nature of philosophical thinking truly "repudiated" by his final analytic philosophy of mind? Was his revolutionary logic of presupposition, question and answer really at variance with contemporary logic? Or is there some comprehensive framework

detectable in Collingwood's writings--a context which he sketched out in his youth and into which all his later, more detailed writings fit as parts of a systematic whole?

A case in point is Collingwood's views on religion--the subject of his earliest publications and by most accounts one of Collingwood's deepest and most enduring interests. We have seen that in Knox's view the place of faith and religion is of prime importance in evaluating Collingwood's alleged dogmatism and scepticism. In the lead essay of Krausz's collection, however, Collingwood's views on the religious doctrine of the fall and redemption of man are singled out by Alan Donagan as "less blasphemous than laughable" when used to interpret what "any ordinary Christian believes that Christian redemption is redemption from" (CEPC, 19). The passage Donagan cites is from Speculum Mentis, and in it Collingwood is using the fall as a metaphor symbolizing man's lapse into forbidden knowledge (the error of abstraction--the separation of subject and object), and redemption as God's acceptance of this burden of human error as His own--presumably in the person of Jesus (SM, 302-03). For the view of the "ordinary Christian" Donagan chooses to compare this passage to one from John Bunyan's Grace Abounding and The Pilgrim's Progress, which speaks of the burden of human suffering that is the lot of every man. Donagan's objection is that no attempt at a literal paraphrase of religious metaphor can absorb the truth

of passages like the latter without remainder; but this is what Collingwood thought philosophy could do for religious truth (CEPC, 18).

Now it is the measure of the difference between Donagan and Lionel Rubinoff that the same passage that Donagan holds up for ridicule is later cited by Rubinoff as "one of the most important passages in all of his writings" (CEPC, 101). Rubinoff's reading of Collingwood is almost a literal rendering of passages such as this one from The Idea of History:

The task of religious thought and religious practice (for in religion the theoretical and practical activities are fused into one) is to find the relation between these two supposed conceptions of myself as finite and God as infinite . . . . (I)n religion the life of reflection is concentrated in its intensest form, and . . . the special problems of theoretical and practical life all take their special forms by segregation out of the body of the religious consciousness, and retain their vitality only so far as they preserve their connexion with it and with each other in it (IH, 314-15).

Rubinoff argues that Collingwood's use of the religious metaphor of the fall and redemption are apt precisely because Collingwood's entire philosophy is a sustained attempt at reconciliation of all the divergent tendencies within man--subject vs. object, thought vs. action, faith vs. reason, history vs. philosophy, etc.--and the first level on which that reconciliation takes place is that of religion, with Christianity as its highest manifestation (CEPC, 106).



The two articles by Donagan and Rubinoff therefore take radically opposing views on the same issue, and their divergent interpretations extend to the whole of Collingwood's philosophy. Donagan argues that the collapse of Collingwood's program for an idealistic metaphysics of the Absolute (in his early philosophy as expressed in Speculum Mentis and An Essay on Philosophical Method) left him with a crippled historicist substitute and no viable philosophy of religion (CEPC, 18). Rubinoff holds that for Collingwood not only is absolute idealism the only philosophy adequate to the Christian solution to the twin problems of alienation and irrationalism that plague the modern world, but religion itself (at least as Christianity) is a necessary condition of the possibility of all other forms of experience--presumably (using the scheme of Speculum Mentis) art, science, history, and philosophy (CEPC, 86-88).

The reader's suspicion that Donagan and Rubinoff have their own, divergent meanings for the expression, "absolute idealism," is partly confirmed by the fact that Donagan formulates the position in terms of an anti-realist or anti-abstraction principle (viz. that all abstractions are partial truths and to that extent erroneous) which is explicit in Collingwood's early writings, while for Rubinoff the term refers to the "unified life of the mind," the divisions of which mark the various subject-object alienations within contempor-

ary consciousness. If these positions appear as obverse and reverse of the same coin, the way to distinguish heads from tails would be that Rubinoff accepts, and Donagan denies, that something describable as "the absolute standpoint" is possible.

In his book, The Later Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood, Donagan forcefully (if not always persuasively) argues that the reason that Collingwood abandoned the idealistic position of his youth is that he came to realize, from his analysis of mental functions in The Principles of Art (1938) that all thinking is conceptual and hence abstract.<sup>15</sup> But this position renders anything like "absolute knowledge" (an absolute identity between subject and object) impossible, and therefore represents a "repudiation" of his earlier idealism, in which abstraction (the cardinal doctrine of realism--on Donagan's reading of Collingwood) is regarded as the root of all error, and itself a falsification (LPC, 14, 47-50, 285-89; cf. CEPC, 18). The philosophy of mind that survives self-destruction by contradiction forms Collingwood's "later philosophy" which parallels conclusions of Ludwig Wittgenstein and anticipates Gilbert Ryle's concept of mind (cf. LPC, 37, 42-43).

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<sup>15</sup>The references that Donagan cites at LPC, 14 and 47-54 to support this assertion--namely, PA, 254 and NL, 7.22, 7.3-7.31, and 7.38--do not make the claim that "all thinking is conceptual and hence abstract." See below, pp. 562-76.

Donagan reconstructs this philosophy of mind around four principles: (1) the Principle of Intentionality ("if a man is conscious he must be conscious of something"); (2) the Principle of Order ("if a man is conscious of one of his own acts of consciousness, then it is not by that act itself, but by another act of consciousness which may be said to be of a higher order");<sup>16</sup> (3) the Law of Primitive Survivals ("when a function of consciousness (B) is brought into existence having a lower-order function (A) as its object, unless the lower-order function (A) continues to exist in its primitive state, the higher-order function (B) cannot exist at all"); and (4) the Law of Contingency ("the earlier terms in a series of mental functions do not determine the latter") (LPC, 27-29). In the resulting hierarchy of levels of consciousness, Donagan argues, there is no upper limit (LPC, 29, 91-92); therefore there is no such thing as 'absolute knowledge' as an upper limit to knowledge (cf. LPC, 258).

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<sup>16</sup>None of Donagan's references to Collingwood's texts for evidence for the "principle of order" support Donagan's formulation and subsequent employment of this principle: at LPC, 28 and more directly at LPC, 105 and 168, Donagan cites NL, 4.31, 5.91 and 5.92 as evidence that Collingwood's philosophy of mind "was fundamentally anti-Cartesian; . . . he repudiated Descartes' doctrine that acts of consciousness are, as it were, self-illuminating" (LPC, 25). In Donagan's view, Collingwood came to hold that no act of consciousness can have itself as an object (LPC, 108, 167-68). For Collingwood's views on self-consciousness and Cartesianism, see NL, 1.84-1.85, 5.34-5.39; IH, 141, 291-94, 297, 306; PA, 206, 222-23, 247-52.

Lionel Rubinoff, on the other hand, argues persuasively (if not always forcefully) in his own book, Collingwood and the Reform of Metaphysics, that such a position could never satisfy Collingwood, whose whole philosophy is an extended argument for rapprochement--including the rapprochement of subject and object in absolute knowledge. There was no "radical conversion" in Collingwood's development, Rubinoff argues, because Collingwood remained true to the idealistic program laid out in Speculum Mentis (CRM, 23). Taking his clue from the description in Speculum Mentis of the three ways that the "prize of truth" can be awarded (to one, to two or more, or to none of the competing forms of experience), Rubinoff constructs a framework of "three ontological levels of experience" on which all of Collingwood's writings can be located.

At the first level, consciousness assumes an absolute distinction between subject and object, and views the whole of reality as an expression of whatever experience it is presently identified with. . . . At the second level, the distinction between subject and object remains but each experience now regards itself as only one among a variety of equally valid standpoints. At the third level the subject-object distinction has been finally overcome and some recognition is given to the fact that the forms of experience, rather than being coordinate species of a genus, are on the contrary a scale of overlapping forms. On the basis of these distinctions the implicit rationale of Collingwood's published works may now be reconstructed. According to this reconstruction each work may be seen as exemplifying one or another type of philosophy operating on one or more of the three levels of experience (CRM, 29-30).

Rubinoff's strategy in answering the charges of Knox and Donagan, therefore, is to locate the source of one of a

pair of conflicting assertions on one level of this ontological schema, and the other on a different level. Thus when Collingwood asserts in The New Leviathan that there is no upper limit to the levels of consciousness he is speaking at the "second level" in which new forms of experience are always possible because they are regarded merely as coordinate species of a genus. But when Collingwood asserts in Speculum Mentis that absolute knowledge forms the upper limit of forms of experience, he is speaking from the "third level" at which subject and object are identified, the "absolute standpoint" (cf. CRM, 69-73, 369-72). Where Collingwood's project seems to falter, Rubinoff calls up a reserve battery of idealistic arguments, from Hegel to Husserl, and from Bradley to Bosanquet and Blanshard.<sup>17</sup> And the summit of Collingwood's idealistic efforts is a description of mind as "pure act"<sup>18</sup>--which stands in stark contrast to Donagan's static hierarchy of levels of abstract concepts, related by the logic of the Principia Mathematica.

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<sup>17</sup>The most noteworthy use of idealistic arguments in Rubinoff's book are the sections dealing with the logic of the "concrete universal" (interestingly enough in the chapter on "Philosophy as Absolute Knowledge") and with the theory of mind as pure act. CRM, 150-83, 315-22.

<sup>18</sup>Rubinoff uses in this portion of his argument Collingwood's translation of G. de Ruggiero's Modern Philosophy. CRM, 315-22.

To the extent that he, too, finds a temporarily schizophrenic Collingwood unacceptable, Louis O. Mink sides with Rubinoff--but not by calling up the arguments of Hegelian idealism. In his perceptive and refreshingly tactful book, Mind, History, and Dialectic: The Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood, Mink asserts with Rubinoff, and against Donagan, that Collingwood is a dialectical philosopher rather than an analytical one. But he holds, in direct opposition to Rubinoff, that Collingwood "retained dialectic and abandoned the absolute" (MHD, 78). And like Donagan, Mink finds Collingwood's religious philosophy the least interesting of all his thought. Mink goes so far as to say that Collingwood had no sympathy for the philosophy of religion, and that Religion and Philosophy was Collingwood's only non-dialectical book (MHD, 16, 20, 260 n. 7). But Mink is no subscriber to Donagan's thesis that Collingwood's later philosophy of mind represents a complete break with his earlier philosophical program as exemplified in Speculum Mentis and made explicit in the Essay on Philosophical Method (MHD, ix, 16, 20).

Mink employs his considerable interpretative skills in bringing out the "recessive" themes in Collingwood's philosophy. In doing so he tries to display the "figure in the carpet" (a tri-partite dialectic of experience, of concepts, and of mind) that makes it possible to soften many of the apparent absurdities and contradictions in Collingwood's phil-



osophy (MHD, 80; cf. MHD, 52, 118, 237). In his essay for the Krausz collection, for example, he takes up Collingwood's famous description of history as the "rethinking of past acts of thought" and shows that each term of the expression requires qualifications in the light of Collingwood's "dialectic of process." In Mink's reconstruction "history" in this expression must be taken as a philosophical rather than an empirical concept, and is thus subject to the characterization of philosophical concepts that Collingwood gave in his Essay on Philosophical Method. As a philosophical concept it has a dialectical structure, which means that the elements designated by the term "history" are related in a developing series or a "scale of forms" (CEPC, 157-72).

Mink describes such a dialectical system as having four properties: it is (1) connective (the terms in the series are related generically to a single essence or general description), (2) cumulative (members of the series are preserved and modified in successive forms), (3) asymmetrical (no member is the mere duplicate of another, but rather differs both in degree and in kind from the others), and (4) non-deterministic (in the series a prior term is necessary but not a sufficient condition for the generation of its successor). Mink argues that since intellectual history (e.g. the history of science, art, or religion) deals with a subject which involves acts that are purposively connected, cumulative in effect, non-cyclic and non-deterministic in

their growth, it is clear that it answers to a dialectical system. All history (in the philosophical sense) is therefore the re-thinking (i.e. the dialectical analysis) of past acts of thought (CEPC, 172-76).

But while these efforts by sympathetic admirers of Collingwood's philosophy may go a long way towards giving the reader an understanding of the intricacies and articulations of Collingwood's philosophy, their solutions to its central paradox would fail to satisfy many of the other contributors to the Krausz volume--and especially as that paradox is stated in the Essay on Metaphysics. Thus W. H. Walsh points out that when Collingwood wrote in that work that "absolute presuppositions" (the true object of the metaphysician's search rather than the "pure being" of the ontologists, which Collingwood rejects as an empty concept) are neither true nor false, he qualified himself as a "metaphysical neutralist"--Walsh's term for a philosopher who limits himself to description only, refusing to apply criteria which would allow one to make a judgment on the truth or falsity, reality or unreality, etc. of the object described. As merely descriptive and factually encountered factors operative in the thought of those who are engaged in any piece of scientific thinking, such presuppositions may escape the positivistic condemnation of metaphysical assertions as neither factually verifiable nor analytically tautologous, but they are also rendered immune



to any sort of justification--they can merely be reported. Metaphysics is thus an historical science, as Collingwood's central thesis of the Essay on Metaphysics maintains; but how then account for the referability, adequacy, or success of one set of "con-supponible" presuppositions to another (CEPC, 134-53; especially, 142-46, 149)?

Similarly, Stephen Toulmin argues that although Collingwood was one of the few pioneer thinkers to come to grips with the central and still unanswered metaphysical question about conceptual changes in the history of science (or scientific revolutions, as Kuhn was later to call them), his "relativism" (roughly the equivalent to Walsh's "neutralism") prevented him from giving a rational account of why they occur. Instead Collingwood resorted to a quasi-causal, psychologicistic explanation in terms of unconscious mental "strains" occurring in a constellation or set of presuppositions (Kuhn's "crisis in normal science") which are "taken up" or resolved when a new conceptual framework replaces an old one (in Kuhn's terms, when a new "paradigm science" appears, completing a conceptual revolution). Toulmin's dissatisfaction with both Kuhn and Collingwood adds fuel to Walsh's charge: if two sets of presuppositions differ, must there not be some mutual presuppositions with respect to which, or by reference to which, they are in agreement (CEPC, 201-21, especially 209-13)?

Finally, Nathan Rotenstreich adds his eloquent voice to this dissenting chorus with a deft discussion of Collingwood's proposed reform of metaphysics vis-a-vis the tradition he proposed to reform--Aristotle, Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel. Rotenstreich shows that as often as not when Collingwood used historical examples of a metaphysician (in Collingwood's reformed sense) who pointed out the presuppositions of science in one period or another, he (Collingwood) ignored the evaluative activities of these same philosophers, who were not concerned with reportage only, but with justification and critique as well. What remains of Collingwood's truncated version of metaphysical history is what Rotenstreich calls a "cultural anthropology of metaphysics," which "does not distinguish between the intention and the intentionality of a metaphysical system which attempts to be categorical" (CEPC, 179-221; esp. 179-80, 197-99).

From this seeming dead end two escapes are possible: expansion and revision. Both are represented by essays in the Krausz volume. The first is taken by Errol Harris. Like Rubinoff, Harris is a sympathetic student of Collingwood and of the great idealists of this and the last centuries, and he supplements Collingwood's thought by evoking a frankly idealistic context for it. But unlike Rubinoff, Harris does not hesitate to criticize some of Collingwood's positions as unten-

able.<sup>19</sup> In his essay for the Krausz volume, Harris renews his argument with Gilbert Ryle over Collingwood's defense of the ontological argument, first carried out in the pages of Mind in 1935 and 1936, just after Collingwood's Essay on Philosophical Method was published.<sup>20</sup> Ryle had argued that Collingwood's use of Anselm's argument made the common idealistic mistake of thinking that concrete matters of fact (concerning the existence of anything whatever) could be established by the use of a priori arguments that can only establish their conclusions hypothetically. Harris' response is to defend the idealist's use of such arguments by showing the legitimacy of "categorical universal" judgments, "the concrete universal" of Bosanquet and Bradley, and the Absolute of Hegel (CEPC, 113-33).

Michael Krausz, on the other hand, takes the alternative route. Collingwood had said in the Essay on Metaphysics

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<sup>19</sup>Cf. Errol E. Harris, "Collingwood on Eternal Problems," Philosophical Quarterly, I, no. 3 (April, 1951), pp. 228-41. Reprinted in his Nature, Mind and Modern Science (London, 1954), pp. 3-42.

<sup>20</sup>G. Ryle, "Mr. Collingwood and the Ontological Argument," Mind, XLIV (April, 1935), pp. 137-51; E. E. Harris, "Mr. Ryle and the Ontological Argument," Mind, XLV (October, 1937), pp. 474-80; G. Ryle, "Back to the Ontological Argument," Mind, XLVI (January, 1937), pp. 53-57. These essays are printed in John H. Hick and Arthur C. McGill, eds., The Many-Faced Argument (New York, 1967), pp. 246-74.

(1) that all questions have presuppositions from which they logically arise; (2) that to be true or false a proposition has to be an answer to a question; and (3) that absolute presuppositions are neither true nor false because they are not answers to questions, but stand relative to all questions, in a body of inquiry, as their presuppositions. Krausz argues that Collingwood's formulation of the relation of absolute presuppositions may be interpreted to mean either that it cannot be the answer to a question in any given systematic inquiry, or in any systematic inquiry whatever. In the second case it is impossible to explain how what is taken as an absolute presupposition at one time can become a relative presupposition (i.e. one that is itself an answer to a question, and therefore verifiably true or false) at another. Krausz's strategy is to argue in favor of the first interpretation, which involves altering Collingwood's theory of meaning to conform with more contemporarily acceptable accounts, notably that of P. F. Strawson, which allow for senses of truth and falsity not specified by Collingwood (CEPC, 222-40).

It is unnecessary to delve any further into Krausz's collection of critical essays,<sup>21</sup> since we have at this point

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<sup>21</sup>There are included in this volume illuminating articles by W. von Leyden, Peter Jones, and Richard Wollheim on Collingwood's esthetics and philosophy of mind; by Leon J. Goldstein on the constitution of the historical past (which deserves special marks for its care in comparing Collingwood's actual historical praxis, in his writings on Roman Britain,

a fairly synoptic overview of the range of alternatives available to the reader interested in finding out the extent of Collingwood's coherence--or incoherence--as a philosopher. Many of these ideas and issues will arise again in chapters to come, but before stating our own reasons for rejecting the approaches of the principal interpreters of Collingwood some sort of summary of conclusions is in order. Table I sets forth observations which seem to follow from our brief survey of Collingwood's interpreters.

We shall see in Chapter II that the list of issues which we have found to be the central core of concern to Collingwood's interpreters turns out, interestingly enough, to be the very set of issues that Collingwood himself presents in his Autobiography. And yet not one of the contributors to this volume of essays seriously considered the Autobiography as an interpretation valid for the whole of his philosophy. This is all the more the pity, because it seems that Collingwood is worthy of at least that degree of attention that he lavished on the unfortunate Albert Memorial during his mili-

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with the theory of historical imagination in The Idea of History--perhaps the first time an author has approached Collingwood's work on the philosophy of history on his own terms); by Sherman M. Stanage on "Collingwood's Phenomenology of Education: Person and the Self-Recognition of the Mind" (based on a few scant remarks by Collingwood on the speaker-hearer situation and the learning of language, in The Principles of Art); and by A. J. M. Milne on Collingwood's ethics and political theory (which might serve as an antidote to Walsh's remarks in an earlier essay about Collingwood's lack of appreciation for the social sciences.)

TABLE 1

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 THE INTERPRETATIONS OF COLLINGWOOD'S PHILOSOPHY
 

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1. The major issues with which Collingwood's interpreters are concerned are:
  - a. his attitudes towards, and arguments about, realism and idealism;
  - b. his formulation of the logic of questions, answers, and presuppositions, and in general his position on philosophical methodology;
  - c. his remarks about the nature of history and the relationship of history to philosophy, and especially of history to metaphysics; and
  - d. the way or ways in which he worked out a reconciliation of all the disparate forms of knowledge (religion, art, science, history, philosophy) within an overall philosophy of mind.
  
2. The major alternatives which interpreters have presented for dealing with the central paradoxes of Collingwood's philosophy are as follows:
  - a. since Collingwood's philosophy is not coherent as it stands, it is necessary to divide his published works into two or more groups, based on the contradictory premises on which they are based, and then argue the relative merits of one group over the other or others;
  - b. since Collingwood's philosophy is not coherent as it stands, it is necessary to propose a revision of a portion of it in order to render the remainder coherent;
  - c. since Collingwood's philosophy is coherent as it stands, its apparent inconsistency can be resolved by assimilating it to a larger and more complete schema--e.g. historical idealism;
  - d. since Collingwood's philosophy is coherent as it stands, its apparent inconsistency can be resolved by showing the essential core of truth or coherence that unifies its diverse aspects.

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tary service in World War I. For in so much of what he writes he seems, like the lines he quotes from Wordsworth's "Leech-Gatherer" to describe this monument,

Like one whom I had met with in a dream;  
Or like a man from some far region sent,  
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment (A, 29).

It would be apt, therefore, to admonish oneself as an interpreter of Collingwood to ask what relationship there is between what he did and what he had tried to do--the very question he wished to put to Scott, the architect of the Albert Memorial--and to start by taking seriously what he said he had tried to do, before rejecting or revising what he did.

#### 4. On Interpreting Collingwood.

The very issue that is at the center of controversy concerning Collingwood's philosophy recoils upon the method an interpreter chooses to employ in dealing with that philosophy. For (1) if history and philosophy are not identical, then in dealing with Collingwood's philosophy in an historical manner, the question of its truth or falsity cannot arise: the historian would merely point to the "facts" of the matter, record any lapses in coherence, and let the matter stand. And in dealing with it in a philosophical manner, all the works of Collingwood suddenly assume equal standing, and it becomes impossible to see how later positions develop out of earlier ones, or how one work has priority over another. One is there-

fore stuck again with apparent contradictions in his fundamental assertions. But (2) if history and philosophy are identical, then one cannot deal with Collingwood's philosophy in a non-evaluative manner: understanding what he said at various points in his career would therefore be only a prelude to measuring its implicit promise against its explicit performance, and evaluating the outcome. But this alternative necessitates the evaluation of some texts as central and others as peripheral, and therefore choosing the "facts" to which one is to attend.

But if in getting caught up in interpretative controversies we were to sidestep the issue of truth in Collingwood's philosophy, we would be showing that we had not learned the main lessons he wished to teach us about history: to think historically is not to merely record facts and refrain from judgment. History is essentially a judgmental affair, because it involves selective attention to a chosen set of facts. This is supremely the case when it comes to the history of philosophy, where the "facts" to which the historian selectively attends are meanings and meaning-complexes. One must therefore take a philosopher for what he said (because this constitutes all the evidence we have for what he was thinking) but only as a symbol for for what he meant. Conflicts in evidence (e.g. contradiction in the texts) may make it difficult or impossible to get



beyond the symbol to the meaning, but this then is the point at which the borders between history and philosophy become precarious. But since so much of Collingwood's thought resides here, we must not fear to explore these disputed territories.

To think philosophically about the past, according to Collingwood, is also to take it as intentional--that is, as something already deliberated upon and thought about with us in mind as the intended heirs to a mental estate. The question one ought to ask with respect to Collingwood's philosophy should then be not what chronological series of literary events occurred in his lifetime, but rather what order or sequence of thoughts he intended for his readers to follow if they are to understand his thinking. Now it is in his Autobiography that Collingwood publicly specified for his philosophical heirs what sort of program he wished them to inherit, and in it he tried to make clear how they should proceed to lay claim to this inheritance. We therefore respectfully decline to accept the limited inheritance offered to us by Mr. T. M. Knox, and declare our intentions to carry our suit to a higher court. In doing so we propose to accept his Autobiography as Collingwood's only public, legal will.

In arguing our case we shall seriously attempt to live up to the highest standards of historical scholarship--these standards being those governing the philosophical interpreta-

tion of another philosopher's literary remains. Most of the canons for such an endeavor are usually given in negative terms. Two of them were cited by Collingwood himself in the Autobiography: (1) never accept criticism of any author before satisfying yourself of its relevance; and (2) reconstruct the problem, or never think you understand any statement made by a philosopher until you have decided, with the utmost possible accuracy, what the question is to which he means it for an answer (A, 74). To these we add the five interpreter's fallacies stated by Richard Robinson<sup>22</sup> (which we shall number consecutively to the two Collingwood canons just cited). One should avoid committing any or all of the following atrocities to a philosophical text: (3) mosaic interpretation (the habit of laying any amount of weight on an isolated text or single sentence, without determining whether it is a passing remark or a settled part of your author's thinking); (4) misinterpretation by abstraction (assuming that because an author mentions X and X appears to the interpreter to be a case of Y, that the author also meant, asserted, or was aware of Y); (6) the fallacy of insinuating the future (assuming

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<sup>22</sup>Richard Robinson, Plato's Earlier Dialectic (Oxford, 1953), pp. 1-5. It is interesting that Robinson seems to envision the task of an interpreter in terms which sound like a direct quotation from Collingwood: "The purpose of an interpreter . . . is to make himself and others rethink the very thoughts that were thought by someone long ago. Interpretation is not just any sort of commentary, including the revelation of the historical causes and consequences of a given thought. It is the re-creation of that thought" (Ibid., pp. 5-6).

that the author held doctrines that did not become explicit until later); and (7) going beyond a thinker's last word (ascribing to him not merely all the steps he took in a certain direction but the next step too).<sup>23</sup>

There may be more rules than this, but these are the most helpful ones this author has ever encountered, and suffice for the task at hand. They serve to eliminate every interpretation of Collingwood that has yet been offered. For (1) would it not be an error to accept Knox's criticism of Collingwood's radical conversion to historicism as a lapse into dogmatism and scepticism due to a cerebrovascular accident, without satisfying ourselves first that it is relevant? And (2) would it not be a mistake to reconstruct Collingwood's mature philosophy of mind, as Donagan does, without understanding what the question was to which it was meant for an answer? And was this question not "How can a thinking person understand his own mind without resorting to the errors of realism?" And (3) is it not a mosaic interpretation when Rubinoff takes the metaphorical remark in Speculum Mentis about the three ways the "prize of truth" may be awarded, and then erects on this frail motif the "three ontological levels of consciousness" on which are mapped all of Collingwood's

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<sup>23</sup>We also declare ourselves bound by the full set of grammatical and logical rules necessary for any discourse to make sense and be coherent. These we omit stating because they are assumed in any piece of rational inquiry.

writings, from books to essays to letters and even translations?<sup>24</sup> And (4) is it not a case of misinterpretation by abstraction when Mink rules out Collingwood's views on religion and its philosophy (in the book by that name) on the grounds that they are not dialectical? For how does Mink know that because Collingwood argues that philosophy is at least dialectical that he would accept the further statement that that is all it is? Does he not say it is also analytical, and is that not what he is engaged in doing in Religion and Philosophy? And (5) is it not a case of misinterpretation by inference to assert, as once again Donagan does, that because in Speculum Mentis Collingwood connected the doctrine of realism to the mental function of abstraction, and argued that all abstraction is falsification, and then later in The Principles of Art argues (if he in fact did so) that all concepts are abstract, that he therefore "repudiated" his earlier rejection of realism? And (6) is it not an insinuation of the future to argue, as Donagan does, that Collingwood's philosophy of mind is a specimen of linguistic analysis of the sort carried out in Ryle's Concept of Mind, and then to assert (on the deception of this analogy with Ryle) that it is fundamentally anti-Cartesian? But on the other hand (if we may be per-

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<sup>24</sup>I do not wish to imply that Rubinoff is the only interpreter to commit this error: Donagan and Mink are equally guilty of mosaic interpretation--Donagan's four principles of the philosophy of mind and Mink's tri-partite dialectic of experience, concepts, and mind are also examples of it.

mitted to invent a new version of (6), is it not an insinuation of the past to justify Collingwood's philosophy of mind, as Rubinoff does, by appeal to the idealism of Hegel? And (7) is it not going beyond an author's last word to argue, as Rubinoff does, that because Collingwood took several steps in the direction of a descriptive phenomenology of consciousness in Speculum Mentis, that he therefore would take the next step too, and endorse a "transcendental phenomenology" of mind (CRM, 54, 152-53, 311-15)?

And yet historical scholarship, like history itself, is a developmental process, as Collingwood says, in which successive terms sum up and go beyond previous terms without being necessitated by them. Our own interpretation of Collingwood is itself subject to this description. Therefore in what follows we shall see how Collingwood's philosophy, in senses yet to be specified, displays most of the characteristics that his interpreters have attributed to it--perhaps even some that they did not:

(1) As Knox points out, Collingwood's most apparent problem is his "historicism"--his tendency to identify philosophy with history; and beyond this is a deeper, less apparent problem of establishing a workable relationship between metaphysics (which Collingwood recognized to be at the center of philosophy) and religious faith. And as Knox (and later such authors as Walsh, Toulmin, and Rotenstreich) argue, his final

position as stated in the Essay on Metaphysics does display aspects both sceptical and dogmatic. But unlike Knox, we find no need to posit a radical reversal in his philosophy, and by viewing the paradoxical statements of the Essay on Metaphysics in the light of the overall philosophical orientation provided in his Autobiography, and the development of his thought in his published writings, this dogmatism and scepticism are transformed into something more akin to conviction and necessary self-criticism--philosophical virtues rather than vices. For there is no need to take the Essay on Metaphysics as a work all by itself, abstracted from his other writings. When restored to its rightful context, its central paradox is illuminated and refined, and the limits of its applicability are re-established; metaphysics may be more than an historical science, but Collingwood's point is that it is at least that.

(2) And as Donagan argues, Collingwood's unique achievement in his later writings is a philosophy of mind that is carried out by arguments which stress the importance of expressive, linguistic structures in the life of thought. But unlike Donagan we find no grounds for arguing that his final philosophy of mind "repudiates" his earlier anti-realistic stance, or even that it was "anti-Cartesian" or anti-intuitional in denying the thesis that self-consciousness is possible at all. The linguistic basis for his conclusions

was present even in his early writings, and he never varied in his assault on what he took to be the main tenet of realistic philosophy. For Collingwood, refuting this central tenet does not mean maintaining that "all abstraction is falsification," as Donagan thinks, but rather it involves showing that the proposition "knowing makes no difference to the object known" is false.

(3) And as Mink argues, the central "figure in the carpet" of Collingwood's philosophy is recognizable in the methodology first explicitly spelled out in the Essay on Philosophical Method--a work that is, as Knox first said it was, a philosophical classic. We also will agree that the philosophy of mind that Collingwood worked out in his later writings exhibits the structure of a scale of forms, a structure first exhibited in Speculum Mentis, which Mink calls Collingwood's first dialectical book. However we find no need to argue, as Mink does, that Collingwood "discovered" dialectic after writing Religion and Philosophy, nor that Collingwood had no sympathy or interest in the philosophy of religion. On the contrary we will find that Collingwood's philosophy is profoundly religious, and although he discontinued talking about "absolute knowledge" in his later writings, he modified his view of a philosophical absolute rather than dropping it altogether (as his discussion of the ontological argument in both the Essay on Philosophical Method

and the Essay on Metaphysics shows). And although some of the functions of a philosophical absolute were taken over by "absolute presuppositions," it is clear that Collingwood took as one of the absolute presuppositions of contemporary science the doctrine of Christianity that God exists.

(4) And as Rubinoff argues, Collingwood's philosophy as a whole cannot be understood apart from his overall orientation towards a rapprochement of the alienating forces typical of the contemporary human situation. The paradigm for this rapprochement was indeed the relation of philosophy and history, which the position Collingwood called "realism" was committed to ignoring. And the means that Collingwood used to re-establish continuity between forms of knowledge was by arguments which are, in some sense of the term, "idealistic," relying as they do on premises that are incompatible with the realistic thesis that "knowing makes no difference to the object known." However there is no need to call in Hegel's aufheben--or even Bradley's experiential Absolute--to save Collingwood's rapprochement project. If because of irreconcilable contradictions on fundamental issues Collingwood's philosophy cannot be approached on its own terms, it must be declared to be to that extent inconsistent and in need of revision, rather than declared to be incomplete and in need of assimilation to, or absorption by, the philosophy of Hegel. If we are in debt to Rubinoff for exposing the fallacy of the



"radical conversion hypothesis," we also declare ourselves free of his own fallacy, the "radical consistency hypothesis." The plain fact is that Collingwood did change his mind on several issues, and stated publicly that he had done so--but not on the fundamental issues discussed in the Autobiography, as we shall see.

In short, the thesis of our interpretation is that it is possible to make sense of Collingwood on his own terms, if we are careful to avoid making the errors of our interpretative predecessors. Perhaps by so doing we shall avoid the wrath of the shade of Collingwood, who warned us of a haunting should we fail to take heed to the requirements of philosophical interpretation:

The reader . . . must approach his philosophical author precisely as if he were a poet, in the sense that he must seek in his work the expression of an individual experience, something which the writer has actually lived through, and something which the reader must live through in his turn by entering into the writer's mind with his own. To this basic and ultimate task of following or understanding his author, coming to see what he means by sharing his experience, the task of criticizing his doctrine, or determining how far it is true and how far false, is altogether secondary. A good reader, like a good listener, must be quiet in order to be attentive; able to refrain from obtruding his own thoughts, the better to apprehend those of the writer; not passive, but using his activity to follow where he is led, not to find a path of his own. A writer who does not deserve this silent, uninterrupted attention does not deserve to be read at all (EPM, 215).

## CHAPTER II

### THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL INTERPRETATION OF COLLINGWOOD'S PHILOSOPHY

#### 1. The Autobiography as Literary Evidence.

In an essay written just two years prior to the publication of his own Autobiography, Collingwood wrote the following account of the requirements for adequate autobiographical composition:

If anyone of us were setting out to compose such an account ((viz. an autobiography - "a strictly historical account of my own past")), he would be confronted with two kinds of tasks . . . . The first task is that of recollecting: he must search his memory for a vision of past experiences, and use various means of stimulating it, for example by reading letters and books that he once wrote, revisiting places associated in his mind with certain events, and so forth. When this is done, he has before his mind a spectacle of the relevant parts of his own past life; he sees a young man undergoing such and such experiences, and knows that this young man was himself. But now begins the second task. He must not merely know that this young man was himself, he must try to re-discover that young man's thoughts. And here recollection is a treacherous guide . . . because thought is not wholly entangled in the flow of experience, so that we constantly reinterpret our past thoughts and assimilate them to those we are thinking now. There is only one way in which this tendency is to be checked. If I want to be sure that twenty years ago a certain thought was really in my mind, I must have evidence of it. That evidence must be a book or letter or the like that I then wrote . . . . Only by having some such evidence before me, and interpreting it fairly and squarely, can I prove to myself that I did think thus. Having done so, I rediscover my past self, and re-enact these thoughts as my thoughts;

judging now better than I could then, it is to be hoped, their merits and defects. (IH, 295-96, emphasis mine.)

It would be hard to believe that a trained archeologist and historian, having just written such a clear account of the criteria for autobiography, an account which expresses such a hard-headed view of what counts as evidence for such a literary project, could have forgotten about them completely when it came time two years later to write his own autobiography. Yet such is the charge of more than one of Collingwood's interpreters--including the man Collingwood named as his literary executor (cf. IH, x-xi).

Since the charge has been made it must be confronted in the same spirit of historical objectivity to which Collingwood himself subscribed. In the second part of his task, Collingwood wrote, "there is nothing which the autobiographer does . . . that the historian could not do for another" (IH, 296). If the autobiographer, in short, performs his task with the same rigor that is expected of historians, he functions as an historian of a subject matter which merely happens to be the events of his own life. If in fact Collingwood was in good faith with this principle when he wrote his Autobiography (and he at least claimed that he was--see A, 107 and "Preface"), his own interpretation of his intellectual development (and this is the main concern of the Autobiography) stands as one among other such interpretations,

each of which must be judged in accordance with the same criteria: each must be an interpretation of Collingwood's thought, based on the evidence provided by Collingwood's published writings, critically evaluated.

One serious objection to taking the Autobiography in this way is that at the time Collingwood wrote it (1938) two of his major works (An Essay on Metaphysics and The New Leviathan) and several articles had not yet been written. Consequently a good part of his interpretation of what his philosophy actually achieves remains speculation about what he intended it to achieve, and not what, on the basis of documentary evidence, it already had achieved. It is because his work remained incomplete at the time of the writing of his Autobiography that several of his interpreters have felt justified in rejecting the latter and arguing that his later works break entirely with the positions he had maintained prior to his writing of the Autobiography.

But while it is certainly quite appropriate to raise the question of the de facto adherence of these later works to the philosophical doctrines of Collingwood's earlier writings, or of the adherence of both of these to the interpretation offered in the Autobiography, it is capriciously arbitrary at best, and maliciously prejudicial at worst, to exclude the latter as a possible interpretation valid for the whole of Collingwood's philosophy, including the later works.

That the Autobiography should not be allowed a privileged position among the interpretations offered of Collingwood's philosophy is a defensible corollary of the principle cited by Collingwood above (viz. that correct autobiography is an application of correct historiography); but that it should be given no consideration is just as clearly ruled out by the same principle.

A second objection is that in addition to proposing an interpretation or an account of the development of his thought, Collingwood's Autobiography also cites evidence to support this interpretation, and since some of this evidence is not publicly available, the interpretation based on this evidence is also open to question.

Now the evidence in the Autobiography is of three sorts: (1) direct statements by Collingwood of positions he holds, at least at the time of the writing of the Autobiography; (2) references to published works that he had completed some years before, some with and some without qualifying remarks to indicate the extent to which he still agreed or disagreed with what he had written; and (3) references to unpublished manuscripts. Certainly there is no difficulty with taking statements from the first group as evidence that as of 1938 Collingwood held the positions that he says he does. And just as certainly, statements from the second can be checked for their accuracy by consulting the published works

to which they refer. Where such reference is factually mistaken, one can only register the lapse and credit Collingwood only as holding to the position he is discussing (if he gives textual indication of it) as his own as of 1938. The third group requires special comment.

In the Autobiography Collingwood refers to four pieces of documentary evidence that he gives every indication of having consulted during his composition of the text, but which are not accessible to other historians. Two of these documents--an unpublished book called Truth and Contradiction which he wrote in 1917, and a book-length essay written in 1920 and jokingly entitled Libellus de Generatione (as if written by one of the Italian idealists)--were destroyed by Collingwood after he wrote the Autobiography (A, 42, 99, and 99 n.1). The other two may still exist: one is a paper he wrote around 1918 and read to his colleagues at Oxford, but apparently never published (A, 44); the other is a 1928 paper which he calls his "Die manuscript" (because it was written at a country-house at Le Martouret near Die in France), and which he may have published under a more descriptive title (A, 107). Of these four documents the first two were seen by at least one other person apiece--the first by "a publisher" to whom it was sent (and by whom it was refused) (A, 42); and the second by Guido de Ruggiero, "for whom I typed a copy, thinking that it might amuse him as an historian of philoso-

phy" (A, 99). Whether the latter copy still exists is, to my knowledge, unknown; but in any event no one has questioned the fact that the original 1917 and 1920 manuscripts did exist until Collingwood destroyed them. The 1918 Oxford paper may be among those unpublished papers still in the possession of Mrs. Kathleen F. Collingwood. If in fact he did publish the "Die manuscript" under a different title, it is still identifiable only in terms of the content he assigns to it, and is hence not unimpeachable evidence.

Since the remainder of the pieces of literary evidence that Collingwood cites in the Autobiography refer to books and articles still publicly available, such evidence is not in question, and one can still test his interpretation by comparing it with the relevant texts. The case is not so clear with respect to the four items mentioned above, and hence they must be treated as evidence of nothing more than what Collingwood's views were at the time of his writing of the Autobiography. The doctrines that Collingwood claims to have espoused in these documents, insofar as he mentions what these doctrines are, and insofar as he does not directly repudiate the position stated, must be treated just like the other direct and contentful statements he makes in the Autobiography--that is, they must be taken as stating doctrines that he does not assign only to one period or to one document,

but puts forward as positions that he currently held.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Since the issue is crucial for the interpretation of Collingwood's philosophy as contained in Autobiography, and since the issue is made so sensitive by later writers on Collingwood's philosophy, at the risk of tedium I propose the following propositional version of what I take to be the limits of autobiographical interpretation:

Supposing in manuscript  $M_1$  at time  $T_1$  an interpreter finds author  $A_1$  making these statements:

$S_1$ : "I hold  $P_1$ "

$S_2$ : "In  $M_2$  at  $T_2$  I held  $P_2$ "

$S_3$ : "I still hold  $P_2$ "

Then an interpreter is justified in making at least the following assertions:

$I_1:M_1$  is evidence that  $A_1$  held  $S_1$ ,  $S_2$ , and  $S_3$  at  $T_1$ .

$I_2:M_1$  is evidence that  $A_1$  held  $P_1$  and  $P_2$  at  $T_1$ .

He is clearly not justified if he were to say:

$I_3:M_1$  is evidence that  $A_1$  held  $P_2$  at  $T_2$ .

He is not justified because  $I_3$  is not constructable on the basis of  $S_1$ - $S_3$  of  $M_1$ . It is valid on the evidence of  $M_2$  only if  $M_2$  at  $T_2$  contains the assertion, "I hold  $P_2$ ." In short,  $S_2$  is itself an interpretation requiring  $M_2$  for its justifying evidence. The situation is not changed if the interpreter is the author himself, and the manuscripts are his own writings.



## 2. The Autobiography as Historical Interpretation.

Prior to the Autobiography Collingwood had published only four philosophical works: Religion and Philosophy (1916), Speculum Mentis (1924), An Essay on Philosophical Method (1933), and The Principles of Art (1938). The latter two were intended as part of a projected series of philosophical works, about which we will have more to say presently. Concerning the former two Collingwood has several remarks in the Autobiography. Religion and Philosophy had been written "some years earlier" than 1916 "to tidy up and put behind me a number of thoughts arising out of my juvenile studies in theology" (A, 43). The main effect of these studies, at least for the development of his later thought, was his recognition of the falsity of the claim that empirical psychology had "already exploded the pretensions and inherited the possessions of the old pseudo-sciences of logic, ethics, political theory, and so forth," and was hence the science of human affairs the world was seeking (A, 92).

If this claim never for a moment deceived me, that is a benefit I owed to my early studies in theology. Like every one else who studied that subject in those days, I read William James' Varieties of Religious Experience and a lot of other books in which religion was treated from a psychological point of view . . . . I was profoundly shocked by the Varieties . . . because the whole thing was a fraud. The book professed to throw light on a certain subject, and threw no light on it whatever. And that because of the method used. It was not because the book was a bad example of psychology, but because it was a good example of psychology, that it left its subject completely unilluminated. And in Religion and Phil-

osophy I attacked, not William James, but any and every psychological treatment of religion, in a passage of which the crucial words are "the mind, regarded in this way, ceases to be mind at all." (A, 93).<sup>2</sup>

According to the above account, then, Collingwood's first published philosophical work attacked the psychologistic reductions of religion and mind to neuropathology and physiology respectively, defending them as on the contrary functions of consciousness, reason, and will (cf. A, 94-95).

His second philosophical work attempted to establish a position independently of idealism, but repudiating realism --a position which belonged to no recognizable or ready-made class.

I became used to it . . . when ((for example)) one of the "realists" (not an Oxford man), reviewing the first book in which I tried to indicate my position, dismissed it in a few lines as "the usual idealistic nonsense." The book was Speculum Mentis, published in 1924. It was a bad book in many ways. The position laid down in it was incompletely thought out and unskillfully expressed . . . . But any one who had been intelligent enough to see what I was trying to say would have realized . . . that it was neither "usual" nor "idealistic." (A, 56-57).

In a footnote to this passage Collingwood adds that, having just re-read Speculum Mentis for the first time since it was published, he found it better than he had remembered.

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<sup>2</sup>The exact words are: "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." (RP, 42; FR, 77).

It is a record, not so very obscure in expression, of a good deal of genuine thinking. If much of it now fails to satisfy me, that is because I have gone on thinking since I wrote it, and therefore much of it needs to be supplemented and qualified. There is not a great deal that needs to be retracted. (A, 56, n. 1).

Surprisingly enough, this is as much as Collingwood has to say in his Autobiography about his first two published philosophical books. For the remaining evidence that his ideas developed as he said they did in the period from 1912 to 1932 Collingwood refers the reader to the short articles he published in philosophical periodicals, "where they were rendered useless by the fixed determination of the persons who read such periodicals not to think about history" (A, 116, n. 1). Two volumes of these essays have appeared since Collingwood's death (EPA in 1964 and EPH in 1965). His first two books and these essays (several of which are included by Knox in the concluding portions of The Idea of History are the only sources presently available for critically reconstructing the development of Collingwood's philosophy during the period prior to the appearance of the Autobiography.

What sort of conclusion then can one draw from a careful reading of the Autobiography concerning Collingwood's development as a philosopher? Every indication in the Autobiography leads the reader to conclude that if there was any "development" of his ideas, during which time a possible change of mind may have occurred, it was in the period from 1912 to 1932

(A, 23, 28, 116-17), and that after 1932 he was engaged in preparing his conclusions for publication.

The ideas very briefly summarized in this chapter ((viz. ch. X--"History as the Self-Knowledge of Mind")) and the two preceding it were being worked out for nearly twenty years after I became a teacher of philosophy ((in 1912)). They were repeatedly written down, corrected, and re-written . . . . None of these writings has ever been intended for publication, although much of their substance has been repeatedly given in lecture form; but I am publishing this short summary because the main problems are now ((i.e. in 1938)) solved, and publishing them in full is only a question of time and health. (A, 116-17).

Both of these conditions, however, were to prove problematic:

By about 1930 my health was beginning to suffer from long-continued overwork . . . . By this time I had in my head a great deal which I believed the public would value; and the only way of giving it to the public was by writing books. On this, therefore, I decided to spend my leisure; and planned a series, to begin with an Essay on Philosophical Method. This I wrote during a long illness in 1932. It is my best book in matter; in style, I may call it my only book, for it is the only one I ever had the time to finish as well as I knew how, instead of leaving it in a more or less rough state. After settling accounts with my archeological studies . . . I wrote in 1937 the second book of my series, The Principles of Art. Before it had gone through the press I was overtaken by the more serious illness which gave me both the leisure and the motive to write this autobiography; whose purpose is to put on record some brief account of the work I have not yet been able to publish, in case I am not able to publish it in full. Henceforth I shall spend all my available time in going on with the series. (A, 117-18).

This passage is crucial for any attempt to reconcile Collingwood's later philosophy to the interpretation of it offered in the Autobiography. It will be the purpose of the later chapters of this dissertation to examine the extent to

which this program--his "series"--was carried out. Right now I merely wish to make two observations. First, Collingwood leaves no doubt that he considers the Essay on Philosophical Method as the key to understanding his mature philosophy. Even the Autobiography itself, the purpose of which is clearly stated in the text just quoted, is regarded as an interim report of work in progress. No other work is singled out for such high marks, and consequently any account of his mature philosophy which ignores it must do so in defiance of Collingwood's own clearly stated intentions.

Secondly, Collingwood gives no indication in the Autobiography of any radical change of mind either before or after he had begun his "series." He therefore clearly intends his readers to approach the body of his later writings (i.e. after 1932) as the fulfillment of a single-minded project, and the earlier writings as a development leading up to it. An interpretation of Collingwood's philosophy would be consistent with the plan of the Autobiography only if it follows this pattern.

### 3. The Autobiographical Interpretation: Four Themes.

"My life's work hitherto, as seen from my fiftieth year," wrote Collingwood approximately five years before his death, "has been in the main an attempt to bring about a rapprochement between philosophy and history" (A, 77). The entire problem concerning Collingwood's mature philosophy is

contained in this sentence, and especially in the meaning of the term, rapprochement. According to Knox and Donagan the reconciliation which Collingwood outlines in the Autobiography, and continues in the Essay on Metaphysics, amounts to nothing short of radical historicism: philosophy as a separate discipline is liquidated by being absorbed into history (IH, x). According to Mink and Rubinoff no such reduction occurs in Collingwood's philosophy, since the rapprochement is dialectical in nature, and in a dialectical relation the relata are not separate or mutually exclusive, but rather "overlap" (a technical term the meaning of which will be examined in Chapter 9).

In the Autobiography neither of these positions is directly supported. There is no mention of any serious change of mind, or of any radical reduction of philosophy to history; and there is no discussion of dialectic or dialectical relations. After two introductory chapters ("Bent of a Twig" and "Spring Frost") recounting his early educational experiences at home and at Rugby (1902-08), there follows two chapters ("Minute Philosophers" and "Inclination of a Sapling") on Collingwood's encounters with the Oxford Realists, first as a loyal, but somewhat sceptical student initiate, and later as a rebelliously independent tutor. Chapter V ("Question and Answer") encompasses the years (1915-18) of his work in the Admiralty Intelligence Division during World War I, during which time his daily communings with the grotesque

Albert Memorial led to the development of his "question and answer logic"<sup>3</sup> which was to be the foundation of all his later philosophical and historical work. Chapter VI ("The Decay of Realism") records his return to Oxford in 1918 as a complete opponent of Oxford realism. The next five chapters ("The History of Philosophy," "The Need for a Philosophy of History," "The Foundations of the Future," "History as the Self-Knowledge of Mind," and "Roman Britain") deal with the gradual development of his views on historical and philosophical thinking, listing the principles which became part of his mature philosophy of history, and giving some indication of the progress of his work on the archeology of Roman Britain. A final chapter ("Theory and Practice") records his political views, especially concerning fascism and socialism, and his assessment of the rapidly degenerating situation in pre-World War II Europe.

Even from this brief topical survey one can see that four themes dominate the Autobiography's interpretation of Collingwood's philosophy. (1) Out of a total of twelve chapters, no less than three (III, IV, and VI) deal with Collingwood's reaction to Oxford realism, and the theme recurs throughout Collingwood's discussion of his own positive con-

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<sup>3</sup>Hereafter "Question and Answer" will be referred to by the abbreviation, Q-A: e.g., "question and answer logic" appears as "Q-A logic."

tributions to philosophy and history. In fact, as we shall see, the Autobiography exhibits a rather surprising consistency when seen from the point of view of this rejection of realist doctrines. (2) Five chapters (VII through XI) are devoted, as one might expect, to Collingwood's overthrow, based on his rapprochement between philosophy and history, of the sceptical conclusions of the Oxford realists. (3) The key to this reconciliation is discussed in a crucial chapter (V) on his "revolutionary" Q-A logic. (4) Finally, the theme of rapprochement is extended, in the final chapter, but also in remarks scattered throughout the other chapters, to other, philosophically opposing doctrines: theory and practice, freedom and obligation, etc. These four themes--the critique of realism, Q-A logic, philosophy and history, and rapprochement philosophy--are central concepts in the autobiographical interpretation.

#### 4. The Critique of Realism.

Collingwood writes that his tutors at Oxford were members of the "realist" school of philosophers, a school whose primary function was the destructive criticism of idealism, and which converged towards the "zero line of complete scepticism" (A, 18-19).

When I began to read philosophy there in 1910, Oxford was still obsessed by what I will call the school of ((T. H.)) Green . . . . The philosophical tendencies common to this school were described by its contemporary opponents as



Hegelianism. This title was repudiated by the school itself, and rightly . . . . This movement never in any sense dominated philosophical thought and teaching at Oxford . . . . When I say that Green's school at this time obsessed Oxford philosophy, what I mean is that the work of that school presented itself to most Oxford philosophers as something which had to be destroyed, and in destroying which they would be discharging their first duty to their subject. The question what positive views they themselves held was of secondary importance (A, 15, 16, 19).

At the time of his graduation Collingwood felt that he was "logically bound to remain a 'realist'" until he had satisfied himself "either that the positive doctrines of the school were false, or that its critical methods were unsound" (A, 23). In connection with the relation between methods and doctrine there appeared to be three alternatives, between which, he says, he did not decide until after he had begun to teach philosophy at Oxford: (a) there was no connection between them (i.e., both were false); (b) the positive teachings were mistaken but the critical methods sound; or (c) the positive doctrines were correct but the critical methods were invalid. The fourth alternative--viz. that both the positive doctrines and the critical methods were valid--was apparently ruled out by Collingwood on the basis of the negativity of the latter: their positive teachings were incapable of resisting attack by their own critical methods (A, 23).

Collingwood's description of this method is given in acid terms:

(T)he 'realists' chief, and in the last resort, it seemed to me, only method was to analyze the position criticized into various propositions, and detect contradictions between these . . . (f)ollowing as they did the rules of propositional logic . . . . (A, 42).

On any given issue a realist would "fish the problem P out of the hyperuranian lucky-bag, hold it up, and say 'what did So-and-so think about this?'" and only after this would they ask, "Is he right?" (A, 68-9). In short, they separated the historical question, "What did X think about P?" from the philosophical question, "Was X right in thinking A about P?" (A, 27, 59). The presupposition of this procedure was that there were a set of "eternal problems" in philosophy, to which philosophers gave various answers at various times (A, 60, 69). The answers given by different philosophers were to a presumably identical set of questions--where "the sameness was the sameness of a 'universal', and the difference the difference between two instances of that universal" (A, 62). Since truth and falsity were regarded as properties of propositions (A, 34), the "answers" could be compared to one another to see if they were contradictory or not (A, 40-42).

As for the positive content, Collingwood writes that this consisted of a single assertion, dogmatically maintained: "except for ((the)) one nonsensical phrase ((that)) knowledge making no difference to what is known, 'realism' had no positive doctrines of its own at all but had stolen all that it had from the school of thought which it was primarily con-

cerned to discredit" (A, 44-45). The dogma was propagated in a number of ways, all of which embody the central assertion in one way or another. In its metaphysical form it is the doctrine that "the known is independent of, and unaffected by, the knowing of it" (A, 45). In epistemology the "Oxford 'realists' talked as if knowing were a simple 'intuiting' or a simple 'apprehending' of some 'reality'" (A, 25).

What all these "realists" were saying, I thought, was that the condition of a knowing mind is not indeed a passive condition, for it is actively engaged in knowing; but a "simple" condition, one in which there are no complexities or diversities, nothing except just the knowing. They granted that a man who wanted to know something might have to work, in ways that might be very complicated, in order to "put himself in a position" from which it could be "apprehended"; but once the position had been attained there was nothing for him to do but "apprehend" it, or perhaps fail to "apprehend" it. (A, 25-26).

As Collingwood paraphrased the way one member of the movement stated it, knowing is "the simple 'compresence' of two things, one of which ((is)) a mind" (A, 25). In ethics "the great principle of realism, that nothing is affected by being known" becomes the principle that "(m)oral philosophy is only the theory of moral action: It can't therefore make any difference to the practice of moral action" (A, 48). In political theory the realists denied "the conception of 'common good', the fundamental idea of all social life," by "insisting that all 'goods' were private" (A, 49).

In Collingwood's estimation the net result of all this was nothing short of disastrous--for philosophy, for civilization, and for the realist movement itself. In a gradual and piecemeal fashion, a process of self-stultification occurred within the ranks of the Oxford realists.

In this process, by which anything that could be recognized as a philosophical doctrine was stuck up and shot to pieces by the "realist" criticism, the "realists" little by little destroyed everything in the way of positive doctrine that they had ever possessed. (A, 49).

But although "the fox was tailless, and knew it," he did not count it a misfortune: the realists

were glad to have eradicated from the philosophical schools that confusion of philosophy with pulpit oratory which was involved in the bad old theory that moral philosophy is taught with a view to making the pupils better men. They were proud to have excogitated a philosophy so pure from the sordid taint of utility that they could lay their hands on their hearts and say it was no use at all; a philosophy so scientific that no one whose life was not a life of pure research could appreciate it, and so abstruse that only a whole-time student, and a very clever man at that, could understand it. They were quite resigned to the contempt of fools and amateurs. If anybody differed from them on these points, it could only be because his intellect was weak or his motives bad. (A, 51).

Collingwood writes that at the time of the outbreak of World War I he had not satisfactorily decided which of his three alternatives concerning Oxford realism was correct (A, 27-28). As far as he had advanced was to work out the first of his two rules for sound scholarship which he tried to instill in his students.

I . . . taught my pupils, more by example than by precept, that they must never accept any criticism of anybody's philosophy which they might hear or read without satisfying themselves by first-hand study that this was the philosophy he actually expounded; that they must always defer any criticism of their own until they were absolutely sure they understood the text they were criticizing; and that if the postponement was sine die it did not greatly matter. (A, 27).

"This did not as yet involve any attack" writes Collingwood, "upon the realists' critical methods" (A, 27). Using this rule himself he came to realize that with respect to what the realist movement primarily was--viz. an attack on "the school of Green"--they misspent their shot. The position they assaulted was not Hegelianism, nor was it even idealism in the proper sense (A, 15-16, 19).

But when Collingwood returned to Oxford after the war he was already convinced that both the critical methods and the positive doctrines of the realists were in error (his first alternative) (A, 42, 44), and his "logic of question and answer," worked out during his wartime reflections on the Albert Memorial, had led to a second pedagogic maxim: "reconstruct the problem" or "never think you understand any statement made by a philosopher until you have decided, with the utmost possible accuracy, what the question is to which he means it for an answer" (A, 74).

In an (unpublished) paper read at Oxford in 1918, Collingwood writes, he assailed the cardinal principle of the realists:

I read a paper to my colleagues, trying to convince them that ((the realists')) central positive doctrine, "knowing makes no difference to what is known", was meaningless. I argued that any one who claimed . . . to be sure of this, was in effect claiming to know what he was simultaneously defining as unknown. For if you know that no difference is made to a thing  $\theta$  by the presence or absence of a certain condition  $c$ , you know what  $\theta$  is like with  $c$ , and also what  $\theta$  is like without  $c$ , and on comparing the two find no difference. This involves knowing what  $\theta$  is like without  $c$ ; in the present case, knowing what you defined as the unknown. (A, 44).

In addition to this "refutation of realism" Collingwood proposed an alternative theory of knowledge based on the centrality of the questioning, rather than the merely asserting, activity:

The questioning activity, as I called it, was not an activity of achieving compresence with, or apprehension of, something; it was not preliminary to the act of knowing; it was one-half (the other half being answering the question) of an act which in its totality was knowing. (A, 26).

We will presently consider the "logic of question and answer" in more detail, but here it is worth noting that Collingwood proposed his "revolutionary" logic as an alternative to propositional logic:

For a logic of propositions I wanted to substitute what I called a logic of question and answer. It seemed to me that truth, if that meant the kind of thing which I was accustomed to pursue in my ordinary work as a philosopher or historian--truth in the sense in which a philosophical theory or an historical narrative is called true, which seemed to me the proper sense of the word--was something that belonged not to any single proposition, nor even, as the coherence-theorists maintained, to a complex of propositions taken together; but to a complex consisting of questions and answers. (A, 36-37).

As this passage makes clear, Collingwood's alternative logic was intended as an instrument for the discovery of philosophical and historical truths--a task for which he felt propositional logic ill-suited.

As a corollary to his Q-A logic, Collingwood denied the realist's assumption that there are "eternal problems" in philosophy. This occurred in two phases (A, 68). In the first, Collingwood discovered through his historical research and in his teaching experience that there is in fact no set of permanent, eternal questions in philosophy (A, 60-68):

I found (and it required a good deal of hard detailed work in the history of thought) that most of the conceptions around which revolve the controversies of modern philosophy, conceptions designated by words like "state", "ought", "matter", "cause", had appeared on the horizon of human thought at ascertainable times in the past . . . and that the philosophical controversies of other ages had revolved around other conceptions, not indeed unrelated to ours, but not . . . indistinguishable from them. (A, 68).

Secondly he attacked the problem in principle. There can be no absolute distinction between historical and philosophical questions both because the distinction presupposes the permanence of philosophical problems (which was false on historical grounds), and because in any case of a philosophical question one and the same passage is used as historical evidence that it was a problem and as philosophical evidence of what that problem was (A, 69-70).

Having disposed of the central positive doctrine of the Oxford realists, as well as their epistemology and logic, Collingwood went on to reject their moral and political theories. He writes that since 1919 he lectured almost every year on moral philosophy, and although his reconciliation-philosophy was still incomplete, the rudiments were present even then of a solution to the realist separation or distinction between "facts" and "theories" (A, 148-49).

My first efforts in this direction were attempts to obey what I felt as my call to resist the moral corruption propagated by the "realist" dogma that moral philosophy does no more than study in a purely theoretical spirit a subject matter which it leaves wholly unaffected by that investigation. The opposite of this dogma seemed to me not only a truth, but a truth which, for the sake of his integrity and efficacy as a moral agent in the widest sense of that term, ought to be familiar to every human being: namely, that in his capacity as a moral, political, or economic agent he lives not in a world of "hard facts" to which "thoughts" make no difference, but in a world of "thoughts"; that if you change the moral, political, and economic "theories" generally accepted by the society in which he lives, you change the character of his world; and that if you change his own "theories" you change his relation to that world; so that in either case you change the way in which he acts . . . . There were, I held, no merely moral actions, and no merely political actions, and no merely economic actions. Every action was moral, political and economic. (A, 147, 149).

Collingwood regarded this as only a "theoretical" rapprochement, and the conclusion of the Autobiography describes Collingwood's bitter and painful discovery that a "practical" rapprochement was also necessary. But this meant a unification of what he calls the "three R. G. C.'s"--the "gloves-on" university professor; the family man of practical



affairs; and the "man of action", a "gloves-off" philosopher for whom "the difference between thinker and man of action disappeared," and who used to "stand up and cheer, in a sleepy voice," whenever he began reading Marx (even though, he says, he was "never at all convinced either by Marx's metaphysics or by his economics") (A, 150-53). The closing lines of the final chapter give the reader a sense of just what a threat Collingwood regarded the "realists" to be, not only to philosophy but to civilization as well. Recalling his remarks about the realists' reduction of ethics to pure theory, Collingwood links them with the recent rise in England of what he regarded as a fascist movement:

I am not writing an account of recent political events in England: I am writing a description of the way in which those events impinged upon myself and broke up my pose of a detached professional thinker. I know now that the minute philosophers of my youth ((viz. the realists)) for all their profession of a purely scientific detachment from practical affairs, were the propogandists of a coming Fascism. I know that Fascism means the end of clear thinking and the triumph of irrationalism. I know that all my life I have been engaged unawares in a political struggle, fighting against these things in the dark. Henceforth I shall fight in the daylight. (A, 167).

The results of our survey of Collingwood's critique of Oxford realism can be summarized as follows:

TABLE 2

THE CRITIQUE OF REALISM

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1. Any doctrine which asserts as its basic principle that the known is independent of, and unaffected by, the knowing of it, is realism (A, 44-45).
2. Realism's ultimate method is destructive criticism; that is:
  - a. the analysis of a position into various propositions; and
  - b. the use of the rules of propositional logic to detect contradictions between these propositions (A, 42).
3. The consequences of realism are:
  - a. the separation of the historical question of fact from the philosophical question of truth, and the metaphysical assumption that the latter are eternal (A, 59);
  - b. an epistemology which defines knowledge as the simple apprehension of an object (A, 25-26);
  - c. a metaphysics which deals with a body of eternal truths concerning the world's general nature (A, 65-67), and which denies the reality of becoming (A, 99);
  - d. an ethics which regards itself as merely moral theory, and hence makes no difference to the practice of moral action (A, 47-48, 147);
  - e. a political theory which denies the conception of a "common good" and insists that all "goods" are private (A, 49).
4. The basic principle of realism cannot withstand destructive criticism: it involves the meaningless assertion (on propositional grounds) that one can know what is simultaneously defined as the unknown. Realism hence cannot live up to its own claims, and fails as a philosophy (A, 23, 44).

5. The method of realism is false as a philosophical method, because
    - a. there is not, and cannot be, a one-one correspondence between indicative sentences in a language and logical propositions (A, 35); and
    - b. meaning, contradiction and agreement, truth and falsity do not belong to propositions by themselves, but to propositions as answers to questions (A, 33).
  
  6. The consequences of realism, as well as being disastrous for civilization, are philosophically erroneous:
    - a. philosophical and historical questions are inseparable, and there are no eternal questions and concepts (A, 68-69);
    - b. knowledge is a complex process consisting of questions and answers, and questioning activity being one half (the other half being answering the question) of an act which in its totality is knowing (A, 26);
    - c. questions concerning the world's general nature are based on beliefs or presuppositions made by the physicists of an era, these presuppositions being subject to change but not to the distinction between truth and falsity (A, 66);
    - d. knowledge of the situation in which one is called upon to act affects the action of the agent in that situation (A, 147-48);
    - e. actions (which are moral, political and economic at the same time) based on false knowledge of the situation in which one is called upon to act, do not serve the good of the nation as a whole but the good of a class, section, or only oneself (A, 147-49, 155).
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## 5. The Logic of Question and Answer.

Collingwood states that the first steps that he took in his youthful revolt against the doctrine of realism were methodological: in place of the "propositional logic" accepted not only by realists but by idealists as well (A, 52), Collingwood formulated a "logic of question and answer", philosophically more appropriate and historically more sound (A, 26, 28, 30). He went so far as to write it up in book-length form ("during my spare time in 1917"), and offered it, under the title Truth and Contradiction, to a publisher, but was refused on the grounds that "the times were hopelessly bad for a book of that kind" (A, 42). The book was never published, and Collingwood later destroyed the only draft of it (A, 99, n.1).

The roots of Collingwood's "revolutionary" logic, as stated in the Autobiography, are complex, and the rules of this logic shade off imperceptibly into his views on history and metaphysics. With respect to the former, three areas of his experience seem to have contributed to the formulation of his views. The first was his field experience in archeology--initially under the tutelage of his father, then, after 1913, directing his own excavations (A, 23-24, 30). This experience, he writes, impressed upon him the importance of the "questioning activity" in knowledge: in archeological field work "one found out nothing at all except in answer to a question; and

not a vague question either, but a definite one" (A, 24). In addition to teaching him that the questioning activity was not preliminary, but rather integral to the activity of knowing, it also taught him that the intuitionistic epistemology (knowledge reduced to direct acquaintance with an object) and propositional logic (truth as a property of indicative assertions) espoused by the realists were inadequate (A, 26-27, 30-31).

The second was his pre-war experience as a teacher at Oxford. This yielded the first of his two pedagogical rules for philosophical interpretation: "never accept criticism of any author before satisfying yourself of its relevance"--that is, one should satisfy oneself by first-hand study that this was the philosophy the author actually expounded (A, 27, 74). But (as we have already seen) while this "did not as yet involve any attack upon the 'realists'' critical methods", when coupled with his archeological experience it converged as a "flank attack on 'realism' as a philosophy which erred through neglecting history" (A, 28).

The third source and by far the most important, according to the Autobiography, was Collingwood's daily communings with the Albert Memorial:

A year or two after the outbreak of ((the first world)) war, I was living in London and working with a section of the Admiralty Intelligence Division in the rooms of the Royal Geographical Society. Every day I walked across Ken-

sington Gardens and past the Albert Memorial. The Albert Memorial began by degrees to obsess me . . . . Everything about it was visibly mis-shapen, corrupt, crawling, verminous; for a time I could not bear to look at it, and passed with averted eyes; recovering from this weakness, I forced myself to look, to face day by day the question: a thing so obviously, so incontrovertibly, so indefensibly bad, why had Scott done it? . . . . What relation was there, I began to ask myself, between what he had done and what he had tried to do? (A, 29).

His reflections on the unfortunate Albert Memorial led Collingwood to formulate the second of his two pedagogical rules: "reconstruct the problem", or "never think you understand any statement made by a philosopher until you have decided, with the utmost possible accuracy, what the question is to which he means it for an answer" (A, 74). This was a direct generalization arising from the analysis of his aesthetic experience of the Albert Memorial: Collingwood forced himself to reconstruct the problem that Scott had set for himself in designing such an artistic monstrosity:

Had he tried to produce a beautiful thing; a thing, I meant, which we should have thought beautiful? If so, he had of course failed. But had he perhaps been trying to produce something different? If so, he might possibly have succeeded. If I found the monument merely loathsome, was that perhaps my fault? Was I looking in it for qualities it did not possess, and either ignoring or despising those it did? (A, 29-30).

In addition to affording Collingwood yet another occasion for examining the role of questioning in knowledge, his reflections on the Albert Memorial provided him with a clue for solving the problem about "eternal questions" in philosophy, and

especially in metaphysics (A, 60). Applying his second pedagogical maxim to political theory he discovered that "the history of political theory is not the history of different answers given to one and the same question, but the history of a problem more or less constantly changing, whose solution was changing with it" (A, 62). Hence the realist assumption that different philosophies were different attempts to answer the same question was a "vulgar error, consequent on a kind of historical myopia which, deceived by superficial resemblances, failed to detect profound differences" (A, 60-61). Just as the ideal nature of the state exhibits essential differences for philosophers living at different times and in different societies, so the ideals of personal conduct are subject to essential changes (A, 61-65). The question "What is the ideal state?" and "What sort of behavior is moral?" are not the same questions when asked by different philosophers, because they have different essential meanings and different presuppositions. The clearest application of the principle was to metaphysics, where Collingwood finally laid to rest "the philosophers convictions about the eternity of problems or conceptions" (A, 65):

It became clear to me that metaphysics (as its very name might show, though people still use the word as if it had been "paraphysics") is no futile attempt at knowing what lies beyond the limits of experience, but is primarily at any given time an attempt to discover what the people of that time believe about the world's general nature; such beliefs being the presuppositions of all their "physics", that is, their inquiries into its detail. Secondly, it

is the attempt to discover the corresponding presuppositions of other peoples and other times, and to follow the historical process by which one set of presuppositions has turned into another. (A, 65-66).

Hence after discovering the clue during his reflections on the Albert Memorial and after generalizing the maxim and applying it to the fields of political theory, ethics, and finally metaphysics, Collingwood concluded that "there was no recognized branch of philosophy to which the principle did not apply that its problems, as well as the solutions proposed for them, had their own history" (A, 67). Except in the sense used to designate collectively a series of problems connected by a process of historical change, such that their continuity, but not their differences, are discernible-- except in this inaccurate sense "(t)he conception of 'eternal problems' disappeared entirely" (A, 67-68, n.1).

Based on the generalizations from these three regions of his experience, Collingwood formulated his revolutionary Q-A logic, the rules of which (in the autobiographical version) may be tabulated as follows:



TABLE 3

## QUESTION AND ANSWER LOGIC - AUTOBIOGRAPHY

- 
1. A body of knowledge consists not of propositions but of these together with the questions they are meant to answer (A, 30).
    - a. "Proposition" denotes an assertive act of thought or what in those acts of thought is asserted (A, 30).
    - b. A proposition is always a logical and not merely a linguistic entity ((i.e. it states what ought to be the case rather than what merely is the case concerning assertive acts of thought)) (A, 31).
  
  2. In order to find out what a proposition means the question to which the proposition was meant as an answer must be known (A, 31).
  
  3. No two propositions can agree with or be contradictory to one another unless they are answers to the same question (A, 33).
    - a. The sameness of two questions is the sameness of an historical process, and the difference between two questions is the difference between one thing ((the first question)) which in the course of that process has turned into something else ((the second question)) (A, 62).
    - b. An historical process is a process of becoming such that if a process  $P_1$  turns into a process  $P_2$ , there remains in  $P_2$  a trace or survival of  $P_1$  (A, 98-99).
  
  4. Truth and falsity belong to a complex consisting of questions and answers such that:
    - a. each answer and its question must be relevant to a complex of questions and answers ((i.e., to a systematic inquiry));
    - b. each question within that complex must "arise" ((Collingwood leaves the meaning of "arise" unresolved in the Autobiography));

- c. each answer must be the "right" answer to its question (where "right" means "enabling the inquiry to proceed", and not "true"--the right answer could be false);
  - d. each answer is to a certain specific question in the questions and answer complex (A, 37). (cf. A, 31-32--correlativity of Q & A).
5. Questions not only have answers, they also have presuppositions which are not subject to the distinction between what is true and what is false (A, 66).
- a. Some presuppositions ((relative presuppositions)) may be the answer to another question (A, 66).
  - b. Some presuppositions are "absolute"--that is, are not answers to any questions at all (A, 67).
6. The question "To what question did So-and-so intend this proposition for an answer?" is an historical question, and cannot be settled except by historical methods (A, 38-39).
- a. The settlement of an historical question results from arguing back from the propositional answer to its question (A, 70).
  - b. In arguing back from a propositional answer to its question, one and the same piece of evidence states the answer and allows the historian to identify the question (A, 70).
-

Collingwood's informal presentation of this Q-A logic is interspersed with commentary on it, some of which is worth mentioning here as a sort of concluding appendix to this section.

It is worth noting, to begin with, that Collingwood's Q-A logic is formulated in the context of a theory of knowledge, and a theory of knowledge that looks to history as a paradigm of knowing rather than to mathematics (A, 36-37). This is the significance of the first statement in the above table. The "body of knowledge" or systematic inquiry which he has in mind is an inquiry in which discoveries are still being made (at least for the inquirer), and not a closed system with fixed relationships (cf. A, 75).

Secondly, Q-A logic is at once a theory of meaning, of logical validity (agreement and contradiction), and of truth:

If the meaning of a proposition is relative to the question it answers, its truth must be relative to the same thing. Meaning, agreement and contradiction, truth and falsehood, none of these belonged to propositions in their own right, propositions by themselves; they belonged only to propositions as the answers to questions: each proposition answering a question strictly correlative to itself. (A, 33; cf. A, 37).

Another way of putting the matter would be to say that meaning, validity, and truth are functions of a Q-A complex which, for Collingwood, is taken as the primary logical unit. Items 2, 3, and 4 of the above table take up each of these successive functions.

Thirdly, it is over these three functions of the Q-A complex that Collingwood felt he departed from the doctrines of propositional logic--the mathematical logic accepted in part by the idealists, and in total by the realists (A, 33-36, 42). As in his refutation of the cardinal principle of the realists, Collingwood was careful to formulate "the central doctrine of propositional logic" which he was concerned to reject:

that there is, or ought to be, or in a well-constructed and well-used language would be, a one-one correspondence between propositions and indicative sentences, every indicative sentence expressing a proposition, and a proposition being defined as the unit of thought, or that which is true or false. (A, 35-36).

This central doctrine would clearly be ruled out of Q-A logic on the grounds that both meaning and truth are functions of a Q-A complex, and not of answers or of assertive acts of thought alone. Yet it is presupposed by all the various well-known theories of truth":

One school of thought holds that a proposition is either true or false simply in itself, trueness or falseness being qualities of propositions. Another school holds that to call it true or false is to assert a relation of "correspondence" or "non-correspondence" between it and something not a proposition, some "state of things" or "fact". A third holds that to call it true or false is to assert a relation between it and other propositions with which it "coheres" or fails to "cohere". And, since in those days there were pragmatists, a fourth school should be mentioned, holding . . . that to call a proposition true or false is to assert the utility or inutility of believing it. All these theories of truth I denied. (A, 36).

It is no wonder that, as Collingwood remarks in a later chapter, "(s)o far as my philosophical ideas were concerned, I was now cut off not only from the 'realist' school . . . but from every other school of thought in England, I might almost say in the world" (A, 53).

Fourthly, it is in connection with his application of Q-A logic to the supposedly "eternal problems" of metaphysics that the relationship between Q-A complexes and presuppositions makes its appearance (A, 66-67). So also the example which Collingwood uses to illustrate that contradiction or agreement (what we have called "validity") is a function of the Q-A complex, is the classical metaphysical problem of "the one and the many":

For example, metaphysicians have been heard to say "the world is both one and many"; and critics have not been wanting who were stupid enough to accuse them of contradicting themselves, on the abstractly logical grounds that "the world is one" and "the world is many" are mutually contradictory propositions . . . . There is no contradiction between saying that something . . . is one, and saying that it is many. Contradiction would set in only if that something were said to be both one  $x$  and many  $x$ 's . . . . Thus, if a given doctrine  $D$  is criticized as self-contradictory because it is divisible into two parts  $E$  and  $F$ , where  $E$  contradicts  $F$ , the criticism is valid only if the critic has correctly reconstructed the questions to which  $E$  and  $F$  were given as answers (A, 40-41).

Fifthly, and finally, the way Collingwood formulates his Q-A logic presupposes an understanding of "history" as he uses the term. This is clear from items 3a and 3b of the

above table, which specify "sameness of question" in terms of historical process, and item 6, which makes historical methodology integral to the discovery of "sameness of meaning" in a Q-A complex.

#### 6. History and Philosophy.

By the time of the outbreak of World War I, but before his reflections on the Albert Memorial, Collingwood had not successfully resolved his "threefold question" concerning the critical methods and positive content of Oxford realism, but his archeological research and early philosophical teaching experience aided him in mounting what he calls a "flank attack" on the same problem:

Working simultaneously along these two lines, I could see them tending to converge in an attack on "realism" as a philosophy which erred through neglecting history. If I had thought it possible to forewarn the "realists" of this attack, I should have said, "You must pay more attention to history. Your positive doctrines about knowledge are incompatible with what happens, according to my own experience, in historical research; and your critical methods are misused on doctrines which in historical fact were never held by those to whom you ascribe them." (A, 28, emphasis mine).

By 1920, Collingwood writes, he had completely worked out the idea of a "living past", and was prepared for a frontal assault on the realists' view of the past as consisting of corpse-like "events". The realists' neglect of history was a result of their refusal to admit the reality of becoming. The overcoming of the error involved in the recognition

that historical processes survive in the present, and this is the key concept in deciding how history can be reconciled with the "wisdom" sought by philosophers. The past that the historian studies is part of the situation within which he is called upon to act (A, 114); and the "events" of the past are processes of becoming which survive as active features of the present (A, 98-100).

By 1930, according to the Autobiography, Collingwood had worked out the principles on the basis of which history as "a science of human affairs" could be constructed (A, 115). These principles Collingwood connects with his Q-A logic and with the maxims drawn from his experience as an archeologist (A, 106-109, 122, 130). Again, for brevity's sake, we shall tabulate these principles here in slightly altered order from their appearance in the Autobiography, but with a notation that facilitates reconstruction of that order:

TABLE 4

## THE PRINCIPLES OF HISTORY

- 
1. (LG) History is concerned not with events but with processes (A, 99).
    - a. Processes are things which do not begin or end ((as events do)) but turn into one another; if process  $P_1$  turns into  $P_2$ ,  $P_1$  goes on in the changed form  $P_2$ , and  $P_2$  has previously been going on in earlier ((implicit)) form,  $P_1$  (A, 98).
    - b. ((In an historical process))  $P_1$  leaves traces (evidence) of itself in  $P_2$ , so that an historian living in  $P_2$  ((a situation)) can discover that what is now  $P_2$  was once  $P_1$  by the interpretation of evidence (A, 98; cf. A, 96).
- 

NOTE: In Table 4, the following abbreviations are used: LG = Libellus de Generatione (see page 94, below), mentioned in Chapter IX of the Autobiography; ARCH-1,-2,-3 = Archeological principles, mentioned in Chapter XI; HIST -1, -2,-3,-4 = Historical principles mentioned in Chapter X.

Collingwood clearly indicates that the principles employed in archeology are applicable to all of history (A, 121, 130, 133). He also states that the idea of a living past, expressed in terms of historical processes, became his "first principle of a philosophy of history"; it is therefore listed as such in the table. "ARCH-2" follows it, because it amplifies "LG", and is a natural bridge to "HIST-1". "HIST-1,-2,-3 are listed in that order in Chapter X of the Autobiography. "HIST-4" is not so numbered by Collingwood, but he indicates that it forms the conclusion of a train of thought that "was not complete until about 1930" (A, 115). Finally, it is worth noting that Collingwood states in a footnote that the principles we are calling "HIST-1,-4" were discussed in a paper delivered before the British Academy after his election to that body in 1934. They appear almost verbatim in The Idea of History in the "epilegomenon" called, after the paper, "Human Nature and History" (IH, 205-231; see especially IH, 215).



2. (ARCH-2) There are no mere "events" in history; what is miscalled an event is really an action, and expresses some thought (intention, purpose) of its agent; the historian's purpose is to identify this thought (A, 127-28; cf. A, 130).
3. (HIST-1) All history is the history of thought (A, 110).
  - a. The thought must be expressed: either in language or in one of the many other forms of expressive activity (A, 111).
  - b. The historian must be able to think over again for himself the very same thought whose expression he is trying to interpret (A, 111).
4. (HIST-2) Historical knowledge is the re-enactment in the historian's mind of the thought whose history he is studying (A, 112).
  - a. The sameness of the thought is not the sameness of a universal but the sameness of an historical process (A, 62).
  - b. The difference between the thought of the agent and the re-enacted thought of the historian is a difference of context: to the historian it is a past thought living in the present ("incapsulated", not "free"), while to the agent it is a present thought (A, 113).
5. (HIST-3) Historical knowledge is the re-enactment of a past thought incapsulated in a context of present thoughts which, by contradicting it, confine it to a plane different from theirs (A, 114).
  - a. An incapsulated thought is a thought which, though perfectly alive ((not a mere "event", which ends and begins)), forms no part of the Q-A complex which constitutes the "real" life, the superficial or obvious present, of the mind in question (A, 113; cf. A, 140-41).
  - b. Present and past planes of thought are distinguished by observing the way in which ((their respective)) problems arise (A, 114).

- c. Every historical problem ultimately arises out of "real" life--i.e., out of practical problems (A, 114).
6. (HIST-4) The science of human affairs (i.e. moral and political wisdom) is history (A, 99, 115).
- a. Knowledge achieved by historical inquiry is not knowledge of his (the historian's) situation as opposed to knowledge of himself, it is knowledge of his situation which is at the same time knowledge of himself (A, 114).
  - b. There must be a kind of action which is not determined according to rule, and where the process is directly from knowledge of the situation to an action appropriate to that situation without passing through the stage of formulating a rule appropriate to the situation (A, 103).
  - c. History offers insight into the situation in which one is called upon to act, rather than ready-made rules for acting in all situations of a given kind (A, 100-102; cf. A, 114).
7. (ARCH-1) Success in historical studies depends upon clear application of Q-A logic to historical problems (A, 121-122, 124).
8. (ARCH-3) No historical problem should be studied without studying its second-order history, that is, the history of historical thought about it (A, 132).
-

Again, several comments about these principles are in order. The first is that what is stated by Collingwood to be the "first principle" of a philosophy of history, as of 1920, is expressed by him in two ways, which are not transparently identical in meaning. The first is "that the past which an historian studies is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living in the present"; the second is in the form in which it appears above. The idea of a living past is described later in terms of the principle of incapsulation (5. of Table 4), so that its later reiteration eliminates the need to argue for an identity of meaning in these two expressions, as well as the necessity to speculate why Collingwood took them to mean the same thing.

Secondly, Collingwood writes that this first principle of history initially appeared in an essay of short book-length (Libellus de Generatione) which "was primarily a study of the nature and implications of process or becoming."

Secondarily, it was an attack on "realism", showing how the non possumus of "realists" towards a theory of history arose from their refusal to admit the reality of becoming, and from their analysis of the true proposition "P<sub>1</sub> becomes P<sub>2</sub>" into the complex of propositions "P<sub>1</sub> is P<sub>1</sub>", "P<sub>1</sub> is not P<sub>2</sub>" "P<sub>1</sub> ends where P<sub>2</sub> begins", "P<sub>2</sub> is P<sub>2</sub>", and "P<sub>2</sub> is not P<sub>1</sub>", all of them either tautologous or false. (A, 11).

Hence Collingwood's first principle of history was formulated, according to the Autobiography, in direct opposition to what he took to be a realist's position.

Thirdly, Q-A logic appears as an integral part of his listing of historical principles: it appears in his principles of re-enactment (4), of incapsulation (5), and of successful historiography (7).

Fourthly, Collingwood states that in connection with the principle of re-enactment (4), the question of what the difference is between the thought of an historical agent and the re-enacted thought in the historian's mind, was the most difficult of all the questions he encountered in his study of historical method (A, 112). The answer that he gives to this question in the Autobiography and the example which accompanies it are given in terms of his Q-A logic. According to the principle of incapsulation (see 5 in Table 4), present thoughts and past, incapsulated thought are distinguished by the way in which questions arise in each. For Admiral Nelson at the naval battle at Trafalgar the question, "Shall I take off my decorations?" and its answer, "In honour I won them, in honour I will die with them," occur in a primary Q-A series that involve the battle and his participation in it on the decks of the Victory. But this question does not arise in a primary Q-A series involving the incapsulated thought (the historian does not contemplate removing his own decorations in fear of losing his life).

But a question arising in ((the historian's)) primary series may act as a switch into another dimension. I plunge beneath the surface of my mind, and there live a

life in which I not merely think about Nelson but am Nelson, and thus in thinking about Nelson think about myself. But this secondary life is prevented from overflowing into my primary life by being what I call incapsulated, that is, existing in a context of primary or surface knowledge which keeps it in its place and prevents it from thus overflowing. Such knowledge, I mean, as that Trafalgar happened ninety years ago: I am a little boy in a jersey: this is my father's study carpet, not the Atlantic, and that the study fender, not the coast of Spain. (A, 113-14).

That primary or surface knowledge, some examples of which Colingwood uses from his juvenile re-enactments of the naval engagement at Trafalgar, serve to "contradict" the imaginative experience in which one takes on the role of being Nelson (and in the process forgets oneself or loses oneself in the imagined object). It is this "contradiction" which confines incapsulated thought to a plane different from the context of present thoughts.

Finally, history as the science of human affairs (6) corrects the false claim that psychology, a natural science of mind, is the source of wisdom, especially in matters moral and political (A, 92, 94, 116, 126).

The nineteenth century, likewise in search of a science of human affairs, tried to realize it in the shape of a "psychology" in which the mental was reduced to the psychical, the distinction between truth and falsehood thrown overboard, and the very idea of a science negated, psychology itself being involved in the resulting bankruptcy. But the revolution in historical method . . . swept away these sham sciences and . . . brought into existence a genuine, actual, visibly and rapidly progressing form of knowledge which now for the first time was putting man in a position to obey the oracular precept "know thyself" . . . . (A, 116).

But if a "science of human nature" cannot be achieved except by historical methods, part of the reason is that actions--historical processes--are not always performed in accordance with rules. Collingwood points out two occasions in which agents necessarily act without knowledge of any rule appropriate to the situation: (1) when a situation requires one to act and yet does not recognizably belong to any rule-governed types; and, (2) when the situation is recognized as of a rule-governed type, but the required act "involves a certain misfit between yourself and your situation"--presumably because the agent requires more of himself than action according to type or to rule (A, 103-104).

Of these two cases in which it is necessary to act otherwise than according to rule, the first arises out of the agent's inexperience and ignorance of life . . . . The second arises only for people of experience and intelligence, and even then occurs only when they take a situation very seriously; so seriously as to reject not only the claims of . . . desire, and . . . self-interest, but ((also)) . . . right conduct, or action according to the recognized rules (A, 105).

Such rule-free occasions call for improvised actions appropriate to the recognized realities of the situation; and the function of historical thinking was to provide "insight" into such situations, the reality of which included the incapsulated past as part of itself (A, 106, 101).

## 7. Rapprochement Philosophy.

We have already seen that Collingwood regarded his philosophy as "in the main an attempt to bring about a rapprochement between philosophy and history"; that he rejected realism as a "philosophy which erred through neglecting history"; that philosophy and history shared a common methodology by employing Q-A logic; and that historical questions are not separate from philosophical questions because "all history is the history of thought". The final step in the autobiographical account is therefore to elucidate the meaning of Collingwood's "rapprochement" philosophy.

One aspect of this rapprochement occurred to Collingwood in the course of his philosophical teaching at Oxford: if philosophers were to deal with the history of their own subject they ought to do so in a manner that met the contemporary standards of historical thinking (A, 77)--some of which Collingwood states in the Autobiography, and which we have summarized in Table 4.

But, in addition to making philosophy more historically respectable, it was necessary to make history more philosophical: this Collingwood did in his own historical work. As an example of it he cites the chapter on "Art" which he wrote for the first volume of the Oxford History of England--a chapter in which he showed how a revival of Celtic

art forms was possible after two centuries, during which time only Romanized art was produced. In solving the problem Collingwood made use of a modified form of his principle of incapsulation:

Incapsulation is not an "occult entity". It was my name for such facts as this--familiar enough to everybody--that a man who changes his habits, thoughts, etc., retains in the second phase some residue of the first. (A, 141).

The principle also operates in habits transmitted from one generation to the next, and without the need of positing any occult entities "like racial temperament or an inheritance of acquired psychical characteristics" (A, 142):

(T)he transmission by educational means of any moral ideal which involves the outlawry of an institution or custom, and the repression of a desire for it, entails the simultaneous transmission of that desire itself. The children of each generation are taught to want what they are taught they must not have. (A, 143).

This was the means by which a suppressed art-form was preserved over two centuries of time in Romanized Britain:

(T)he less successful the Britons were in Romanizing art, . . . the more they were likely to cherish the memory of their own fashions and ensure that these fashions were never wholly lost to sight by the rising generation. (A, 144).

Collingwood calls on this example as an illustration of the use of his rapprochement philosophy:

I found it possible to assert a connection between two facts, both of them notorious, which had not previously



been thought of as connected. One was the Celtic revival; the other was the badness of Romanizing British art . . . . (T)he idea which I expressed in the chapter on "Art" in the Oxford History of England . . . I would gladly leave as the sole memorial of my Romano-British studies, and the best example I can give to posterity of how to solve a much-debated problem in history, not by discovering fresh evidence, but by reconsidering questions of principle. It may thus serve to illustrate what I have called the rapprochement between philosophy and history, as seen from the point of view of history (A, 144-145).

In addition to a reconciliation from the historical direction, there is presumably a reconciliation from the point of view of philosophy:

This meant, in the first instance, a special branch of philosophical inquiry devoted to the special problems raised by historical thinking. Epistemological problems, such as one might group together under the question "how is historical knowledge possible?" Metaphysical problems, concerned with the nature of the historian's subject-matter: the elucidation of terms like event, process, progress, civilization, and so forth. (A, 77).

We have already observed how Collingwood resolved the first question (viz. that one can know the past if it is not a "dead" past, but is rather "living", incapsulated in the present, and known by critical evaluation of evidence). In the second group, Collingwood deals only with the terms "event" and "process"--the subject matter of the first two principles in Table 3; the remainder are left unelucidated in the Autobiography.

"But this demand for a new branch of philosophy," adds Collingwood, "soon developed into the demand for a new kind of

philosophy" (A, 77), a "Copernican revolution" (A, 79, n.1) in which historical knowledge is shown to be an element in all thinking (A, 86-88, 67-68). Collingwood cites the example of a scientist who, in framing a theory, makes use of historical knowledge as to what experiments had been tried and with what results, and insists that this historical knowledge is an essential element in all scientific thinking (A, 87). Metaphysics itself is an historical science, insofar as "the question what presuppositions underlie the 'physics' or natural science of a certain people at a certain time" is a purely historical question, and the origins of these beliefs about the world's general nature have come into existence by certain changes out of other such beliefs (A, 66-67).

Finally, a similar analysis occurred in connection with moral philosophy, which also involved an historical element:

If knowledge as to the facts of one's situation is called historical knowledge, historical knowledge is necessary to action . . . . Immediately after the War, therefore, I began to reconsider in detail all the familiar topics and problems of moral philosophy . . . . In the first place, I subjected these topics and problems to what I called an historical treatment, insisting that every one of them had its history and was unintelligible without some knowledge of that history. Secondly, I attempted to treat them in another way, which I called analytic. My notion was that one and the same action, which as action pure and simple was a "moral" action, was also a "political" action relative to a rule, and at the same time an "economic" action as means to an end. (A, 149).

The reconciliation between theory and practice, like that between history and philosophy, proceeded from two sides. From the theoretical side thought and action were shown to be mutually dependent, "thought depending upon what the thinker learned by experience in action, action depending upon how he thought of himself and the world" (A, 150). We have already seen how the need for a practical rapprochement impressed itself on the "three R. G. C.'s".

Unfortunately this is as much as Collingwood has to say on the subject of rapprochement philosophy in the Autobiography, and the reader is directed to complete the task of working out the details for himself (A, 149). Unlike the discussion of Q-A logic and the principles of history, there are no explicit rules for rapprochement. However, from the above discussion several generalizations about rapprochement philosophy are possible:

TABLE 5

RAPPROCHEMENT PHILOSOPHY

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1. The subject matter of rapprochement philosophy are viewpoints presumed to be distinct and opposite (e.g. philosophy and history, theory and practice, etc.). Such an accepted state of unreconciled opposition between viewpoints is characteristic of the "realist" philosophy (A, 148).
  2. A reconciliation of opposing viewpoints proceeds from each viewpoint towards its presumed opposite (e.g. from philosophy toward history, and from history toward philosophy) (A, 77, 144-45).
  3. What must be shown for minimal reconciliation is that there is a relation of mutual dependence of each viewpoint on its presumed opposite (A, 150).
  4. A relationship of mutual dependence between opposing viewpoints is established by subjecting them to both:
    - a. an historical treatment, in which they are shown to satisfy the conditions (or principles) of historical inquiry (to be related as two phases of a process, capable of re-enactment, etc.); and
    - b. an analytic treatment, in which they are shown to satisfy the conditions (or principles) of Q-A logic (they must be answers to the same question, be part of a Q-A complex, etc.). (A, 148; cf. A, 31, 42).
-

It is questionable, given Collingwood's remarks about rule-free situations and improvisation, whether he would agree that any such semi-formalization of the methodology of reconciliation is possible. Improvisation apparently extends even to the level of methodology:

Obscure provinces, like Roman Britain, always rather appeal to me. Their obscurity is a challenge; you have to invent new methods for studying them, and then you will probably find that the cause of their obscurity is some defect in the methods hitherto used. When these defects have been removed, it will be possible to revise the generally accepted opinions about other, more familiar, subjects, and to correct the errors with which those opinions are perhaps infected. In this sense, knowledge advances by proceeding to "from the known to the unknown", but from the "unknown" to the "known". (A, 86).

Collingwood extends this remark to include "obscure subjects" including (at that time in England) historical methodology, the systematic study of which he hoped would reveal epistemological truths "concealed from the 'realists' by their obviously conventional and second-hand ideas about the methods of natural science" (A, 86).

It is also possible that Collingwood's failure in the Autobiography to specify the sorts of conditions under which questions are said to "arise" is related to his reversal of the Aristotelian maxim about the direction in which the mind works in coming to know a subject (for Aristotle it proceeded from the known to the unknown). If obscurity is a stimulus for the invention of new methods which, in turn, reveal errors

in previous treatments of the subject, then it is hardly possible to predict in advance the questions that will arise: it presumes prior knowledge of the errors that have been made.

But on these issues Collingwood is enigmatically silent.

PART II

THE EARLY WRITINGS (1916-1932)

## CHAPTER III

### REALISM AND IDEALISM

#### 1. Introduction.

In the Autobiography Collingwood described his weaning from the brand of realism that he had been taught at Oxford, the turning point occurring during his reflections on the Albert Memorial sometime around 1917. At one end of this development is the teaching of Cook Wilson and the other Oxford realists, and at the other is the publication of Speculum Mentis in 1924, which the Autobiography acknowledges was perceived by at least one reviewer as the "usual idealistic nonsense." In between these two points there is the publication of his first book, Religion and Philosophy, in 1916, but actually "written some years earlier, in order to tidy up and put behind me a number of thoughts arising out of my juvenile studies in theology (A, 43). Prior to the appearance of Speculum Mentis Collingwood published a lecture entitled "Can the New Idealism Dispense with Mysticism?" and several other articles dealing with the distinction between science and history and Croce's philosophy. From these points we should be able to sketch in the curvature of his thought and compare it to that described in the Autobiography.



Along the way we should be able to reconstruct what Collingwood's understanding was of the realism-idealism issue, before it hardened into the form it takes in his later writings--viz. the anti-realism of the Autobiography. This is a crucial topic, since the starting point for virtually every one of Collingwood's publications is a critique of the realistic position of the subject under investigation. Furthermore his interpreters, as we saw in Chapter I, have used this issue to discredit the accuracy of the autobiographical account. Indeed it is difficult to understand how Collingwood could deny that in the years following the war he thought and wrote as an advocate of a school of thought widely recognized under the title "idealism"--as the 1924 article on the "New Idealism" illustrates. Yet in the Autobiography Collingwood writes that Speculum Mentis was neither "usual" nor "idealistic" (A, 57). We shall have to decide on the basis of his use of the term whether this is a sheer piece of effrontery or if it would be like Hegel denying that he was an idealist --where the term means "subjective idealism" of the sort he attributed to the Kantian philosophy.

The idealism-realism issue is also a strategic boundary in the interpretation of Collingwood, since (as we also saw in Chapter I) Rubinoff uses Speculum Mentis as a basic program for interpreting the entire remainder of Collingwood's philosophy, and views Collingwood as an unregenerated idealist

of an Hegelian pedigree, whereas Donagan reconstructs what he regards as the steps by which Collingwood worked his way free from his youthful idealism and forged a philosophy of mind on linguistic and analytic principles. And where Rubinoff has to explain why such terms as "absolute knowledge" and "dialectic" tend to disappear in the later writings, Donagan has to account for Collingwood's continued and uncompromising anti-realism in these same works. And finally, where Rubinoff has to account for the reversal from the condemnation of abstraction in Speculum Mentis to the apparent endorsement of it for all higher thought in The New Leviathan, Donagan, who uses this as an index of Collingwood's conversion from idealism, must account for the striking difference between the descriptions of this process of abstraction in the same two works-- a point that we will examine more carefully in later chapters.

In all of this discussion we must therefore try to be as clear as the texts will allow us to be on the senses of the terms "idealism" and "realism" as Collingwood formulates them. This will necessitate trying to be clear about certain other related terms, since what we are trying to do is to flesh out the bones of the abstract formula for realism from the Autobiography, "Knowing makes no difference to what is known." What does Collingwood mean by each of the terms, "object," "knowing," and "makes a difference"? As we shall see in this and subsequent chapters, the sense of the formula shifts with

the meaning of the terms: where "knowing" means "perception" the difference knowing makes to the object of perception is not completely equivalent to the situation in which "knowing" means "history" and the object is the thought of an historical agent. And when Collingwood rejects realism with his autobiographical anti-realistic argument, one must pay careful attention to the situation in which it is applied in order not to discard the baby with the bathwater. When he rejects the abstractions of realism in Speculum Mentis, for example, we must ask if there is any acceptable sense of "abstraction" that is salvable from the condemnation as distinct from the realism that it is aimed at overcoming. And similarly when we find the project of "absolute knowledge" collapsing for lack of any concrete subject matter at the end of Speculum Mentis, we have to ask if from the wreckage we can find any principles on which a more solid structure of thought can be erected. (Some of this work will occupy us in the next three chapters.)

## 2. Realism and Idealism in Religion and Philosophy.

If we were to begin where a beginning should really be made, we would probably never achieve the limited goals we have set for ourselves. A proper assessment of Collingwood's background would require sketching out not only the realistic doctrines of Cook Wilson and the Oxford realists but also of the shadowy figure of Bradley, whose thought was still very

much alive--even if only as the target of realistic critics.<sup>1</sup> From this point one could trace the issues backwards or forwards: backward into the roots of Collingwood's idealism in Bradley, Green, Hegel, Kant, and Berkeley, and the sources of the realism he opposed in Mill, Hume, and Locke; and forward into the fruits of idealism contemporaneous to Collingwood in the Italian idealists, Croce, Gentile, and de Ruggiero, and the development of realism with Alexander, Moore, Ayer, and Russell. All of this would make fascinating reading and would be a welcome study and an invaluable background work for the understanding of Collingwood's philosophy. Having said that we shall say little more about these matters, except by way of occasional footnotes suggesting interesting parallels or contrasts. Our task is to understand Collingwood's philosophy as interpreted by the Autobiography, and limitations in both space and our own background necessitate leaving these matters for another time.

The place for us to start is with Collingwood's early publication, Religion and Philosophy, which we anticipate will give evidence of Collingwood's early tolerance of realism. As expected, this work exhibits an ambivalent attitude toward realism. On the one hand Collingwood writes that what he is saying "contains little if anything which contradicts the prin-

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<sup>1</sup>C. J. Warnock, English Philosophy Since 1900 (Oxford, 1964), pp. 1-12. Cf. John Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy (Baltimore, 1957/1968), pp. 48-71, 240-57).

ciples of either Realism or Idealism in their more satisfactory forms,"<sup>2</sup> and adds that "There is an idealism with which I feel little sympathy, and there is a so-called realism which seems to be only distinguishable from that idealism by its attempt to evade its own conclusions" (RP, 101, n. 1; FR, n. 1).<sup>3</sup> On the other hand (and even this passage shows a leaning in this direction), in the same work Collingwood admits that in at least one controversy the position he is defending "would claim the title of idealism" (RP, 94-95). The only way for us to understand where Collingwood stands in this early work is therefore to look a little more closely at the positions he is analyzing and the arguments he puts forward to confirm or reject them.

Religion and Philosophy is laid out in three parts.

Part I examines the general nature of religion, and attempts

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<sup>2</sup>In this same footnote he cites with apparent approval the work of Joachim on The Nature of Truth on the one hand and Prichard's Kant's Theory of Knowledge and Carritt's Theory of Beauty on the other as representing the "more satisfactory forms" of the theories he hopes not to be contradicting. In the Autobiography Collingwood identified Carritt as his realist tutor, and H. A. Prichard as following Cook Wilson, and H. H. Joachim as a close personal friend of Bradley and later of Collingwood (A, 18, 20-22).

<sup>3</sup>In-text citations from Religion and Philosophy are followed by citations from the publication, Faith and Reason, ed. by L. Rubinoff, because the former is out of print, and portions of it appear in the latter work. Where no second citation follows the reference to RP, it does not also appear in FR.

to examine the distinction of religion from ritual, conduct, and feeling, and to identify it as "creed," i.e. its intellectual element. Furthermore it examines the distinction between religion and conduct (thought and action), history, science, and philosophy. To anticipate later conclusions, we might add that it is in this part that Collingwood not only engages in wholesale identification of apparently distinct subject-matters (religion as creed is identified with history, philosophy, and even, by implication, science; thought and action are identified; etc.), but also sets up many of the problems against which he would later struggle in Speculum Mentis. Part II takes up the metaphysical issues of proving the existence of God, the dualism of matter and mind, personal identity, and evil--these issues all approached in a manner which first analyzes a claim, then its counter-claim, and then attempts to state on which side the truth appears to reside. Part III is more properly theological in tone, dealing in successive chapters with the self-expression of God in Man, in the person of the Christ; God's redemption of Man; and the problem of Miracles.

As can be seen from this glance at the table of contents, there is a good deal of interesting material in this very early work, and we must resist the temptation to deal with all of it (some of it will appear in later chapters--the issue of the "identities" will appear, for example, in Chapter

VI on rapprochement). What we seek to clarify at this point is how Collingwood stood on the issues of idealism and realism, and this requires us to limit ourselves primarily to the material presented in Part II, "Religion and Metaphysics." In particular we want to find out the way in which Collingwood understood the independent status of objects of knowledge.

As in most of his subsequent writings, Collingwood prefaces his positive treatment of the subject with a critique of false views of the subject matter. In Part I Collingwood singles out psychology as characteristic of the way the phenomenon of mind in general, and religious thinking in particular, is improperly approached. When composing the Autobiography Collingwood recalled this passage with evident approval (A, 93), and in re-reading it he may have prepared himself for writing the anti-psychological chapters in the Essay on Metaphysics, which it strikingly anticipates. Psychology, Collingwood writes, is distinguished from the philosophical sciences of logic and ethics (which also study the mind) not by its subject-matter but by its method.

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 judgement--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 universalized, and thus gives us the definition of the 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 relation with real things other than itself; and you have psychology. Thus in scientific thought as studied by logic we have a judgement in which the mind knows reality: psychology, treating the judgement as a mere event, omits its reference to reality, that is to say, does not raise the question whether it is true. (RP, 40; FR, 75-76).

In a footnote Collingwood adds that the same omission or abstraction is made by formal logic, which he takes to be a psychological rather than a philosophical science (RP, 40, n. 2; FR, 76, n. 2).

Here we have in germ a strategy which comes to fruition in Collingwood's later philosophy of history as a re-interpretation of the act-object distinction, i.e. the distinction between an act of consciousness and the object of such an act, where the former is regarded by realists as an event in the subjective or psychological life of a conscious agent (cf. IH, 282-301). Our present interest is in the "metaphysical" aspect of the "reality beyond the act" which the mind apprehends. Throughout this chapter and those which follow, where Collingwood's anti-realism is being evaluated we will use this independent reality of the object as an index to measure the degree of his anti-realism, bearing in mind that in each case we must try to assess the meaning of the terms involved. It is, after all, the object's independence from the act of knowledge which is at the center not only of Collingwood's autobiographical realist formula, but also of



the historical issue as Collingwood inherited it.<sup>4</sup>

The passage about psychology which we have just quoted is taken from a chapter on religion and history, in which Collingwood is trying to demonstrate that religious creed is not devoid of reference to historical factuality. The attack on psychology is carried out because the psychology of religion, while pretending to deal with the phenomenon of religious consciousness, fails to do so precisely because it ignores this factual reference: a mind regarded in an external way, i.e. without reference to its object, "really ceases to be a mind at all," and the knowledge gained by studying it in this way "is not knowledge of anything, but barren and trifling abstraction" (RP, 42; FR, 77). In a later passage he comments that empirical psychology treats mind exactly as if it were matter (RP, 76). But when it comes to describing the

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<sup>4</sup>Cf. Bertrand Russell, "Logical Atomism," in Contemporary British Philosophy, ed. J. H. Muirhead (London, 1924), I, p. 360: "For some years I was a disciple of Mr. Bradley, but about 1898 I changed my views, largely as a result of arguments with G. E. Moore. I could no longer believe that knowing makes any difference to what is known." A more technical version of the formula was given by Russell some years earlier in "Meinong's Theory of Complexes and Assumptions," Mind, n.s. XIII (1904), p. 204: "every presentation and every belief must have an object other than itself, and, except in certain cases where mental existents happen to be concerned, extramental; . . . and . . . the object of a thought, even when this object does not exist, has a Being which is in no way dependent upon its being an object of thought." R. M. Chisholm in his "Editor's Introduction" to Realism and the Background of Phenomenology (New York, 1960), p. 3, n. 1, quotes Russell as saying that he had been led to accept these theses by Mr. G. E. Moore, and that "Except Frege, I know of no writer on the theory of knowledge who comes as near to this position as Meinong."

nature of history in contrast to this Collingwood endorses what appears to be a blatantly realistic definition:

History must be regarded not as a mechanical process, nor yet as a gradual accumulation of truths, but simply as objectivity; as the real fact of which we are conscious. History is that which actually exists; fact, as something independent of my own or your knowledge of it. In this sense there would be no philosophy without it; for no form of consciousness can exist without an object. (RP, 49; FR, 83).

At this point in his development Collingwood had not yet come to a full realization of what he would later call the ideality of history, and as the subsequent discussion illustrates, history is not yet confined to deeds of men. In Chapter V we shall see how this primitive idea of history became refined in the essays written between 1920 and 1930.

But what of this concept of a fact as "something independent of my own or your knowledge of it"? Where we might be tempted to soften its realistic impact by qualifying it as distinct from an object (the factuality of anything is its givenness, its aspect of independence, which says nothing about the facticity of objects, or about their independent existence or reality), it is better to let it serve as a statement forming the limit of Collingwood's early attitude toward realism. We shall never again encounter him affirming anything like it-- unless it is as a premise which he was setting out to demolish. The problem of the reality of objects makes its appearance in a later chapter in the discussion of what he calls the "plain

man's metaphysic:"

Popular metaphysic distinguishes two categories of reality, mind and matter. Mind is a reality whose qualities are thought, will, and so forth; it is not extended over space or divisible into parts. Matter, on the other hand, occupies space, and is homogenously subdivisible into smaller parts; it has no consciousness of itself as mind does . . . . Mind is active . . . matter is passive . . . . We have thus three hypotheses before us. Either the world is entirely material, or it is entirely spiritual, or it is a compound of the two . . . . (M)aterialism will admit the existence of thought, but will try to explain it as a kind of mechanism; the opposite theory (which for the sake of convenience I shall call idealism) will admit the existence of mechanism, but will try to describe it in such a way that its operation is seen to be a form of spiritual activity. (RP, 72-73).

In a footnote Collingwood adds that the sense of the term "idealism" which is opposed to materialism "must be carefully distinguished from Idealism as a theory of knowledge. The former, concerned with the antithesis between mind and matter, has no connexion whatever with the latter, which concerns the quite different antithesis of subject and object, and is opposed not to Materialism but to Realism" (RP, 73, n. 1).

Here a preliminary distinction has been drawn between metaphysical and epistemological idealism, and although one might question whether they truly have "no connexion whatever" with one another,<sup>5</sup> such an equivocation on the term might allow

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<sup>5</sup>We shall try to avoid being drawn into a protracted historical discussion of what the various meanings of the term "idealism" have been--since the title encompasses everything from Platonic archetypalism to Husserlian essentialism, and along the way from one end of this spectrum to the other, cuts across both Kantian and Hegelian territory. Nevertheless to

Collingwood to deny being an idealist (in the metaphysical sense) without being committed thereby to a denial that he was an idealist in the epistemological sense. More importantly, Collingwood does not view the realism-idealism controversy in a metaphysical sense--as it might be viewed by someone who takes realism to be a statement about independent existence of objects, in which case it is saying something about reality rather than something about our knowledge of it. For Collingwood realism is not a metaphysical issue but an epistemological one, i.e. one which says something not about reality but about our knowledge of it.

After some argumentation criticizing rigid adherence to the materialistic hypothesis (partly based on the impossibility of importing mind-characteristics into a purely mechanistic description of the world, and partly based on the failure of mechanists to defend the principle of causality), Collingwood pays the mechanistic devil his due. Materialism satisfies the scientist's demand for uniformity, regularity, and generality--all of which are satisfied by a materialistic philosophy (RP, 91). But that is not all.

Another merit of materialism is its insistence on fact, on reality as something beyond the power of the individual

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say that the metaphysical and epistemological forms of idealism have nothing whatsoever to do with one another ignores the fact that Berkeley's idealism arises from a critique of the concept of matter from a practitioner of epistemological empiricism.

mind to create or alter. Matter is supremely objective. And when it is said that mind is the only reality, the suggestion at once arises that the world is less solid, less satisfying, less "real" than we believed . . . : Materialism . . . is right as against those theories which make the world an illusion or a dream of my own individual mind; but while it is right to insist on objectivity, it goes too far in describing the objective world not only as something different from, and incapable of being created or destroyed by, my own mind, but as something different and aloof from mind in general. (RP, 92-93).

We shall find Collingwood making this point in various forms repeatedly throughout his philosophical writings, but usually not in defense of materialism. Whatever mind may make of the world, it is not simply the creation of one's own imagination --a view that Collingwood called "subjective idealism" (RP, 120)<sup>6</sup> and one which he tended to associate with solipsism.

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<sup>6</sup>This is the title Hegel applied to the Kantian critical philosophy. Hegel faulted Kant for stopping short with the analysis of experience at that point at which objects of experience are shown to be mere appearances (phenomena), whereas the view that Hegel advocates is absolute idealism, which holds that objects of experience are not only mere phenomena for us but in their own nature, since their existence is founded not in themselves but in the universal divine Idea. Cf. The Logic of Hegel, tr. from The Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences by William Wallace (Oxford, 1873), pp. 93-94. Kant himself refuted a form of idealism which he called "material idealism"--the theory which declares the existence of objects in space outside us to be merely doubtful and indemonstrable (the problematic idealism of Descartes) or to be false and impossible (the dogmatic idealism of Berkeley)--Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, tr. by N. Kemp Smith (New York, 1961), B 274, p. 244. Collingwood's use of the term is closer to Kant's "material idealism" than to Hegel's "subjective idealism."

The outcome of the discussion of the matter vs. mind controversy is that "we cannot conceive matter without ascribing to it some qualities of mind, nor mind without ascribing to it some qualities of matter" (RP, 93-94)--in short, the "mixed" hypothesis. But even here there is a definite tilt towards idealism.

To ask whether mind is a form of matter or matter a form of mind is largely a question of words. The important thing is that we should be able to bring the two into relation at all; that we should hold such a conception of matter as does not prevent us from admitting truth, morality, and life as a whole to be real facts, and that we should hold such a conception of mind as does not reduce the world to an illusion and experience to a dream. The first of these errors is that of crude materialism, and the second that of an equally crude idealism. The view for which we are contending would claim the title of idealism rather than materialism, but only because the current conception of mind seems a more adequate description of the world than the current conception of matter. We are laying stress on the fact that the world is the place of freedom and consciousness, not of blind determinism; and at present this can best be conveyed by saying that mind is the one reality. (RP, 94-95).<sup>7</sup>

A similar fate awaits the immanence-transcendence question in a later chapter. God must be regarded as both immanent and transcendent: immanent because all human knowledge and goodness are the very indwelling of his spirit in the

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<sup>7</sup>Collingwood closes the chapter with the suggestion that he does not wish to exclude a "higher materialism" which would "regard matter as nothing else than mind itself in its concrete existence, and mind as the life and operation of matter"--but this must wait for physics to develop to the point where it can adopt a principle which would regard all matter as in its degree a form of life (RP, 95).

mind of man; and transcendent because God has attained these things whether or not man attains them, his being not depending upon the success of human endeavor (RP, 119). But when he asks if God exists only as a "spirit in our hearts" or if he is also a real person "with a life of his own, whether we know him or not," he confesses that this is not an easy philosophical problem to solve.

The difficulty of answering this question is bound up with a well-known philosophical puzzle, the puzzle of how to prove the existence of anything except as present to the mind. If it is true that things cease to exist when we are not thinking of them, . . . then it follows by the same argument that God is immanent only, and exists nowhere but in the mind of men. But we cannot really believe that these things are so . . . . The arguments for pure immanence are at bottom identical with the philosophical creed of subjective idealism, and with that creed they stand or fall. (RP, 119-20; FR, 188-89).

If God is not entirely an immanent idea, what objective status does the concept have? Can the existence of God be proven? Collingwood argues that the traditional proofs for the existence of God are not so much impossible as premature: what is required is to first define what one means by "God," which involves finding some definite content to the concept--the task of theology. "No one can prove that God exists, if no definite significance is attached to the words" (RP, 64).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Collingwood does not deny that the existence of God can be proven--he merely postpones it until after an adequate concept of God has been developed. But after he spends the remainder of Religion and Philosophy expending considerable effort to develop just such a concept, he does not conclude his study with any such proof. Nor does one appear in any of

The only course open to the sceptic who doubts the existence of God is to discover what he actually thinks, and then to find out if that idea was justified or not (RP, 69).

This is an extension of a principle which Collingwood lays down as fundamental to all thought, and which is an early statement of the principle of intentionality, the modification of which we will be watching closely in succeeding chapters. In its earliest formulation it is expressed as follows:

The mind is specifically that which knows the object . . . . The mind seems to be not so much that which thinks as the thinking itself; it is not an active thing so much as an activity. Its esse is cogitare . . . . All consciousness is the consciousness of something definite, the thought of this thing or of that thing; there is no thought in general but only particular thoughts about particular things. The esse of mind is not cogitare simply, but de hac re cogitare. (RP, 100; FR, 172).

When two minds think the same thought it is never exactly the same in terms of emphasis or applications peculiar to the individual; but that does not mean that such a difference destroys the identity of the truth, or its ability to be the same truth thought by two different minds (RP, 106; FR, 177).

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his writings. What one finds instead is a favorable discussion of the ontological argument in the Essay on Philosophical Method (EPM, 124-26), and a very idiomatic use of the argument in the Essay on Metaphysics (EM, 185-90), which declares that the statement "God exists" is not a verifiably true or false proposition, but an absolute presupposition, and therefore that the ontological proof is only a way for Christians like St. Anselm to say what in fact they believe. If Religion and Philosophy is Collingwood's theology, his philosophy of religion remains unpublished. (Cf. RP, 16; FR, 53-54).



In Chapter VI we shall take up the issue of Collingwood's use of the term "identity" as he uses it in Religion and Philosophy and Speculum Mentis.<sup>9</sup>

On the strength of the passages we have been examining we can say that in this early publication Collingwood already shows a leaning toward an epistemological form of idealism, but at the same time he rejects both a "metaphysical" or subjective idealism which would assert that objects of knowledge are simple creations or imaginings of subjective consciousness. With respect to realism he displays a certain tolerance--as in the notion of "fact" as something independent of any knowledge of it, and in the distinction between an act of consciousness and its object (although he says nothing about the esse of the object to correspond to the esse of consciousness). Similarly

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<sup>9</sup>Our purpose in this chapter is to examine Collingwood's early views on realism and idealism, and it is only secondary to this that we have become involved in the issues of the philosophy of religion. But we do not mean to leave the reader dangling on the issues we have just raised--some of which we will meet again repeatedly in different chapters. The conception of God that Collingwood develops in Religion and Philosophy is basically that of the Christian God--centering on the Incarnation as the means by which the creator God overcomes his transcendence. The unity of man and God occurs through a "concrete union . . . attained in and by the identification of the self in all its aspects with the perfect mind of God" (RP, 150; FR, 254). This is achieved in the person of the Christ, who "has absolute experience of the nature of God and lives in absolute free obedience to his will" (RP, 166; FR, 267). Insofar as any man achieves a similar concrete identity of will with the mind of God he achieves union with God (RP, 160, 167; FR, 262, 268). Whether such a person as the Christ actually existed is an historical issue that Collingwood declines to consider (RP, 151; FR, 254).

he shows a tolerance for the positive aspects of materialism as a philosophy which, with proper modifications, is able to satisfy the scientific demand for uniformity and generality. We have not yet found any form of the anti-realism argument as outlined in the Autobiography, nor any linkage of realism and abstraction. The situation, in short, is pretty much what we would expect it to be on the grounds of the autobiographical interpretation.

### 3. Idealism, the Absolute, and the Metaphysic of Knowledge.

In a short piece published after a symposium in 1923 (the year before Speculum Mentis), Collingwood responded to a paper by Evelyn Underhill on the "new idealism"--by which she meant the philosophy of Croce and Gentile (FYC, 85). Underhill charged the Italian idealists with failing to provide room for mysticism in their account of the forms of experience, and Collingwood (who had just finished translating Guido de Ruggiero's Modern Philosophy<sup>10</sup>) undertook a defense of Gen-

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<sup>10</sup>Collingwood translated three of Croce's works and two books by Croce's disciple, Guido de Ruggiero--see Johnston, FYC, 66. Johnston's book also has a sketchy chapter on Collingwood's relation to Croce and the Italian idealists, whose influence on Collingwood Johnston aptly summarizes under the rubric formulated by Collingwood himself, that "to borrow is to interpret" (FYC, 89). "Collingwood asks us to focus not on what was borrowed, but on what led the borrower to select what he did . . . . It was the multiplicity of his interests and his command of many fields of learning which made Collingwood 'capable of borrowing' from Croce, Gentile, and Vico. It was his almost unique intellectual versatility which 'laid (Collingwood) open to their influence'" (FYC, 88-89).

tile's religious philosophy against her attack. The interest for us of this brief and tactful article is in the distinctions that Collingwood draws concerning idealism, which if they do not directly reflect his commitment to the school of thought he is discussing, at least indicates to us his understanding of it.

Collingwood corrects Miss Underhill's misconception that the new idealism "dispenses with mysticism" in the sense that it ignores an intuitive or immediate consciousness of the supreme reality as one, eternal, and spiritual. On the contrary, both Croce and Gentile identify mysticism with religion (FR, 270).<sup>11</sup> Gentile in particular does not deny the existence of an absolute object of thought such as that which mystics contemplate--something that is one, eternal, and unchanging; nor is Gentile's philosophy exhausted by calling it a philosophy of change like that of Bergson, for whom absolute reality is an absolute flux (FR, 273). This misconception is taken over from Bosanquet, whose view Collingwood corrects as follows:

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<sup>11</sup>Collingwood recognizes that Croce did not represent religion as one of the "necessary forms of the spirit" in his systematic philosophy (FR, 270), but adds that it provides the hint of a new attitude towards religion that "in Gentile blossoms into a complete new attitude to religion" (FR, 271-72). Johnston adds that Croce "accords religion scant place," and that in this "he differs significantly from Collingwood, who all his life regarded religion as a necessary, even indispensable component of culture" (FYC, 70).

reality, for Gentile, is history. Now history is not, as Miss Underhill assumes, a synonym for change. Change is . . . a realistic concept, history an idealistic. That which changes is a mere object, which need not know that it is changing, and indeed which no one need know to be changing. The philosophy of change is a "metaphysics of being," that is, a philosophy which tries to describe the world as a thing in itself without raising the question how it comes to be known. And there can be little doubt that the philosophy of change makes the world unknowable. That which has a history, on the other hand, is a mind, for matter may change but it cannot be said to have a history . . . . Hence Gentile's philosophy is a "metaphysic of knowledge," that is to say, a philosophy which never loses sight of the question "how do we come to know what we know?" (FR, 274).

In the light of what we shall find Collingwood saying in Speculum Mentis in this and the next three chapters, it can hardly be doubted that Collingwood would describe his own philosophy as a "metaphysic of knowledge."

But is that idealism? By 1923 it is clear that Collingwood had recognized the essential ideality of history, and had already moved away from a conception of history as simply "factuality." In Chapter V we shall observe the staging of this development; at this point we are interested in the way in which Collingwood describes idealism. In the essay under consideration Collingwood finds in Gentile an expression of the common ground of all idealism (FR, 277), the double aspect of mind as both active and passive, expressed by Gentile as the identity of act and fact:

(C)hange in a mind must be change for that mind, a change of which that mind is conscious; and to be conscious of it, the mind must somehow be raised above it. How is this apparent contradiction to be realized? How is the mind to

be at once in change and out of change? Only if the mind originates change in itself. For then, as the source and ground of change, it will not be subject to change; while on the other hand, as undergoing change through its own free act, it will exhibit change. This double aspect of the mind as active and passive is the very heart of Gentile's philosophy. It is his favorite distinction of act and fact. (FR, 275).

But if the identity of act and fact is the equivalent of Croce's principle of immanence, what room is there for a principle of transcendence? Gentile assigns the name of religion or mysticism to the losing of the mind in its object--the transcendent element of all human life. The synthesis of the immanent element of life (which Gentile calls art) with the transcendent is philosophy, which seeks the absolute, defined (citing Hegel for support) as "that which has reconciled its own opposite to itself, and therefore no longer stands in opposition to it" (FR, 276). Collingwood therefore states that in pursuing the absolute, Gentile's philosophy "is as convinced of the necessity of transcendence as Miss Underhill herself . . . . That reconciliation of the opposing principles of immanence and transcendence which both regard as possible, necessary, and indeed actual, she calls mysticism, and ((Gentile)) calls it philosophy" (FR, 276-77). It is, he adds, in basic agreement with Hegel's Absolute Spirit and the post-Kantian tradition in philosophy (FR, 277). For this tradition, mysticism is a thing which cannot be dispensed with--not as something intuitional or wholly immediate, but as something assimilated by the labor of the life of the mind (FR, 278-79).

The necessity of mystical experience lies in the principle that we discover new truths neither by the inference of the logic-books nor by the intuition of Aristotle, but by an act of mind which reaches out beyond the given, grasps the new thought as it were in the dark, and only after that consolidates its new conquest by building up to it a bridge of reasoned proof. (FR, 281).

In this discussion of Gentile we find Collingwood defending a form of absolute idealism, and defending it against attack not from the point of view of someone who finds it problematic in the sense of failing to show how the object is unaffected by the knowing of it (epistemological realism), but from the point of view of someone who charges it with failing to provide sufficient grounds for mystical religious experience. In the next section we shall find Collingwood widening this discussion to include all forms of experience, and deepening his commitment to absolute idealism at the same time that he begins to lay the foundation for moving beyond it.

#### 4. Absolute Idealism and the Forms of Experience.

In 1916, when Religion and Philosophy was published, we found Collingwood stating that the argument he was advocating did not conflict with either realism or idealism in their more satisfactory forms. By 1924 not only had his point of view shifted in the direction of absolute idealism, but his earlier tolerance had completely vanished. In Speculum Mentis Collingwood was prepared to take a stronger stand against realism and all its ramifications, and it was this work that

earned him the reputation of being an "idealist." It is a label that he explicitly rejected, but in much the same sense that he had rejected it in Religion and Philosophy:

Idealism . . . is the doctrine that the world is made, so to speak, of mind; and is regarded as the opposite of materialism or the doctrine that the world is made of matter. Both of these theories begin by abstracting the object of knowledge from the subject, and both go on by inquiring into the nature of the object in this abstraction, regarded as a thing in itself. Both agree in committing the fundamental error of separating the metaphysical inquiry as to what the world is in itself from the psychological inquiry as to how we come to know it. Idealism in this sense leaves unreconciled the opposition between subject and object, and therefore sets the object outside the subject; . . . it tries to bridge the gap by ascribing to the object some kind of consubstantiality with the subject, turning it into another mind, a society of minds (spiritual pluralism) or an infinite mind (theism). With anything which deserves the name of idealism in this sense we have nothing to do except reject it. (SM, 266-67).

What is being rejected is the "metaphysical idealism" that he had contrasted with materialism in Religion and Philosophy.

But what of the "epistemological idealism" that is contrasted with realism over the issue of whether knowledge makes a difference to the object known? Speculum Mentis widens our horizon beyond the object of religious knowledge; it is an analysis of successive "forms of experience," each of which competes with all the others for the "prize of truth" --that is, the successful fulfillment of its claim to be true knowledge (SM, 42). Each form of experience is a conscious attitude with respect to the known, an activity which

has both cognitive and practical aspects (SM, 39, 42, 44). In short, each is knowledge claiming to be wisdom.

Five such forms of experience are examined--art, religion, science, history, and philosophy--although the list is not exhaustive of all possible forms (SM, 41, 57, 280). As concrete activities engaging the whole self, each form of experience regards the others as illegitimate contenders for the prize of truth, "rival ways of conceiving the whole"--the "whole" being that conception of reality which will allow the mind to live the unified life that it sees and needs in order to be totally satisfied (SM, 36-37, 47-48). Consequently the forms of experience cannot be regarded as mere species of a genus, each taking a portion of the prize: "each denies the others; and because they are not species they have not that indifference with respect to one another which characterizes abstract logical classifications" (SM, 55). Each is to be examined on its own merits or in accordance with its own claims, in order to discover whether its claim is consistent with its actual performance.

Our map ((of knowledge)) . . . is to be a statement of the essential nature or structure of each successive form of experience, based on actual knowledge of that form from within, and concentrated upon the search for inconsistencies, rifts which when we come to put a strain on the fabric will widen and deepen and ultimately destroy it. (SM, 46).

When such inconsistencies appear it is the task of a higher-



order form of experience to repair the damage by constructing "from without" a self-conscious justification of the primary, inconsistent form (SM, 250, 252-55).

Since we will be engaging in an explicit discussion of the form of experience called science in Chapter IV, of history in Chapter V, and of the overall argument of Speculum Mentis in Chapter VI, rather than attempting a detailed analysis of the contents at this point we shall first present Collingwood's own summary of the five forms of experience in the Outlines of a Philosophy of Art which appeared the following year (reprinted in EPA, 45-154), and then focus on those sections of Speculum Mentis which particularly reveal Collingwood's views on idealism and realism.

After stating at some length a general theory of art, Collingwood locates art within the context of the life of the spirit, which he characterizes as follows:

The life of the spirit is an indivisible whole within which are necessary and permanent distinctions: permanent in the sense that the spirit in its own activity perpetually affirms them, and necessary in the sense that the attempt not to affirm them would merely result in affirming them over again. Fundamentally, the spirit is awareness or consciousness, which implies a prima facie distinction between the conscious spirit and the world of which it is conscious; but since this awareness is itself an act, a self-modification on the part of the spirit, the passivity of pure awareness rests upon the creativity of action, and the life of the spirit is a whole within which consciousness and action, awareness of the world and modification of the world are correlative elements. The unity of these two elements is feeling, where that of which we are aware is our own states, and these states are identi-

cal with the feeling of them: they are at once states of consciousness and objects of consciousness. (EPA, 137-38).

Coming upon this passage after reading Collingwood's defense of "the new idealism" it is hardly possible to ignore Collingwood's commitment to an idealism at least similar to that of the Italian philosophers, Croce and Gentile. For certainly the view expressed here represents the unity of "act and fact" or the duality of spirit or consciousness as both active and passive--a view that Collingwood had called the common ground of all idealism. Furthermore it appears that this distinction is at least post-Kantian, and probably Hegelian: the consciousness-object distinction is described as occurring within spirit ("a self-modification on the part of spirit") rather than forming the limit of spirit beyond which lies an unintelligible thing-in-itself.

Furthermore Collingwood imbues this structure with an internal dynamism which propels it through the stages of the "forms of experience":

Hence a rhythm in which awareness and activity concentrate themselves into the unity of feeling, and feeling again articulates itself into awareness and activity, is fundamental in all aspects of spiritual life. But life is not a mere rotation of three psychological categories in a rhythmical montony. This triple rhythm is present in all life, but it is never twice alike; its whole character is altered by the specific difference of the experience in which it is embodied. These differences emerge in the course of a process which on its theoretical side may be called the spirit's attempt to know itself, on its practical side the spirit's attempt to create itself. To know itself means also knowing its world, and to create itself means creating its world; its world in the former case

means the world of which it is aware, in the latter case the world in which it can live. (EPA, 138).

It is clear that when Collingwood refers to "objects" or "the world" he means primarily objects of consciousness--what he had called, in Religion and Philosophy, de hac re cogitare. It refers to the objective correlate of acts of consciousness, and when the term "object" is used henceforth without further qualification this is the sense we shall have in mind. If we mean to refer to a "thing" we shall call it a "physical object" or an object having extramental reference.

The first stage in the life of spirit is the life of art or the pure act of imagination--i.e. "the act of consciousness which presents to itself an object of whose relation to other objects it takes no cognizance" (EPA, 139). It is important to bear in mind that by imagination Collingwood does not mean a faculty which creates objects which appear to be presented in perception; in an earlier section of this essay Collingwood makes this point more clearly than he ever did in his subsequent writings:

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. In knowledge, on the other hand, the object is real; and the relation between them is that the empirical act of knowing presupposes the object and does not create it.

This may be said without prejudice to the idealistic view that there is an absolute or transcendent sense in which knowing creates its object; for no idealist is so innocent as to confuse knowledge with imagination and to suppose that what we generally call knowing is simply imagining. (EPA, 52).

The caveat against the "idealist" here is clearly against the "subjective idealist." Furthermore by "the empirical act of knowing" Collingwood clearly means perception. We shall find that throughout Collingwood's writings he never intimates that in perception consciousness creates an object ex nihilo: and this is the abhorrent sense of "idealist" that he rejected throughout his published works.

If the essence of artistic consciousness or aesthetic experience is its monadism, i.e. its contemplation of an object without relating it to other objects, its practical aspect appears in play--the immersing of ourselves in an activity without any question as to the relation of this activity and anything else. "Just as art does not explain itself by stating reasons, so play does not explain itself by stating reasons; and immediacy means the absence of reasons" (EPA, 139-40). But neither simple imagination nor simple play can remain in this immediacy as a complete and self-contained form of consciousness:

It is only within a consciousness which distinguishes truth from falsehood that we can find in actual existence that consciousness which does not distinguish them . . . . The question "what am I?" can therefore no longer be answered in terms of imagination; I am not merely an imagin-

er but a thinker. The question "what is my world?" must be answered by saying that it is a world not merely of fancies but of realities. But if I who think am also the I who imagine, it would seem natural to superimpose the act of thinking on the act of imagining in such a way that the real is merely one division of the imaginary. The only world whose existence we have learned to recognize is the world of our own imaginations; and when the distinction between reality and unreality forces itself upon us . . . we impose this distinction upon the world of imaginations, and regard certain imaginations as true and others as false. To do this is to break with the life of art; for . . . now we are asserting one imaginary object as real, and denying another as unreal; and to do this is to embark upon the life of religion. (EPA, 140-41).

I have quoted this passage at some length because it is our first contact with a transition between forms of consciousness, and is expressed without much of the complicating circumlocutions of Speculum Mentis. In fact it is exemplary in its simplicity, and gives us a clear sense of how Collingwood envisioned distinctions occurring within the unified life of the spirit: when a distinction like that between reality and unreality "forces" itself upon us, it is imposed on the unity of the form of consciousness which thereafter regards its objects under this oppositional distinction. In religion this takes the form of mythological or metaphorical expression, insofar as religion "says one thing and means another" by using imagery to convey a truth. Nevertheless religion marks an advance in the life of spirit:

(I)n religion that indifference to the distinction between real and unreal, which is the essence of art, is abolished. Religion is essentially a quest after truth and explicitly conscious of itself as such a quest. But the truth which it can and does discover is a truth which

is always hidden from view in a reliquary of symbolism: we see the imagery, but we do not see the truth; we are only conscious that the truth is there, and its presence converts the beauty of the imagery into holiness. But inasmuch as this holiness is a property of a mere symbol, religion always contains an element of idolatry and superstition. (EPA, 141).<sup>12</sup>

Religion, like art, cannot survive the disruptive force of the tension between metaphorical and literal language. When it attempts to overcome its own superstitious tendencies it is forced to distinguish thought from its own imagery, and in the process "the symbol loses its holiness and becomes merely significant" (EPA, 142). With the distinction between metaphorical and literal expression the life of explicit or self-conscious thought is reached. While art forgets the presence of thought and concentrates on the pure imagery of language, and where religious thought was immediately identified with the language expressing it, scientific consciousness separates thought from language and intellect from imagination.

Here thought is regarded as an activity self-contained and self-sufficient, and its object as a self-contained and self-sufficient intelligible world, reached through, but lying behind, the sensible world. The aim of science is to apprehend this purely intelligible world as a thing in itself, an object which is what it is independently of all thinking . . . . The world of thought is the universal, the timeless and spaceless, the absolutely necessary, whereas the world of sense is the contingent, the changing

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<sup>12</sup>Remarks like this make it difficult to assess Collingwood's true estimate of religion, which here seems to have slipped somewhat under the high position he accords it in Religion and Philosophy. In Chapter VI we shall review Collingwood's remarks about religious consciousness and try to judge the extent to which his view of religion is reductive.

and moving appearance which somehow indicates or symbolizes it. (EPA, 142).

The distinction is the separation of reality from appearance, the necessary from the contingent, which ultimately poses problems for scientific consciousness. Science cannot bridge the gap between the abstract universal and the particular, the necessary and the contingent, reality and appearance.<sup>13</sup>

The overcoming of this opposition is the achievement of the form of experience known as history.

Appearance and reality, imagination and thought, have been merely distinguished and not related: they must somehow be brought together again and shown to be equally necessary, each to the other. This need is satisfied by the historical consciousness, whose object is the individual; no longer an abstract universal divorced from its own equally abstract particulars, but a universal that particularizes itself, a particular constituted by its own universality. For history, the truth is no longer an abstract necessity which nowhere actually exists; it is concrete and actual, it is real in every sense of the word, while the truth of science is a reality which is in one sense utterly unreal, and ideal never realized, a law which has no instances. (EPA, 143).

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<sup>13</sup>Collingwood's view of science in these early writings is primarily based on the classical Greek notions of science, perhaps modified by Renaissance advances, but hardly based on first-hand knowledge of work in the physical and biological sciences of his day. It is therefore somewhat understandable why this form of experience is least articulated and not altogether satisfactory. Having stated the requirement for other forms of experience that the philosopher of it must be one who not only observes the experience of others but has engaged in the activity for himself (EPA, 153), Collingwood was in a weak position to describe the nature of scientific experience. Nevertheless we shall try always to evaluate what he says about it as a reflection of his own understanding of it rather than what natural science is in itself or in the contemporary understanding of it. What he does understand by it is sometimes quite remarkable, as we shall see in Chapter IV.

But history too has its fatal flaw. The historian presumes a world of fact which is already there for him to discover, and for which the historian is a mere spectator. The fact is a thing in itself, "a thing whose existence and nature are supposed to be wholly independent of the thinker" (EPA, 143). This constitutes the separation of subject and object--a relic of the abstractness of science remaining in history.<sup>14</sup>

This abstractness is only overcome in philosophy. The object of philosophy is nothing short of reality, a reality which includes both the fact of which the historian is aware and his awareness of that fact. The philosopher . . . is not, like the historian, outside his own picture; he sees himself as part of the historical process which he studies, and therefore part of his problem is to understand how that historical process has thrown up in its development an organ--namely himself--which is at once a part of it and the spectator of it. With this clue in his hand . . . he is able to reinterpret that process itself, and to see in every phase of it a *nisus* towards self-consciousness. And in realizing that history is the emergence of the spirit's consciousness of itself he is actually achieving that consciousness . . . . His knowledge is therefore explicitly action; he is creating himself by knowing himself, and so creating for himself an intelligible world, the world of the spirit in general. (EPA, 143-44).

Since we are treading on the margins of territories that we prefer to leave for later chapters, we shall leave off this discussion of the forms of experience with the conception of philosophy just given. In Chapter VI we shall be in a better

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<sup>14</sup>As Collingwood's idea of history developed he struggled against this very criticism, and his development of the concept of "re-enactment" is an attempt to overcome the difficulty completely. The extent to which this constitutes an adequate rapprochement between history and philosophy will be evaluated in Chapter IX.



position to evaluate Collingwood's project for a philosophy of "absolute knowledge."

But we have several particular ideas from Speculum Mentis to attend to, and to these we must now turn.

##### 5. Speculum Mentis and the Emergence of Explicit Anti-Realism.

In the last section when we discussed the way in which the five forms of experience competed, as rival ways of conceiving the whole, for the prize of truth, we noted that when a particular form of experience exhibits inconsistencies it becomes the task of a higher form of experience to resolve the disparity. That form of experience is philosophy, whose main task is to attain self-consciousness and therefore to overcome all the contradictions that arise due to the subject-object dichotomy. In Speculum Mentis this process gives rise to the construction of what Collingwood calls "dogmatic philosophy"--i.e. a form of consciousness which is conscious of itself, but imposes on itself the limits of a particular form of experience--art, religion, etc.--which it undertakes to justify as the only true form of experience. But these are errors that the mind makes about itself, and since the esse of mind is de hac re cogitare, it follows that when the mind takes itself as its object, an error about that object is an error that it makes about itself--an error that is immediately reflected in the mind's activities under the erroneous conception of it-

self: "the mind, having formed a false conception of itself, tries to live up to that conception. But the falseness of the conception just means that it cannot be 'lived up to'" (SM, 250).

Art, religion, science, and history are thus philosophical errors, and owe their characteristics, and the characteristics attributed by them to their ostensible objects, to the initial error on which each is based . . . . Each grasps "one aspect of the truth," as we say, forgetting that truth is a whole whose aspects cannot be thus separated: each is true, even while it is false . . . . Error is always present in truth, but negatively present, that is to say, it is present as that which is denied . . . . This interdependence of truth and error, error containing truth positively and truth containing error negatively, is not only a fact easily verified in empirical observation . . . but is a corollary of the fact that all knowledge is self-knowledge, and every error an error about the knowing mind. Hence an abstraction which separates subject and object also separates truth and error (good and evil, and so on), and . . . is a logical consequence of realism, for if there were a world of real objects completely other than the mind, absolute errors could no doubt be made concerning them. (SM, 250-52).

Here for the first time we encounter Collingwood attributing to realism all the errors that the mind makes about itself. But if we are to become aware of the genesis of this generalization, we must return to the conception of "fact" with which we began our investigation of realism in the section on Religion and Philosophy. Where in that earlier work Collingwood appeared to be content with leaving uncriticized the concept of historical "fact" as "something independent of my own or your knowledge of it," this immunity is no longer respected. The philosopher knows what the historian does not

know, "that his own knowledge of facts is organic to the facts themselves, that his mind is these facts knowing themselves and these facts are his mind knowing itself" (SM, 295; cf. SM, 287). Modern realism arises from the discovery of the concept of fact, which soon develops into the "historical form of dogmatism" (SM, 281):

Historical dogmatism is the assertion of fact as ultimately real, and fact means not only the facts of "history" but the facts of perception. Such a dogmatism may take a considerable number of forms ((several of which Collingwood lists: monism and pluralism, intuitionism and intellectualism, materialism and spiritualism, etc.)) . . . . That which unites all these divergent views is their common assertion of the positivity of the object, that is, their denial that the object is conditioned or affected by becoming known to any thinking mind or to what, with a question-begging epithet, is sometimes called finite mind: its finiteness being just this indifference to it on the part of its object. Such a realistic account of the object, as positive fact indifferent to its being known, is at first sight compatible with any theory as to what the ultimate nature of this object may be; and so we get all manner of realisms . . . all equally capable of being held in combination with the fundamental thesis of realism, which is distinguished from them as "theory of knowledge" from "metaphysics." (SM, 282-83).

Here we find a clear statement of what the Autobiography called the central doctrine of realism. This formulation never changed substantially in Collingwood's writings.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Cf. EPA, 182-83 (1925); EPH, 99-100 (1933); EPM, 161-62, 169-70 (1933); IH, v, 142 (1936). The term "realism" does not appear in some of the later writings because the movement ceased to maintain its positions under that title. But Collingwood's arguments were directed against the same positions as they were now maintained under the titles of positivism and empiricism: cf. PA, 130-31, 149-51 (1938); EM, 34-35, 37-38, 337-38 (1940); NL, 5.2, 5.31-5.32, 5.39 (1942).

Just as in the Autobiography it is presented primarily as a negative thesis: the negative formula that knowledge can make no difference to its object. But the realist is caught in a positive antithesis to which he is equally committed--a coincidentia oppositorum which could not help but embarrass a subscriber to formal logic. If reality consists of a collection of objects independent of the mind which knows them, then a pluralistic realism is affirmed--a universe in which objects and minds both occur. But on the other hand the historian presumes that all facts fall into place in a single all-embracing system of fact, and this system is the absolute, the ultimate reality--a monistic realism which conflicts with its latent pluralism precisely over the status of the thinker. Collingwood phrases the dilemma as follows:

For either the thinker himself falls inside the absolute whole or he does not. If he does then differences in his thought about it make a difference to it, and the more concretely real--that is, organized and interconnected in all its parts--it is, the more fundamental these differences will be and the more completely the positivity of fact is lost. If he does not, then the monistic doctrine is surrendered and we return to pluralism. (SM, 283-84).

While this is an issue that appears to arise only from within the perspective of the form of experience called philosophy, Collingwood emphasizes that it is a problem that arises from within the historical standpoint itself. The fundamental principle of history, the concreteness of the object, makes it impossible for it to define its object in such a way that

it leaves out the subject, i.e. the historian, and "compels us to recognize an object to which the subject is organic, in the sense that the subject's consciousness of it makes a real difference to it as a whole and to all its parts," so that "(b)eing known, whether truly known or erroneously known, must make a difference to the object" (SM, 244).

Just as the formulation of the central doctrine of realism corresponds to the statement of it in the Autobiography, so one also finds in Speculum Mentis a rejection of the principle in an argument employing the same strategy. However the argument introduces a complication in the form of the principle of abstraction, an issue to which we shall return after having a look at the argument.

(A)ny object considered in abstraction from a mind which knows it is neither material nor mental, but an illusion, a false abstraction. Thus we do not say that the objective world in itself is mental. If we are asked what it is apart from a mind that knows it, we shall answer that it is not "apart from" such a mind; it is "with" it in the sense of being known by it. If we are asked what it would be apart from such a mind, we shall answer that the very question implies the suggestio falsi that we can describe that which by definition is unknown. (SM, 267-68; cf. SM, 241).

Notice that the nerve of this argument is the absurdity that results from suggesting that we can describe (and hence know) what has been defined as something that is unknown, i.e. the world as it is "apart from" the mind which knows it. This is slightly different wording from the Autobiography, but essen-

tially the same argument as the one that he claims to have given at Oxford in a paper which refuted the central negative tenet of realism (A, 44). It is also noteworthy that although the phrase "in abstraction from" is employed in connection with this refutation of realism, its use in the argument is confined to the meaning, "apart from," as is indicated by the fact that Collingwood replaces the phrase with this expression without any change in the resulting sense of the argument.

But since Alan Donagan has made the issue of abstraction central to his interpretation of Collingwood's development (see Chapter I), we should take careful note of this meaning of the term in Speculum Mentis, so that when we encounter it again in its altered meaning in Chapter VIII we shall have some basis for comparison. Furthermore it plays such a prominent role in Speculum Mentis and its connection with realism is so strong that it would be hard to ignore it. Collingwood himself ties the concepts of realism and abstraction together:

Such was . . . and to some extent still is, the belief of eminent realists, who sum up their own position in the negative formula that knowledge can make no difference to its object. On the other hand, it is not possible to assert so much as this without asserting more, namely the principle of abstract thought; for what is explicitly asserted is the complete separateness of subject and object, their independence of one another: and this implies that there are facts in existence which are thus completely independent. It is therefore correct to maintain that realism commits its author to the principle of pluralism; and pluralism only means the scientific abstraction of the universal from its particulars. This path, therefore, leads from historical dogmatism back to scientific dogmatism. (SM, 283).

It is this double implication that causes the basic inconsistency within realism itself, and is responsible for the dual role that realism is assigned in Speculum Mentis. On the one hand realism is identified with the particular form of dogmatism which he calls "historical"--history being taken as "the assertion of concrete fact," and realism as the assertion of this fact as ultimately real (SM, 281-87, 201-11). On the other hand realism is identified with all forms of dogmatism, insofar as realism is the willful resistance to any doubt that subject and object are in all cases separate from one another, such an act of will being the essence of the dogmatic attitude (SM, 259). Realism thus appears to be identified with both the principle of abstraction (where abstraction means separation of subject and object), and the principle of concrete factuality. Collingwood himself recognizes this dual role, and charges the realists themselves with it:

In spite of the simplicity of these difficulties, they have not as yet been fairly faced by a single realist with whose work the present writer is acquainted . . . . The fact is that modern realism is essentially inconsistent. It is a halt, or rather a confused running to and fro, between two principles, the abstract concept and the concrete fact (SM, 284-85).

Speculum Mentis thus emerges as a philosophical work which not only rejects realism but does so in large part on the grounds of its principle of abstraction. It is the latter principle which is responsible for all the errors that consciousness makes about itself. "There is not only one dogma-

tism; there are as many types of dogmatism as there are types of abstraction" (SM, 268).<sup>16</sup> "Every error is a lapse from concreteness into abstraction, and all abstraction is dogmatism" (SM, 288). "(T)he abstraction which separates subject and object also separates truth and error (good and evil, and so on) . . . . Such a melodramatic view of life is a logical consequence of realism (SM, 252; cf. SM, 259). "Abstract knowledge is the same as error . . . . But all error contains an element of truth and the error appears as the externality of the object, its otherness with respect to the mind" (SM, 313).

Furthermore realism and abstractionism are also held responsible for most of the pernicious consequences of realism that Collingwood listed in the Autobiography: an ethics which separates knowledge from conduct (SM, 169-72); an epistemology which defines knowledge in terms of intuition (SM, 188-94; cf. SM, 255, 262, 283, and 293); a metaphysics which deals with hypostatized or abstract universals concerning "nature or the objective world" (SM, 271-81, especially 273 and 277; cf. SM, 158-63); and political theory which, in the guise of utilitarianism, pits the subjective will of the individual (as de-

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<sup>16</sup>How many types is that? Clearly more than Collingwood enumerates in Speculum Mentis, since the abstraction that he embraced in later years is not one of those considered among the abstractive processes of the four sub-philosophical forms of experience. See Chapter VIII, below. We leave it to the reader to judge if that form of abstraction also qualifies as a dogmatism.



sire) against the objective will of society (as law), so that "in such a society one regards every one else as a means to his own ends"--a society in which, in other words, all goods are regarded as private (SM, 169-76, 221-31).

Nor is this anti-realism peculiar to Speculum Mentis alone; many of these themes appear in different guises in articles which he published during this period, and some of them are brought out even more forcefully in later publications. It is also instructive to pay attention to the synonyms that Collingwood uses for realism. Thus what is called the "plain man's metaphysic" in Religion and Philosophy, and "realism" in Speculum Mentis, is called "the plain man's realism" defined as "to think of the object as a 'thing in itself,' a thing existing in and by itself" in a paper of 1928 on "The Limits of Historical Knowledge" (EPH, 99). In a 1921 paper on "Croce's Philosophy of History," Collingwood criticizes Croce for his "vacillation between naturalism, for which some statements are just true and other just false, and idealism, for which truth and falsehood are inextricably united in every judgement" (EPH, 12)--the former representing the Croce who is "the realist, dualist, empiricist, or naturalist, who delights in formal distinctions and habitually works in dualistic or transcendent terms" (EPH, 8). In passages such as these it is clear that Collingwood tends to use interchangeably terms like realism, naturalism, dualism, and empiricism.

This synonymous use of terms is further exemplified in a 1923 paper on "Sensation and Thought" in which Collingwood attacked what he called "the empiricist fallacy" of divorcing sensuous appearance from objective reality, or assuming "that a distinction could be made between what a thing looks like and what it is"<sup>17</sup>--a distinction which is taken as "the infallible mark of dogmatism (and consequently of realism) in all its varieties in Speculum Mentis (SM, 255; cf. SM, 77). Here we have empiricism and naturalism described in terms identical with the epistemological doctrine of realism. In a 1925 paper on "Economics as a Philosophical Science" Collingwood reinforces this identification of realism and empiricism by defining "empirical thought" as "that which conceives its object as substance or thing," as opposed to philosophical thought, which conceives its object as activity.<sup>18</sup> The distinction is virtually repeated in "Political Action," a paper delivered before the Aristotelian Society in 1928.<sup>19</sup>

## 6. Conclusion.

To say that "realism" as described in Speculum Mentis is a protean monstrosity would hardly be an exaggeration, and

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<sup>17</sup>Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, XXIV (1923-1924), p. 66.

<sup>18</sup>International Journal of Ethics, XXXVI (1925), p. 162.

<sup>19</sup>Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, XXIX (1928-1929), p. 155.

one cannot help but wonder why any person of sound mind and civilized demeanor would ever willingly describe himself as a realist. Are we dealing with something which has any historically evidenced counterpart, or is Collingwood presenting us with caricature as a foil for his protagonist, absolute idealism? While we can certainly say that at this point that the autobiographical interpretation on the issue of realism is well supported by the evidence we have been examining,<sup>20</sup> we are left with a number of troubling problems which we shall have to monitor closely in the chapters which follow.

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<sup>20</sup>Two themes from his discussion of realism in the Autobiography have not been discussed at this point: the non-eternity of philosophical problems and the falsity of realistic logic with its claim to one-one correspondence of propositions with indicative sentences. We shall be examining Collingwood's views on logic in the next chapter. Concerning the eternity of problems, the closest one comes to a statement of his position at this time is in a 1927 paper on "The Theory of Historical Cycles" (EPH, 76-89), which argues that in one sense it is true to say the the problem of politics is always the same, but in an equally important sense it is always different. The abstract goal of providing for the needs and betterment of a society remains the same, but in each case this involves solving different concrete problems (EPH, 85-87). The reader of the quotations of the last few pages would not have much difficulty in constructing an argument to overcome this difficulty: the problems that philosophers are concerned with are eternal--the same questions from generation to generation--only insofar as they are initially taken as abstracted from the historical situations in which they arise. The refusal to see these questions and their historical context as related is a willful dogmatism, and a species of the more fundamental error of separating subject (the philosopher) and object (the problems he considers). From an abstract point of view, then, there are eternal questions and concepts--and such is the point of view of the realist; from a concrete point of view, there are not--and such is the view point of the philosopher as historian.

The first of these is the issue we just raised. If there are distinctions which Collingwood is willing to make within the ranks of those who have been called idealists, so that when Collingwood denies that Speculum Mentis is idealistic he can remain in good faith with his readers by assuming that they understand him to mean that he was not a subjective idealist, are there no such equivalent distinctions to be found among the ranks of the realists? While Collingwood tells his readers that there are as many forms of error as there are forms of realism, he fails to tell the reader what those forms might be. We shall find in succeeding chapters that this issue remains unresolved, and that the "realists" remain not only a shadowy group of figures warming themselves by the bare fire of their negative thesis, but also that the position being rejected becomes progressively more indistinct as his polemic against it increases in its fury.

What is clear from this polemic is that in discussing realism Collingwood himself always employs an abstract sense of "knowing" and "object" because he was dealing with the problem from what he considered to be the realist's own perspective, i.e. one which takes the perception of a physical, extra-mental object as paradigmatic for all forms of knowing.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Passmore writes that "British philosophy, preoccupied with the theory of perception, tends to classify philosophical theories by their attitude to the perception of material things: 'realism,' for it, is the view that material things exist even when they are not being perceived, and 'idealism'

This means that by "realism" Collingwood had in mind the epistemological viewpoint which looks to empiricism as its natural point of departure. That there might be non-empiricist realists Collingwood never appears to have considered, as is clear from the fact that even in his criticism of a realist he admired--Samuel Alexander--his main objection is to the fact that he adopts an acquaintance theory of knowledge (EM, 176-78). His strategy is therefore to attack any sensation-bound theory of knowledge which neglects the active role of thought in perception, and to do so by emphasizing the contextual and interpretative aspects of the perceptual process. In Chapter VII we shall find Collingwood arguing against a different opponent--G. E. Moore--and adopting a similar strategy, but one which argues that the expression "sense datum" is intrinsically absurd. But in both earlier and later writings, his point of departure is the abstract statement of the realists that "knowing makes no difference to the object known," where "knowing" means perception, and "object known" means object of perception.

Secondly, what about the connection between realism and abstraction? Obviously an empiricist epistemology must account for the existence of universal concepts and many do

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is, most commonly, the view that they exist only as objects of perception." *Op. cit.*, p. 49, note.

so by providing a theory which describes universals as arising by a process of abstraction from particular sensible instances. In Speculum Mentis Collingwood does not enter into a criticism of any such abstractive process, nor is it the basis for attack on "abstraction" as the root error of realism and all forms of dogmatism. Speculum Mentis, adopting the stance of absolute idealism, assumes that absolute truth resides only in the whole, and "abstraction" is whatever divides this whole into atomic parts. Just as Collingwood did not seem to consider the possibility of a non-empiricist realism, in Speculum Mentis he did not appear to consider a non-abstractive realism. But we found him in at least one passage arguing against realism in a way which does not entail any commitment to the principle of abstraction (SM, 267-68), at least not in all senses of the term. In Chapter VIII we shall find Collingwood proposing a peculiar description of abstraction that does not involve "separating" what is abstracted from its abstracting context, and at that point we shall have to assess whether such a process can be maintained within an anti-realistic framework. The statements "all abstraction is falsification" and "abstraction is necessary for all true judgements" may not be contradictory when the appropriate interpreting qualifiers are added--"simple abstraction" in the first assertion being semantically discernible from concrete or "real abstraction" in the second. But more of this in Chapter VIII.

Thirdly, we wish to point to a hidden presupposition in these early discussions of realism and idealism, but one which Collingwood stated early on in his career, and never abandoned. In Religion and Philosophy Collingwood had already decided that there was no such thing as a fixed human nature. This appears to be a corollary of his principle that the esse of mind is de hac re cogitare. "The question to be asked about mind," writes Collingwood in 1916, "is not what it is, but what it does; a question which the logic of things and qualities does not deal" (RP, 165; FR, 266)--and herein lies an enormous part of the program for the remainder of his philosophy. Not only does it entail placing Collingwood on a collision course with empirical psychology, which until the end of his life he criticized for treating mind as if it were a thing, and acts of thought as if they were events not significantly different from those of the physical world; but it required him to formulate a logic alternative to that of "things and qualities" in order to have an instrument for dealing with what mind does without doing violence to it in the process. In the next chapter we shall look at Collingwood's early attempts to satisfy this requirement. We can anticipate that, just as he found in the philosophy of absolute idealism a kindred spirit for his anti-realistic leanings, so he would also find in their logic an alternative to the formal logic he presumed to be the tool of the realist philosophers.

## CHAPTER IV

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, LOGIC AND DIALECTIC

#### 1. Introduction.

In the Autobiography Collingwood states that his Q-A logic was not explicitly formulated until he was obliged to confront the Albert Memorial on a daily basis during World War I; but by 1917 it was, since he states that it was at that time that he wrote a book called Truth and Contradiction, which was refused by a publisher. After writing the Autobiography Collingwood deliberately destroyed it (A, 29-30, 42, 99 n. 1). In Chapter I we noted that Knox found it incredible that Collingwood could have worked out his theory of absolute presuppositions (which the Autobiography describes as part of Q-A logic) prior to writing the Essay on Philosophical Method in 1932 (IH, x-xi). Since the Autobiography is not clear on what exactly is included in the version of Q-A logic presented in Truth and Contradiction, we have questioned Knox's judgment on this issue. In this chapter we must try to find whatever evidence we can in the writings prior to 1932 of the role of questions and their presuppositions in the logical functions of mental acts, and on the basis of this evidence to decide if Collingwood's autobiographical interpretation can be



upheld on this point, or if he was deliberately trying to deceive his readers (as one might suspect from his destruction of the manuscript of Truth and Contradiction, which could be interpreted as an attempt to cover his own tracks).

At this level of inquiry our task is plain: we are to take up the early publications, including books, essays, and published lectures, and examine them for statements concerning questions, answers, and presuppositions. Unfortunately this task is already complicated by the overlay of issues from the previous chapter--especially the problems which arise due to his early commitment to absolute idealism. For while Collingwood disclaimed originality in rejecting propositional logic and the propositional, correspondence, coherence, and pragmatic theories of truth (A, 36), he appears to claim credit for recognizing that truth is a property of the Q-A complex and not of propositions as such (A, 38). Furthermore he clearly wants his readers to believe that the alternative to formal logic was his own Q-A logic, and that Q-A logic allowed him to answer his 1914 question about whether the realists' methods were sound: the answer was that they were not, because "the 'realists'' chief and only method was to analyse the position criticized into various propositions, and detect contradictions between these," following as they did the rules of propositional logic (A, 42).

But if Collingwood could have been so historically careless as to have forgotten, as other students of Oxford realism have not, that it was Cook Wilson himself who was highly critical of propositional logic, and who insisted that what the actual subject or predicate of a statement was depended on what question the statement is answering,<sup>1</sup> could he also have been mistaken about other details concerning his "discovery" of Q-A logic? What is particularly puzzling is Collingwood's failure in the Autobiography to mention anything at all about dialectical logic, and it is this oversight--or was it deliberate neglect?--that is brought into focus by the issues raised in the previous chapter. While it is true that in Religion and Philosophy Collingwood employs a method of argument that relies more on what he claimed in the Autobiography to be that of the realists (i.e. analysis into contradictory propositions), Speculum Mentis is beyond any reasonable shadow of a doubt built upon the dialectical logic familiar to

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<sup>1</sup>"A point of particular importance . . . is Cook-Wilson's criticism of the subject-predicate logic. First of all, he sharply distinguishes between the grammatical subject and the logical subject, which the traditional logic is content . . . to identify . . . Everything depends upon what question ((a)) statement is answering . . . (S)tress and context are ignored by the traditional logic; thus there arises what Cook Wilson regards as the absurd presumption that the noun which is nominative to the principal verb in a statement is bound to indicate the logical subject" (John Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy (Baltimore, 1957/1968), p. 244). Passmore also notes that Cook Wilson criticized Bradley's dialectical method for asking "unreal" questions, i.e. questions which cannot intelligibly arise (op. cit., p. 246).

post-Kantian idealist philosophers. If Collingwood was an anti-realist primarily because he became an absolute idealist, then it is understandable that he would also be opposed to a logic of atomic propositions, each externally related to an equally atomic and distinct state of affairs in the physical world, and that he would offer in its place a dialectical logic of developmental processes more in keeping with the active role of thought in reconciling oppositions. But this is not the genesis of his thought as he outlined it in the Autobiography, where the turn away from realism is described without any mention of absolute idealism or dialectical logic. In fact it is astonishing to find that there is no mention of any of the Italian idealists in the Autobiography other than one brief reference to Guido de Ruggiero as the recipient of a copy of his manuscript, Libellus de Generatione, which outlined the logic of historical process (A, 99). His description of this process is also the closest that Collingwood comes in the Autobiography to discussing dialectical logic (the term is not used). In fact in reading the Autobiography one is inclined to believe that while Collingwood read widely in his youth, in his maturity he was philosophically influenced only by indigenous British philosophers.

We already know this not to be the case. But if we are to understand the Autobiography as an act of self-interpretation, our concern is less with such oversights as these--

whatever their reason might be<sup>2</sup>--than with the extent to which the account he gives can make sense of his published writings, and it is to these that we now turn without further prologue.

## 2. Abstract and Concrete Universals.

As one might expect, there is no mention of the questioning activity in Religion and Philosophy, nor of the Q-A complex as the unity of knowledge. But there are scattered remarks about logic, the universal, abstraction, and scientific thinking which provide us a few clues about the way in which he conceived these subjects prior to his turn to absolute idealism. In the first chapter Collingwood tries to analyze what would be meant by a philosophy of religion, and in the process outlines what a "philosophy of" anything means:

The philosophy of any subject means careful reflexion upon that subject; thus we have the philosophy of art, of con-

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<sup>2</sup>One such reason could very well be the political and military polarizations which were occurring at this time in Europe. In May of 1936 Italian forces entered the Abyssinian capital of Addis Ababa, and in July of 1936 the Spanish Civil War began. The Preface to Collingwood's Autobiography is dated 2 October 1938. In May of 1939 Germany and Italy signed the "Pact of Steel." From June through August of 1939, Collingwood sailed to Greece and Italy as First Mate of the schooner yacht, Fleur de Lys. In The First Mate's Log he writes with outrage and contempt of an incident with an Italian fascist harbor patrol in Messina (FML, 170-74), and at the end of his account of the voyage he describes the discovery by the crew, mostly from Oxford, of the German-Russian alliance and the Nazi invasion of Poland. In such circumstances it is understandable why Collingwood might not wish to make an issue of expressing his indebtedness to German and Italian idealism.

duct, of science and so on. To do a thing, and to understand what one is doing and how one does it, seem to be different things; . . . to conduct an argument is science, to reflect upon it is logic . . . . But the theory of knowledge or logic does not consider differences of the object, but only processes of the subject; and therefore there is no distinction between the philosophy of religion (as theory of religious knowledge) and the theory of knowledge in general. If there is a general philosophy of knowing, it includes religious knowledge as well as all other kinds; no separate philosophy is required. (RP, 15; FR, 53).

As Collingwood's thought developed, nearly every statement in this passage is modified to the point of contradiction, with the exception of the definition of logic as a "theory of knowledge."<sup>3</sup> By the time he came to write Speculum Mentis he had already abandoned the idea of a "general philosophy of knowing"--as if knowledge were a genus and cases of it were particular species; and in the same work he denies that a theory of knowledge does not consider differences of the object, but only "processes of the subject." In fact even in Religion

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<sup>3</sup>In his chapter on Cook Wilson and Oxford philosophy, Passmore writes: "Cook Wilson's main theme is logic, but logic conceived in the Oxford manner, as a philosophical investigation into thought rather than as the construction of a calculus. The Boole-Schröder logic, indeed, Cook Wilson condemned as 'merely trivial,' in comparison with 'the serious business of logic proper'--inquiry into 'the forms of thought'" (op. cit., p. 240). It must be recalled that Collingwood learned his logic from Cook Wilson, and never seems to have accepted any other view than that the true task of logic is to understand the "forms of thought"--cf. Chapter VIII, below. As Donagan rightly notes, Collingwood completely failed to appreciate the revolution in logic occurring during his lifetime.

and Philosophy Collingwood could not consistently maintain that logic considers only processes of the subject, since in this work we have already found him attacking psychology for treating a judgment (the act of knowing something) as an event in the mind without going on to determine the relation of this mental event to the reality beyond the act which is being apprehended (RP, 40; FR, 75-76).

A more promising and enduring starting point is with his remarks about the universal-particular distinction. In analyzing the relationship of philosophy and history (as part of his efforts to relate religion and history), Collingwood examines the attempt to distinguish history and philosophy on the grounds that they deal respectively with the particular and the universal:

History, it is sometimes said, is knowledge of the particular, philosophy knowledge of the universal. But the particular is no mere particular; it is a particular of this or that universal; and the universal never can exist at all except in the form of this or that particular. "The universal" and "the particular" considered as separate concrete things are fictions; and to equate the distinction of philosophy and history with such a fictitious distinction is to admit at once that it is untenable. (RP, 49-50; FR, 83).

Later Collingwood settles in much the same way the suggestion that the Incarnation can be interpreted by means of the same distinction--God as the universal and man as the particular. To regard the universal as if it were something separate and concrete is the result of a logic gone awry.

(T)he universal itself, which as a matter of fact exists only in various particulars, is sometimes falsely conceived as if it were itself another particular; and thus arises the notion of an archetype or ideal specimen of a class to which every less perfect member is an approximation. These ((are)) two tendencies of false logic, the tendency to elevate one particular into the standard and only real instance of a universal, and the tendency to hypostasise the universal into a perfect and ideal particular . . . . (RP, 163).

What Collingwood suggests as an alternative to the separate universal of false logic is what he calls a concrete identity in Religion and Philosophy and the concrete universal in Speculum Mentis. We shall deal with the latter in the next section, but it will be helpful to have a provisional idea of what he means by these terms. Evidently a universal refers to a unity of some sort, and especially a unity which is capable of being shared by two minds thinking about the same thing--such is the minimal sense of "universal" at least since the time of Socrates and Plato. When Collingwood asks how it is possible for two minds to think the same thought, he begins by assuming the factual existence of communication and knowledge (RP, 98, 109; FR, 170, 180) and, like Kant, asks how this is possible. Since all consciousness is the consciousness of something definite, it follows that if one is thinking of anything at all it must be a thought of something concrete; Collingwood goes so far as to say that "One simply cannot make general statements without any thought of their instances" (RP, 46; FR, 81). Two minds share the same thought when that thought is a concrete identity, i.e. one which has

the characteristics of a whole in each of whose parts the whole is entirely present (RP, 88-89; cf. RP, 108, 112; FR, 179, 182). Collingwood contrasts this concrete unity (manifested in personal identity) with the abstract unity--i.e. what a thing is in itself as opposed to what it is in relation to its context or the whole of which it is a part; he argues that the character or self of a thing, what it is, cannot be distinguished from its relations, which consist in a quality of the thing itself (RP, 110-12; FR, 181-82).

Without going further into this discussion (we shall take it up again in more detail in Chapter VI on rapprochement identity), we can see already a drift in the direction of idealism of the sort we discussed in Chapter III. It is also transparent that Collingwood is making use of distinctions that were known to anyone familiar with the logic of Bradley.<sup>4</sup> The contrast is between the abstract and concrete universals, and while it is somewhat vague and imbedded in discussion of other topics in Religion and Philosophy, it is explicit and prominent in Speculum Mentis. But so is, we must add, the role of questioning in knowledge.

In Religion and Philosophy Collingwood seems anxious to take seriously the realists' principle "that the mind is

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<sup>4</sup>F. H. Bradley, The Principles of Logic (Oxford, 1883), vol. I, p. 188; cf. Bosanquet, The Principle of Individuality and Value (London, 1927), pp. 35-39.



one thing and the object another," although he immediately adds that "we cannot rest content with the statement" (RP, 99; FR, 172). The theory of knowledge contained in this early work seems to be an attempt at a compromise between correspondence and coherence theories of truth with the hope expressed that it would offend neither realists nor idealists. On the one hand mental acts (judgments) are defined and determined by their reference to objects (RP, 99-102; FR, 171-73); on the other hand the "object" toward which mental acts are directed turns out to be an identity-in-difference (a concrete universal) whose "inner structure" is entirely constituted by the necessary relations it has as part of a whole (RP, 108-14; FR, 179-84).

But by 1924 Collingwood was less willing to grant any ground to the realist at all. In Speculum Mentis knowledge in its irreducible and simplest state is an activity of questioning and answering, and the attempt to identify knowledge as anything less than this is sharply dismissed:

A crude empiricism imagines that knowledge is composed wholly of assertion: that to know and to assert are identical . . . . Knowledge as a past fact, as something dead and done with--knowledge by the time it gets into encyclopedias and textbooks--does consist of assertion . . . . But those who look upon it as an affair of discovery and exploration have never fallen into that error. People who are acquainted with knowledge at first hand have always known that assertions are only answers to questions. (SM, 77).

Here we have a declaration that sounds like it could be a direct quote from the Autobiography. But as we have already seen, there is a great deal else in Speculum Mentis that does not. One noteworthy difference is that there seems to be a strong inclination to accept coherence rather than P-Q-A complexes as a touchstone of truth: Collingwood makes it clear from the start that the various claimants to the title of truth--his five "forms of experience"--are to be tested on their ultimate self-consistency, that is, the coherence they exhibit in attempting to live up to their own claims (SM, 44-45). The "self-consistency" that Collingwood has in mind, however, is not merely freedom from propositional contradiction:

Now the characteristic mark by which a form of experience is shown to be satisfactory is simply that it is possible . . . . Any scheme ((i.e. form of experience)) which is in itself contradictory or nonsensical cannot redeem ((its)) promises, because it cannot be put into execution; but if there is any scheme of life which is inherently consistent and therefore, ideally speaking, practicable, we may safely assume that this is the scheme to adopt. Self-consistency, then, is our test.<sup>5</sup> (SM, 44; cf. SM, 250).

Collingwood immediately adds that any criterion of truth resting on a presumed correspondence either with human nature or

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<sup>5</sup>Cf. F. H. Bradley, Appearance and Reality (Oxford, 1893), p. 120: "Is there an absolute criterion? . . . Ultimate reality is such that it does not contradict itself; here is an absolute criterion. And it is proved absolute by the fact that, either in endeavoring to deny it, or even in attempting to doubt it, we tacitly assume its validity."

with the facts about the world is a mistake, because both of these are inherently doubtful: what human nature is and what the facts about the world are, are both open to legitimate questioning (SM, 45). So it is apparent that if the usual form of "coherence" is not exactly what Collingwood has in mind as a criterion of truth, "correspondence" of consciousness and object is no longer acceptable. Nor did he appear to entertain it seriously again for the remainder of his published career.

Speculum Mentis also in part corrects, in part develops his earlier views on logic. As in Religion and Philosophy, what Collingwood is seeking is a philosophical logic, by which he apparently meant something like Kant's transcendental logic, i.e. a logic which does not regard mental acts considered in abstraction from their reference to objects. It must therefore be not the formal logic of the "abstract universal" (the unity, identity, or sameness of a concept which is indifferent to the variation or inter-relation of its own instances), but the dialectical logic of the "concrete universal" (an identity-in-difference, or a unity to which difference is essential) (SM, 162-63). Collingwood's strategy in both of these early works is to argue that the very attitude of consciousness that regards all concepts or universals as abstract also prevents the latter from being identified in any meaningful way with their objects or instances--in a word,

from referring. In Religion and Philosophy Collingwood limited himself to the case of religious consciousness, and calls such an abstract attitude with respect to religious objects "psychology" (RP, 40; FR, 75-76) (although he does also speak of "abstract history"--this being the "mere verbal description of events without any attempt at understanding them," and abstract philosophy as "the dry criticism of formal rules of thinking without any attempt at grasping their application"--RP, 51; FR, 85). In Speculum Mentis such an attitude towards objects of knowledge is taken to be characteristic of science as such (SM, 158-63). In both cases the reification of the abstract universal, that is, making it an object of thought "separate" from its instantiations, is taken as characteristic of the "realistic" point of view (SM, 189, 252, 282-85). But in Speculum Mentis objects of knowledge are not described as "real things" or "facts" independent of anyone's knowing of them, but rather are taken as the objective correlates of acts of knowledge (SM, 11, 159, 287, 293-95, 310). And as a consequence the tendency to regard logic merely as a psychological science (a tendency opposed by such diverse thinkers as Bradley and Frege) is overcome to some extent, and logic is allowed to have its own innings--that is, to present its case as a justification of science as an autonomous discipline.

But since it is in Speculum Mentis that both Q-A logic and formal logic (as the justification of science) make their

appearance, it is necessary here to assess their relationship in order to see if Collingwood's view in the Autobiography, which presents the former as an alternative to the latter, is reflected in his second major work. As we shall see, the linking concept between the two is bound up with the activity of "supposal" or hypothesis formation, which remains somewhat ambiguous--as one might expect, since at this stage his reconciliation philosophy was still incompletely worked out.

### 3. Science and Supposal.

The form of experience which regards its objects only as particulars of a universal, as members of a class, or as instances of a law, Collingwood calls "science" (SM, 158-63). Whether the abstract concept makes its appearance as a Platonic form, a medieval universal, or a Renaissance law of nature, the characteristic viewpoint of scientific consciousness is that it distinguishes between universals and particulars, and assumes that the former can be abstracted by thought --i.e., separated or isolated and studied apart from its instances (SM, 159-60, 180). Such an attitude is variously described by Collingwood as the abstractness of the scientific concept (SM, 162), the principle of the transcendence of the universal to the particular (SM, 179), or the relation of difference without identity (SM, 243). In any event it asserts the reality of the abstract concept as indifferent to its exemplifications or to the mutual relations its instances have

other than as members of a class (SM, 162-63). Furthermore the abstract universal of science is contrasted with the concrete universal of history:

Classification is the key-note of the scientific spirit; but classification is nothing but the abstractness of the scientific concept. For a class as such is a collection of individuals without any mutual cohesion or organization except their common membership of the class. They have no reference to each other, but only to the universal; and each one refers to the universal in precisely the same way as every other. As soon as they refer to the universal in different ways, or, what is the same thing, as soon as they develop a system of mutual relations between themselves, they cease to be a mere class and become an organized and articulated system; and the universal ceases to be an abstract universal (class-concept) and becomes a concrete universal, or one to which the differences between its particulars are relevant. (SM, 162-63).

The point at which science cannot maintain its object as an abstract universal, and is forced to assert the reality of the concrete universal is, therefore, the point at which science ceases to survive as an autonomous form of experience and becomes dependent on another form of consciousness, viz. history (SM, 180, 186-87; cf. 193).

That point occurs when scientific consciousness attempts to deal with "facts," or to refer to objects and events given in sensuous appearance. In its most elementary and primitive form science is constructed in accordance with an a priori or deductive ideal: it is the attempt to work out the implications of the concept of a class as such, known independently of all experience (SM, 164). Since the relations

of an indeterminate plurality of abstract units (the members of a class) to a determining unity (the class itself) is precisely what constitutes the numerical series, mathematics is the one and only a priori science. Mathematics "is simply the theory of order, where order means classificatory order, structure in its most abstract possible form" (SM, 165). Pure mathematics deals with classes (e.g. numerical sets) whose members are themselves classes (numbers) (SM, 169). But if it claims to be objectively true, mathematics turns out to be an illusion: it is "the truth about nothing," since it is "the description of the structure of a null class"(SM, 185).<sup>6</sup>

The attempt to import some sensuous content into these empty class-concepts gives rise to the second phase of science: science on the empirical or inductive model--an ordered knowledge of "facts" (SM, 177; cf. 168). But the inductive method (observation and experiment) does not supersede a priori deduction; on the contrary, induction itself presumes a principle variously described as the uniformity of nature, the law of universal causation, etc. which induction is unable to establish by its own methods, and which rests on the principle of uniformity itself (SM, 178-79). If it is

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<sup>6</sup>This seems to be a variant of Russell's paradox--the class of all classes both is and is not a member of itself. For Collingwood's further use of this paradox, see SM 169, 189, and 192. Collingwood does not, however, seem to apply it to mathematics itself, but only to mathematics insofar as it claims to be objectively true.

not to presume the very principle that it seeks to prove, empirical science is forced to alter its conception of its own object, and this leads to the third phase of science: science as supposal.<sup>7</sup>

Science asserts, not the actual truth, but what would be true if something ((else)) were true which is laid down as an hypothesis. It asserts, never that S is P, but that if there were an S it would be P. Its procedure therefore consists, first, in making an assumption, secondly in deducing consequences of that assumption. Throughout this process it never makes an assertion, in the sense of a categorical judgement, at all. Its judgements are hypothetical from the beginning to end. (SM, 183).<sup>8</sup>

Such a process is utterly gratuitous: without a basis in previous assertions, Collingwood insists, no hypothesis can be framed at all, much less relevant or illuminating hypotheses (SM, 79). Supposal without a framework of assertion is arbitrary and meaningless; but supposal within a framework of assertion is something more than merely hypothetical. Its ob-

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<sup>7</sup>Collingwood, true to a long standing tradition in British philosophy, does not provide his reader with anything but scant clues about the historical representatives of these movements. The third phase has taken place "almost within living memory" in the latter part of the 19th century, and is represented by the "critical movement" and "scientific pragmatism" (SM, 180-82). There is no hint in Speculum Mentis that any movement in science follows this one.

<sup>8</sup>Collingwood casts the hypothetical assertion in subject-predicate form but it is clear that it applies equally to propositional functions: the procedure of "making assumptions" and then "deducing the consequences of these assumptions" is appropriate for propositions, since what is assumed is a proposition, not merely the subject of an assertion.



ject is not only something possible (viz. the alternatives envisaged in the hypothesis) but something actual, and this is beyond the reach of mere supposal (SM, 187-88, 191, 199). Unless science is to remain a tissue of hypotheses, and fact is therefore permanently to elude the grasp of science, it must have a categorical basis in actual assertions. (SM, 185).

On this objective ambiguity founders the autonomy of science. If the objects of science are pure concepts (mathematics, universals), they are true of nothing actual at all; but if science intends its laws to apply to real objects it cannot deal with the latter by means of purely abstract concepts; and finally, if science says that its object is neither a null class nor something strictly speaking actual, but only something possible, it renders its conclusions arbitrary. The issue cannot be settled from within scientific consciousness alone, and the attempt to settle it from without gives rise to "scientific philosophy"--that form of dogmatism which, in the guise of formal logic and metaphysics, presents itself as a justification of the scientific attitude (SM, 271).

Since the deduction of consequences from hypothetical assertions is governed by the rules of formal logic, the latter is taken (by the critical and pragmatic defenders of the third, and presumably still current phase of science) as the justification of the methodology of science. But mathematical or formal logic constructs its deductions in a categorical

fashion: its statements are demonstrably true of every possible object--true, that is, categorically. Insofar as formal logic is the categorical basis for the (hypothetical) mathematical formulation of scientific assertions, mathematical truths themselves are taken as "true without qualification of the entire world, actual and possible" (SM, 184-85). Unfortunately this conflicts with the conclusion that mathematics had reached about itself as the "theory of order"--viz. that it is the description of the structure of a null class, the truth about nothing. Formal logic of itself is not able, therefore, to extricate third-phase science from its difficulties: laws that are categorically true of every possible object are true of everything in general, but of nothing in particular. Formal logic may be able to distinguish valid from invalid inferences, but without metaphysics as its necessary correlate, such a vindication of the principles on which scientific thinking is founded may only be true for thought alone, and not for thought that is directed to an object (SM, 272-73).

(W)e must demonstrate that what we have hitherto called logic or the theory of ((scientific)) thought is really metaphysics or the theory of reality, and that what we have called the laws of thought are the laws of being. But this is precisely what we cannot do. Metaphysics is impossible ((on scientific grounds)); for its task is to vindicate the objective validity of the ways in which we think, and if there are any flaws in our methods of thought, these will affect our metaphysical theory of reality and introduce into it the very mistakes which by its help we had hoped to eradicate. Hence the theory of being as distinct from thinking (metaphysics) will only be

the theory of thinking as distinct from being (logic) expressed in different terminology, but subject to the same fatal weakness, namely that just as logic can never analyze real thinking--thinking that, going on in the logician's mind, always lies behind ((i.e. beyond)) his analysis--so metaphysics can never analyze real being, being as it is in itself untainted by thought. (SM, 273-74).

In short, scientific consciousness is left permanently and irreparably without justification because its principle of abstraction renders its objects (individuals, particular matters of fact) utterly beyond the reach of its principles (laws, necessary principles of order) (SM, 185-86, 277).

What science is left with as a justification of its own viewpoint is a psychology of abstract consciousness which fails for the very reasons that Collingwood had advanced in Religion and Philosophy--viz. since it fails to take into account the truth or falsity of the thought it examines ab extra, as an event, it cannot justify itself as anything more than another mental event alongside the first (rather than an explanation of the thought it claims to be observing) (SM, 274-77). Psychology (or, more properly, psychologism) marks the point at which scientific consciousness fails to achieve wisdom or self-conscious self-justification, just as history marks the point at which science fails to achieve concrete knowledge of fact--the difference being that history provides the justification of the scientific attitude that psychology cannot (SM, 186, 193). But of this we shall have more to say in the immediately following chapter.

It is important to realize (both for an understanding of the argument in Speculum Mentis and for an assessment of the relationship of Q-A and formal logic) that when a form of experience is shown to fail in its claim to be the whole truth about its object, it is exposed as an error, but it is not thereby utterly discredited and completely rejected. Since it is an error that consciousness makes about itself, that error is overcome only when it is criticized and shown to rely on something other than itself for its validity (SM, 244-45, 255, 288-91, 296-97). Consequently when scientific consciousness "collapses" it does not collapse into nothing, but leaves behind "solid assets" in the form of a pure science of mathematics and an empirical-hypothetical science of nature, with mathematical logic and metaphysics as their partial justification, and the psychology of concrete mind as their absolute justification (SM, 271-72, 277-78, 280, 317; cf. "ST", 73-75). One of the "solid assets" for Collingwood's philosophy is the status of questions and answers in this context.

And since the purpose of this excursion through one portion of Collingwood's "phenomenology of error"<sup>9</sup> was to as-

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<sup>9</sup>Cf. SM, 289; Collingwood rejects this title as a description of what he is doing, but in at least one sense of the term "phenomenology"--as a description of how states of consciousness appear or manifest themselves--it is still a correct description of what he is doing in Speculum Mentis. Collingwood rejects the term because he claims not only to be merely describing, but also stating the truth about the forms of experience he is describing.

sess the relationship between Q-A logic and formal logic, it is time to make good our previous assertion that the connecting link is an ambiguous notion of hypothesis or supposal. The entertainment of an hypothesis is, according to Speculum Mentis, equivalent to the asking of a question:

Science is explicitly supposal. But supposal itself . . . is identical with questioning, which is the cutting edge of the mind, an activity not self-contained or independent, but implying behind it a body of information or assertion . . . . But it is the facts that are true; the scientific simplification of them into instances of laws, abstract particulars of abstract concepts, is not true but arbitrary, useful no doubt, but useful precisely because it is not asserted as true but merely entertained in the form of a question. (SM, 186).

But the entertainment of an hypothesis in the form of a question turns out to be a complex mental function, since hypothesis formation is identified not only with questioning but also with "intuition":

The paradox of science may be expressed by calling it intuitive thought. Intuition is the questioning, immediate side of experience: thought is the asserting, explanatory side. Science is explicit to itself as thought, but it turns out on inquiry to be identical with the questioning activity; that is, it realizes the contradiction of a type of thought which is not thought precisely because it is thought's opposite, intuition. (SM, 188).

Collingwood is quick to add that the division of experience into intuition and thought is an abstract fiction, and represents only a distinction between two sides of the indivisible whole of experience--"an immediate, intuitive, or questioning

side" and a "mediating, reflective, logical or assertive side," the former being called sensation and the latter, thought (SM, 95, 188; cf. "ST", 57-58). But the willful enforcement of this distinction by scientific consciousness is another manifestation of its self-contradictory or paradoxical nature:

It is this falling-back upon intuition that constitutes the irrationality, the arbitrariness of all science. The assumptions made by science cannot be justified under criticism; their only justification is the frankly irrational fiat of the scientist's will. The concept is for him an abstraction, that is to say hypostasized into a thing, reified; hence it cannot be explained by thought, it can only be intuited, and this intuitive attitude towards a concept is what is meant by assumption in science. (SM, 189).

It is at this point that the ambiguity of hypothesis or assumption becomes apparent--a ghost that not only remains unexorcised in the body of science, but which survives to haunt Collingwood's Q-A logic. If assertion is the minimum activity claiming truth or falsity (SM, 59-60), then (with respect to assertion) hypothesizing, questioning, and intuition have one and the function: each is a suspension of the activity of asserting (SM, 78-79, 186, 188-89). But there are important differences which such an identification overlooks, and which are crucial not only for formal logic but for a Q-A logic which seeks to replace it.

(1) Questions are not merely non-assertions, they are proto-assertions--non-assertions about to become assertions.

It may be true that "supposal and questioning are at bottom the same thing" (insofar as asking a question, like framing an hypothesis, means contemplating the non-existent in the form of several alternatives, only one of which may be existent), but "true questioning is a suspension ((of assertion)) which looks forward to a renewal of this asserting activity, in the shape of an answer" (SM, 78-79). "Hypothesis" as Collingwood uses the term in Speculum Mentis vacillates between these two senses--i.e. proto-assertion and non-assertion--and it is not until the Essay on Metaphysics that the distinction is clearly made between questions, assertions, suppositions, and presuppositions (EM, 21-33).

(2) In Speculum Mentis meaningful questions do have a bi-directionality, looking both forward to an answer and backward to other assertions (SM, 79), but there is no clear recognition that the assertions which ground questions may be non-factual but yet meaningful--i.e. function as what he was later to call "presuppositions." Instead Collingwood leaves the reader to decide whether the categorical assertions, which are logically prior to hypotheticals (SM, 183: cf. "ST", 64), are necessarily or only factually true. Thus, for example, within two pages he speaks about the mind "categorically asserting a concrete fact" (when it sets about framing hypothe-

ses),<sup>10</sup> and about mathematical logic being "categorically true of every possible object" (SM, 184-85). These are the factual and the inferentially necessary senses, respectively, of the term. It is not until the Essay on Philosophical Method that Collingwood would try again to say what he means by a "categorical assertion" (EPM, 117-36).

(3) Underlying both of these ambiguities is a basic equivocation on the use of the phrase, "mental activity," which leaves mental dispositions (conscious attitudes involved in raising questions, framing hypotheses, asserting a proposition, etc.) undistinguished from logical functions (formal properties of interrogative sentences, hypothetical assertions, categorical propositions, etc.)<sup>11</sup> This leads to certain puz-

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<sup>10</sup>Cf. EPH, 45-46 (1924): "(S)cientific thinking is an abstract thinking, historical thinking a concrete thinking. In other words, because the object of science is not a fact but an abstract type or form, the judgement of science is always hypothetical: 'if A, then B,' where it is not asserted that A exists in the world of fact . . . . Whereas the object of history is the fact in all its actuality, and therefore the historical judgement is categorical . . . . The ideal of history, then, is to be a single categorical judgement, articulated into an infinity of coherent categorical judgements, asserting the reality and expounding the nature of an infinite individual world of fact articulated into an infinity of individual facts.

<sup>11</sup>The closest Collingwood comes in Speculum Mentis to recognizing the difference is at SM, 79, where he speaks about the "empty form of questioning," questions which ask nothing, mere "marks of interrogation." But he is not here explicitly distinguishing between mental dispositions and logical functions, but rather two sorts of mental activities, one with and one without a background of factual assertion.



zling and unresolved contradictions which mask rather than illustrate Collingwood's thought in Speculum Mentis, and provide obstacles to the success of his Q-A logic. (a) On the one hand questioning is identified with explanation and intellection. The characteristic mark of the former processes is their "immediacy" (i.e. their spontaneous actuality, their positivity, or in general their lack of dependence on something other than themselves) (SM, 95, 188). Questions are thus immediate, and answers mediate. (b) On the other hand questions are identified with the logical function of assertion cast in the hypothetical mode, while answers are identified with the corresponding categorical function (SM, 183, 186). In this sense questions are mediate (their truth depends on something further being asserted), and answers are immediate (they actually assert something positive--something true or false). It is not until Collingwood wrote the chapter on language in the Principles of Art that logical and psychological functions are distinguished (PA, 225-69).

Collingwood does not seem to be alarmed at these conclusions in Speculum Mentis, since he presumes that such arguments demonstrate that questions and answers are not independent abstractions, but are both mental activities, and therefore have the characteristic marks of all mental activity--

viz. mediacy and immediacy (cf. SM, 80).<sup>12</sup> But when Collingwood calls the distinction between question and answer an "ideal distinction," and adds that "the process of knowledge is . . . not so much an alternation of question and answer as a perpetual restatement of the question, which is identical with a perpetual revision of the answer," the ensuing "iden-

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<sup>12</sup>Cf. SM, 188-89, where parallel arguments concerning mental and logical functions are put forward to illustrate the irrationality of the abstract distinctions made by science: (a) "Intuition and thought are not two separate activities which are somehow united in the body of human experience. Experience is an individual whole in which two sides can always be distinguished: an immediate, intuitive or questioning side, which is hypostatized in abstract psychology into the faculty of sensation, and a mediating, reflective, logical 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 difference from itself, flux, novelty, or creation. What characterizes the logical or reflective side is its self-identity, permanence, unity. Now we have already seen that science consists in the separation of these two distinct elements, and the attribution of reality to thought while denying it to sensation. But division as such is the characteristic of sensation as opposed to thought: thought unifies what sensation divides. Therefore any given thing which is made the field of an unreconciled division is thereby placed under the head of sensation, for the characteristic unity of thought has been denied to it. If experience as a whole is now divided into two separate parts, thought and sense, it becomes by this very definition wholly sensuous, and each part of it is a sensuous, not an intelligible, object." (SM, 188-89). (b) "This argument is more familiar, though more superficial, when stated in terms of logic. The universal has its very life and being in its particulars, of whose multiplicity it is the unity. If now it is disentangled from those particulars and set apart by itself, it becomes not their universal but another particular object, thus losing precisely its intelligibility (universality) and becoming an object of mere intuition, a thing that we no longer think but only imagine. It is this falling-back upon intuition that constitutes the irrationality, the arbitrariness of all science." (SM, 189).

tity" which "contains all diversity within itself" (SM, 80) appears dangerously similar to that absolute night in which all cows are black. The result, in short, is as unfortunate for his Q-A logic as it is for formal logic: if truth and falsity are functions of the Q-A complex and there is no adequate way to distinguish within that complex what counts for a question and what counts for an answer, then it seems there may be no adequate criteria for distinguishing between truth and falsehood either. It is not until the early chapters of the Essay on Metaphysics that he attempted to disentangle Q-A complexes and truth criteria (EM, 21-48).

#### 4. Conclusion: Three Logics.

From the evidence that we have just examined it does not appear that there is any systematic "question-and-answer logic" as such mentioned in any of Collingwood's writings through 1924, and a glance at the articles from this date until 1932 does not yield any significant indication that would change this judgement. Thus we find Collingwood writing in "The Nature and Aims of a Philosophy of History" (1925) that the way in which a problem arises for an historian must convey some hint of the direction in which evidence for its solution is to be sought, and that in doing so he argues to and from this evidence, so that there is in the last analysis no distinction between his sources and his conclusions (EPH, 52-53). While this gives the observant reader of the Autobiog-

raphy some confirmation of the use of Collingwood's Q-A principle that in arguing back from a propositional answer (the conclusion) to its question the same piece of evidence states the answer and allows the historian to identify the question, it does not explicitly suggest that this was a conscious application of a systematic Q-A logic. And again Collingwood writes in "The Philosophy of History" (1930) that

a question must be asked with some reasonable expectation of being able to answer it, and to answer it by ((genuine)) thinking; otherwise it leads nowhere, it is at best idle "wondering" . . . . We express this by saying that a question does or does not "arise." To say that a question arises is to say that it has a logical connexion with our previous thoughts, that we have a reason for asking it and are not moved by mere capricious curiosity. (EPH, 137).

We see at work another of the principles of Q-A logic cited in the Autobiography, but without any explicit mention of presuppositions and their logical efficacy in causing such questions to arise. In fact the omission of any explicit discussion of presuppositions or presupposing in these early writings renders suspicious the autobiographical suggestion that he had formulated Q-A logic as such (including the theory of presupposition) in the years between 1916 and 1918 when he returned to Oxford. And once again we must add that this suggestion is rendered even more suspicious by his failure to mention anything about dialectical logic and his early absolute idealism.

But perhaps we are allowing ourselves to be misled by Collingwood's use of that vague and sometimes all-inclusive

word, "logic," as well as by his tendency in the Autobiography to offer Q-A logic as an actual replacement or substitute for formal logic. In Chapter VIII we shall take a hard look at this claim and try to settle the issue of whether and to what extent Collingwood's Q-A logic is "logic" in this sense at all. For now we can only make several tentative statements based on the evidence provided in the writings we have been examining. We note, first of all, that we have three labels to attend to, if not three logics: formal logic (F-logic), dialectical logic (D-logic), and Q-A logic. Collingwood's conception of logic tends to view it in epistemological terms, but he does allow that logic in general is concerned with the justification of some form of knowledge. If it is to be a truly philosophical logic, it must justify not only the conclusions reached by a body of knowledge, but the way in which it reaches these conclusions. The way in which conclusions are reached is by a systematic question-and-answer process, the success or failure of which is not measured by any external criteria, although in empirical science, at least, the conclusions arrived at can be shown to be free of contradiction by formal logic. But a body of knowledge must not only be free from contradiction; it must also be able to demonstrate that in its process of development the methods that it employs for the discovery and verification of these assertions do not conflict with the ideals which this knowledge sets for itself. This is the role of dialectical logic. It would therefore appear that Q-A, F-,

and D-logics are ordered in a developing series such that Q-A and F-logics are opposed and complementary phases by which knowledge comes to be (Q-A logic), and retains itself in being by resisting criticism (F-logic), but are both preliminary to the dialectical measurement of explicit performance against implicit promise (D-logic). We hasten to add that this suggestion of the relationship between the three logics that appear in Collingwood's writings was never made explicit by him, and is our own reconstruction of their apparent relationship at this point in our investigation.

Before passing on to the next step of our survey of the early works, we must make some final comments about D-logic. At least one of Collingwood's interpreters, whose views this author greatly respects, has stated that Religion and Philosophy is Collingwood's only non-dialectical book, and that his moment of kairos came between his first and second books, because Speculum Mentis is a dialectical essay where its predecessor is not (Mink, MHD, 20, 242). To this we can only comment that if Collingwood discovered dialectic, it could not have come as much of a surprise. For on his own principles philosophy does not bring us to know things of which we are simply ignorant, but brings us to know in a different way things which we already knew in some way (EPM, 161). Dialectic could therefore only be something of which he was already aware, so that when it became explicit it was only a

refinement of a reflection on an experience with which he was already familiar. We therefore cannot accept any interpretation of Collingwood which presumes that there was any such "event" in the intellectual development of his philosophy, and especially when no such event is acknowledged in the Autobiography.

But the evidence of Collingwood's writings forces us to admit that not only does the explicit use of dialectical concepts, judgments, and inferences show an order of development, but also the use of the term dialectic has a peek-a-boo career in Collingwood's published writings. So far as this development is concerned, Religion and Philosophy presents us with the spectacle of an analytic of concepts and principles, but does display a propensity for expressing first one side of an issue and then the opposing viewpoint, and only does so in order to resolve the issue by showing how the two opposing viewpoints can be reconciled. Furthermore the discussion of "concrete identity" (which evolves quite naturally into that of the concrete universal of Speculum Mentis) is prominent in Religion and Philosophy, and is opposed to the abstract universal of "false logic." In Speculum Mentis the concrete universal emerges as an "identity-in-difference" whose characteristics are those of a scale of forms, but one which lacks the unity of both differences of kind and differences of degree that Collingwood later specified for such a scale in the Essay

on Philosophical Method (SM, 208; EPM, 54-57).<sup>13</sup> Therefore from Religion and Philosophy to Speculum Mentis to the Essay on Philosophical Method there is a continuous development of the idea of defining something not by subsumption under a universal and abstract class, but by showing how its meaning includes others which are related by opposition and distinction, embodying differences of both degree and kind, and where the variable is identified with the generic essence.

But on the other hand the term dialectic appears and disappears in Collingwood's writings, sometimes in a most confusing manner. While the term is not mentioned in Religion and Philosophy, it is over-used in Speculum Mentis, mentioned with modesty in the Essay on Philosophical Method (e.g. EPM, 12, 210), disappears altogether in the Autobiography and the Essay on Metaphysics<sup>14</sup> but re-appears in more classical cos-

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<sup>13</sup>The reader must be patient with the use of such jargon at this stage of our investigation--the terms will be explained in future chapters. But it is well to bear in mind that (1) where Religion and Philosophy argues that where two terms are "not different" they are therefore identical, and (2) Speculum Mentis argues that two terms in a dialectical series are related to one another in kind only, and not in degree, (3) it is only after the Essay on Philosophical Method that terms in a scale of forms are declared to differ both in degree and in kind from one another. Therefore if Religion and Philosophy is a non-dialectical book, so is Speculum Mentis--i.e. on the standards of dialectic set in the Essay on Philosophical Method.

<sup>14</sup>There is only one reference to dialectic in the Essay on Metaphysics, and that is in connection with Hegel's use of it, which is not treated in a flattering manner (EM, 318).



tume in The New Leviathan.<sup>15</sup> Nor can one simply relate the sudden prominent usage of the term in Speculum Mentis either with his recognition of its systematic implications (since such a description is present in Religion and Philosophy in the analysis of "concrete identity") or with the properly philosophical use of the implicit-explicit distinction (since this is not a distinction reserved for philosophical dialectic: at SM, 93 it is applied to psycho-analysis in the Freudian sense--the interpretation of dreams is not the bringing into consciousness of that which was unconscious, but the bringing into explicitness that which was implicit).

A more promising direction for uncovering Collingwood's mature understanding of the term is in the posthumous publication, The Idea of History. In a chapter on Hegel in Part I, Collingwood takes up Croce's criticism of Hegel's philosophy

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<sup>15</sup>At NL, 24.63-24.68 Collingwood writes of dialectical thinking, defined as "the readiness to give up something which at a certain time you settled on as true." As an example Collingwood cites Plato's discovery that the way to find one's way about in a Heraclitean world is to think dialectically--a Heraclitean world being one in which change from X to not-X or vice versa is constantly occurring. At NL, 27.82 Collingwood writes of the dialectical spirit as the spirit of agreement and compromise in the ensuing discussion--see NL, 24.61, 27.9). And at NL, 24.57-24.61 Collingwood writes of dialectical discussion, where one's aim is to show that both disagreeing parties in an argument are correct. NL, 24.57 contrasts dialectical and eristic discussion, and declares that all logic is concerned with discussions. In all these usages Collingwood seems to have in mind a sense of the term derived from classical Greece, i.e. the sense which emphasizes the manner of conducting a debate involving disagreeing parties.

of history which appeared to Croce to be a "gigantic blunder produced by confusing two quite different things: namely opposition and distinction." Then he continues:

Concepts, Croce says, are related by opposition: good and bad, true and false, freedom and necessity, and so forth; and the theory of their relation, he admits, has been well expounded by Hegel in his theory of dialectic, which describes the way in which any concept stands in a necessary relation to its own opposite, generating it at first and then negating it, so that the way in which the concept lives is by creating and overcoming oppositions. But the individual things which are the instances of concepts are never related to each other by way of opposition, only by way of distinction: consequently the relations between them are not dialectical, and in history, which is the history of individual actions and persons and civilizations, there is consequently no dialectic . . . . (IH, 118-19).

It is interesting to note, before turning to Collingwood's comments on this Crocean criticism, that in The New Leviathan Collingwood remarks that logic applies to propositions only because it applies in the first instance to concepts (NL, 7.33, 7.39, 11.35). Following this line of thought one might conclude that D-logic applies primarily to concepts, and F-logic to propositions. But extrapolating this analogy is not very promising, since Q-A logic is not obviously inferential, where F-logic is, and so is D-logic. Nonetheless there is some point in the observation that the center of gravity, so to speak, of D-logic is concepts, which emphasizes the semantic unity of terms, and has as its central concern the meaning of terms, whereas F-logic takes as its minimal unit the proposition that can be the bearer not only of meaning but of truth

or falsity. However in the passage that we are presently considering Collingwood is pursuing a different line of thought:

Plausible though Croce's view is, it does not really get to the heart of the problem. It implies that in talking of history we should never use words like opposition or antagonism, and synthesis or reconciliation: . . . we ought only to say that they are different: we ought not to speak of an opposition, but only a difference, between Whigs and Tories, or Catholics and Protestants. Now it is true that we do not need to use terms like opposition (let me call them dialectical terms), when we are talking only of the outward events of history; but when we are talking only of the inward thoughts which underlie these events it seems to me that we cannot avoid them. (IH, 119).

To pursue his argument from the Idea of History any further would get us into the subject of the next chapter, where we shall have a chance to observe how his concept of history developed in the early writings. For now we wish to call attention to the usage of opposition as a "dialectical" term, and synthesis as a term of reconciliation.

As we proceed with our investigation of Collingwood's logical views it will be well to bear in mind that "dialectic" may represent a number of different meanings in his writings, so that we might recognize, for example, that as the methodical program we have called D-logic it stands in a relation with F-logic and Q-A logic so as to appear to form a scale of forms, from another point of view any such scale can itself be defined as "dialectical." And again, while the analysis of a concept into opposing principles may be called a dialectical

relationship and the synthesis of this opposition may be called a rapprochement (so that analysis, dialectic, and reconciliation may be interpreted as three phases of complete philosophical thought), from a more inclusive sense of the term (e.g. the one so frequently used in Speculum Mentis) all rapprochement is dialectical. It may well be that Collingwood omitted explicit reference to dialectic and dialectical logic in the Autobiography because the term is capable of such a multitude of meanings that it was virtually useless for painting the kinds of sharp contrasts that he wanted to elicit for the purpose of highlighting what he regarded as central to his philosophical development.

But while we may charge Collingwood's Autobiography with an error of omission, and even with being somewhat misleading in that it suggests to the reader that his early Q-A logic already made explicit the role of presuppositions, it is at least accurate to the extent that the early writings do show evidence of a stress on the role of questioning in the process of knowledge. We can also say that nothing we have found would give any indication that had he had such a complete Q-A logic he would have done anything but embrace it wholeheartedly at this point in his development, since its spirit is present from Speculum Mentis onwards, and many of its principles are explicitly stated in the early writings.

## CHAPTER V

### HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

#### 1. Introduction.

There can be little doubt that Collingwood felt that his greatest contribution to philosophy would be his reconciliation of philosophy and history. The Autobiography describes in some detail how the two activities between which he divided the majority of his time, his actual work in Roman-British history and his philosophical lecturing and writing, gradually converged, and how this synthesis not only was in large measure responsible for breaking with the epistemology of his realist tutors at Oxford, but also was the foundation for the development of his rapprochement philosophy. If we are to understand how and why he recognized this relationship to be axial not only for his development but for interpreting his entire philosophical outlook, we must take a careful look at how this philosophy of history took shape in his early writings. And since the Autobiography specifies that this development can be found in his essays of the twenties (A, 107, 116-17), it is this group of articles that we must spend most of our time on in this chapter.

But what is it that needs reconciling? If "the philosophy of" something merely means, as Religion and Philosophy asserts, the careful reflection upon that subject (RP, 15; FR, 53), what is problematic about a philosophy of history? In the Autobiography the opposition is approached from the direction of the realism-idealism controversy: realists assumed the existence of permanent philosophical problems which could be analyzed independently of their historical setting, so that the historical question of what someone thought about one of these "eternal problems" was distinct from the philosophical question of whether or not he was right (A, 59-68). In addition to this mistake, the realists assumed that all knowledge was a simple apprehending or intuiting of some unaffected reality, which failed to recognize the essential role of interpretation of evidence in the case of historical knowledge (A, 25-26, 39-40). But from the other side, in the practice of his historical studies Collingwood found that those historians he most respected knew and cared little about philosophy (A, 83), so that the need for a reconciliation from this direction was simply the absence of any serious philosophical reflection on the subject-matter of history. Not only did realist philosophers neglect history as a form of knowledge not assimilable to their sense-bound epistemology, but historians neglected philosophy and therefore failed to pay sufficient attention to the foundations of their own science (A, 85-90).

When we turn to the early writings we find out that it was not merely neglect that is involved in the distancing of philosophy and history, but a basic difference in orientation of each that must be overcome. As we shall see in the next two sections, Collingwood's earliest attempts at the philosophy of history tend to assume that philosophy is the realm of the universal and history the realm of the particular, and the resolution of the conflict that arises when it is assumed that truth resides either with the universal or the particular is by rooting both in a "concrete identity" or "concrete universal"--an individual which is both universal and particular at once. While the idea of an individual historical event as something which is both universal in meaning and concrete in objective reference is an idea which as a long and continuous development in Collingwood's philosophy of history, the focus of it shifted gradually away from the object of history and towards the thinking role of the historian, and it is this development that Collingwood is anxious to indicate in his Autobiography.

It is also quite a natural course of thought from the point of absolute idealism, as we saw in Chapter III; for if the common ground of all idealism is the role of the mind as both active and passive (FR, 275, 277), then to view the historian as a merely passive receptacle for the transmission of fact as "something independent of my own or your knowledge of

it" is on a collision course with the philosophical view of knowledge as active, and ultimately with the philosophical demand for self-knowledge. Just as Gentile distinguished between the realistic concept of change in material objects and the idealistic concept of the history of mind, and argued that reality is history (FR, 274), so Collingwood would distinguish between physical events and re-enacted historical acts, and argue that mind is what it does, and what it does is to make history. The path to self-knowledge then is through history, for it is history which narrates what it is that man has done.

But the reconciliation of philosophy and history develops as Collingwood's concept of rapprochement became more complete.

## 2. The Identity of History and Philosophy.

In the earliest form that Collingwood's reconciliation between history and philosophy takes, the two are simply equated: philosophy and history are the same thing. In Religion and Philosophy the identity between philosophy (like that between religion and philosophy, and between religion and morality) is established in two ways: first by criticizing the views which hold them to be separate, and then by showing that they are mutually dependent on one another. In the case of history its abstract separation from philosophy has been held by those who maintain either that historical facts are independ-



ent of the philosophical constructions or interpretations that are placed on them (historical positivism), or by arguing that the past as such is unknowable because it depends on inferences based on fallible data (historical scepticism). Neither of these anti-historical arguments can withstand criticism. Historical positivism fails because the distinction between historical interpretation and historical fact cannot be maintained: historical interpretation is just historical fact further specified. If one "construction" that is put on fact differs from another, it is not merely two "ideas" superimposed on one fact: one was an historical fact and the other a historical error (RP, 46; FR, 80). Similarly, anti-historical scepticism fails because it is not just historical data used in inference that is fallible; the same can be said of all data. "If inference as such is to be distrusted, the evidence that leads us to distrust it is discredited with the rest" as another misreporting of a well-attested fact. (RP, 44; FR, 79).

But not only do arguments for positivism and scepticism fail to dislodge historical thought, but we cannot do without either philosophical or historical thought, since they co-imply one another:

In the first place, it appears that history cannot exist without philosophy. There is no such thing as an entirely non-philosophical history. History cannot proceed without philosophical presuppositions of a highly complex character. It deals with evidence, and therefore makes episte-

mological assumptions as the value of evidence; it describes the actions of historical characters in terms whose meaning is fixed by ethical thought; it has continually to determine what events are possible and what are not possible, and this can only be done in virtue of some general metaphysical conclusions. (RP, 46-47; FR, 81).

We shall see in Chapter VII that at least one of these "metaphysical conclusions" (actually a presupposition) mentioned here is taken by Collingwood from Bradley's The Presuppositions of Critical History, which Collingwood would later acutely criticize (IH, 238-39). It is interesting to note that this is the first reference to "presuppositions" which we have encountered in Collingwood's writings, and it occurs in the context of an argument that identifies philosophy and history. The argument continues by showing that philosophy needs or presupposes history:

It is equally certain that philosophy is impossible without history; for any theory must be a theory of facts, and if there were no facts there would be no occasion for theory . . . . History must be regarded not as a mechanical process, nor yet as a gradual accumulation of truths, but simply as objectivity; as the real fact of which we are conscious. History is that which actually exists; fact, as something independent of my own or your knowledge of it. In this sense there would be no philosophy without it; for no form of consciousness can exist without an object. (RP, 47-49; FR, 81-83).

Collingwood draws the conclusion that the relation of history to philosophy is that neither can exist without the other, or as he says, "each presupposes the other" (RP, 49; FR, 83).

Each is knowledge; and if they are different, they must be the knowledge of different objects. How can we distinguish these objects? History, it is sometimes said, is knowledge of the particular, philosophy knowledge of the universal. But the particular is no mere particular; it is a particular of this or that universal; and the universal never can exist at all except in the form of this or that particular. . . . History, like philosophy, is the knowledge of the one real world; it is historical, that is, subject to the limitation of time . . . . It is philosophical, that is, all-embracing, universal, for the same reason; because historical fact is the only thing that exists and includes the whole universe. History a parte objecti--the reality which historical research seeks to know--is nothing else than the totality of existence; and this is also the object of philosophy. History a parte subjecti--the activity of the historian--is investigation of all that has happened and is happening; and this is philosophy too . . . . (T)he philosophical pre-suppositions of history are not something different from the history itself; they are philosophical truths which the historian finds historically exemplified. History and philosophy are therefore the same things. (RP, 49-51; FR, 83-85).

As can be seen from this argument, Collingwood had not at this point penetrated very deeply into the nature of historical thought. As he refined the concept he would narrow the object of history from "the knowledge of the one real world" or "the totality of existence" to res gestae--deeds of men, done in the past. And even in Speculum Mentis he showed dissatisfaction with such wholesale identities as he proposed in Religion and Philosophy. Since it is not a settled part of his mature outlook, we shall not engage in criticism of the argument here (although we shall do so in examining the concept of rapprochement identity in Chapter VI). But while one may quarrel with the argument here, the spirit of reconciliation is certainly present here, its only flaw being that the

resulting rapprochement between history and philosophy is less a marriage than a fusion. While he continued to use the strategy of "co-implication and therefore identity" in arguing for the reconciliation of any two forms of consciousness, he became more careful (a) to specify the differences between them as well, (b) to distinguish what any form of consciousness is implicitly from what it is explicitly;<sup>1</sup> and (c) to locate them not as co-ordinate species of the genus, "knowledge," but rather as successors on a scale of forms.

### 3. The Concrete Universal as Absolute Object.

This is evident in Speculum Mentis, where philosophy and history are described as having aims insofar as they both essentially assert concrete reality and deny simple abstraction. Therefore "the identification of philosophy with history is far less violent and misleading than its identification with science, religion, or art." But it is immediately added that "all such identifications are barren abstractions," since to "assert the identity without the difference or the difference without the identity is to turn one's back on reality and amuse oneself with paradoxes" (SM, 246). The differentiating feature of philosophy as opposed to history, as

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. SM, 108, n. 1, where Collingwood acknowledges that in Religion and Philosophy he had overlooked the distinction between implicit and explicit--roughly, the distinction between its "promise" or what it indirectly implies (implicit) and its "performance" or what a form of consciousness directly asserts (explicit).

presented in Speculum Mentis, is that in philosophy subject and object are identified, whereas for historical thinking concrete fact is always assumed to be something independent of the knowing activity of the historian (SM, 241-43, 249). That is why Collingwood calls modern realism, in which the object is presumed to be unaffected by the knowing of it, the historical form of dogmatism.

Now these appear to be paradoxical assertions if taken in conjunction with what Collingwood says about the reconciliation of philosophy and history in the Autobiography. (a) If it is philosophy, and not history, that is the form of consciousness in which subject and object are identified, then how can history be the "self-knowledge of mind" that Collingwood intended it to be? And (b) if the form of dogmatism peculiar to the historian is realism, then how can realism be "a philosophy which erred through neglecting history"? We already know part of the answer to the second question from Chapter III: what makes history dogmatic is its unquestioning acceptance of the concept of fact as something independent of anyone's knowledge of it, which is the fundamental concept underlying realism. Since there are as many forms of realism as there are of dogmatism, historical realism follows scientific, religious, and artistic realism. What makes historical realism an error is its assumption that this is the whole story, and what is neglected is the higher concept of history in which

fact and the knowledge of fact are reconciled in self-consciousness--i.e. the philosophical concept of history. But this leads us back to the first question, and ultimately to the development of the concept of history in Collingwood's early writings. The first stage in this development we have just reviewed in Religion and Philosophy. The second is in Speculum Mentis, which we will consider in this section. The third is in the essays on history that appear in the decade of the twenties, which we will examine in the immediately following section.

The recognition that the form of experience known as history is an improvement on abstract science is an achievement of the Renaissance, and is solidified in the experimental method of Renaissance scientists. "Experiment means the recognition of fact, and experimental science means the assertion of fact, even if only mutilated fact, as the true presupposition of scientific thought" (SM, 201-202).<sup>2</sup> The first to recognize this explicitly, says Collingwood, was Descartes:

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<sup>2</sup>The reader would be correct to assume that by the "assertion of fact" at this point Collingwood means something more than the utterance of a statement that something or other is a fact or is the case. In Speculum Mentis to assert a fact means to assert it as true, which is more than merely observing it. To be asserted as scientifically true it must be capable of withstanding Baconian cross-examination, which means subjecting a fact to the sort of treatment an hypothesis gets in the laboratory. Cf. SM, 53.

All science, said Descartes, rests upon the one indubitable certainty that I think and that therefore I exist. Now the thought and existence of which Descartes spoke were not abstractions--anything thinking anything, or anything somehow getting itself thought about . . . . Descartes meant what he said; and what he said was that the concrete historical fact, the fact of my actual present awareness, was the root of science. He was only going one step beyond Bacon, for whom the root of science was natural fact: Descartes, more profoundly, saw that before natural fact can be of any use to the scientist he must observe it, and that the fact of his observing it is the fact that really matters. Science presupposes history and can never go behind history: that is the discovery of which Descartes' formula is the deepest and most fruitful expression. (SM, 202).

If it is surprising to find Descartes' cogito translated as "the fact of my actual present awareness," and given credit for expressing the discovery that "science presupposes history,"<sup>3</sup> it is nonetheless revealing of Collingwood's early view of the matter: the recognition of the historical element of science is the first stage of both a revolution in science (the development of the experimental method) and the beginning of a revised awareness of history (SM, 202-203).

It also brings into focus an early association of history as a form of knowledge and perception as a level of mental activity. The early annalists or historical compilers were not aware of their reliance on perception, but as the concept of

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<sup>3</sup>As we shall see, this is not the last of Collingwood's creative interpretations of Descartes and the history of philosophy: cf. EPM, 10-25, 124-26, 155-60; EM, 185-90. In The Idea of History Descartes is treated as an historical sceptic, and Vico's anti-Cartesianism is hailed as the real beginning of scientific historiography (IH, 59-70).

history developed the role of perception, as opposed to sensation, became more explicit.

Sensation is the false or abstract account of perception. In perception we are immediately aware of our object, which is a concrete and therefore historical fact: perception and history are thus identical. But the immediacy of perception does not exclude mediation, it is not abstract immediacy (sensation) but implicitly contains an element of mediation (thought) . . . . Perception is explicitly immediate, but it always contains within itself mediation (thought, "interpretation of sense-data," "inference from the immediately given," or whatever one likes to call it) and is therefore never abstract immediacy . . . . History is thus, as a specific form of experience, identical with perception. (SM, 204-205).

Just as perception requires an element of memory insofar as an object of perception is grasped not all at once or immediately but serially, or as a "synthesis" or reconstruction, so also the annalist or writer or memoirs is someone whose reminiscences rely on memory--one's own or that of a "source"--for its narrative sequence. But such a reliance on memory must, to retain even the rudiments of reliability, distinguish between memory and pure imaginative fantasy, and this requires the exercise of a selective criterion (SM, 213-14). The earliest forms of historiography were dominated by various mixtures of the true criterion of history with ideals drawn from other forms of experience, so that in historians like Herodotus and Thucydides factual coherence was mixed with aesthetic or dramatic effect (SM, 214-16). It is only in the eighteenth century that the concept of fact becomes explicit and such errors were overcome to reach "historians' history" (SM, 216).



But it is at this point that fact is elevated to the level of the absolute:

There is thus no feature of experience, no attitude of mind towards its object, which is alien to history. Art rests on the ignoring of reality: religion, on the ignoring of thought: science, on the ignoring of fact; but with the recognition of fact everything is recognized that is in any sense real. The fact, as historically determined, is the absolute object. The mark of the absolute object is individuality, for individuality is concreteness. The object as individual is the whole of what exists, and this is concretely articulated into parts each of which is again individual, and so to infinity . . . . The object, as a system of fact so organized, is objective throughout, for every part is a true microcosm, and is truly infinite. (SM, 218-19).

It is to this extent that history achieves what art, religion, and science could not. For where esthetic consciousness expresses itself in a monadic work of art, but while each such work is its own cosmos, it is only so by ignoring not only other works of art but the everyday world in which the artist lives and works (SM, 84, 219). Religious consciousness locates its individuality in God, "the monad of monads, a cosmos whose structure is that of the absolute object"--but whose individuality stands over against that of the world "whose very nature is to be outside him," and therefore leaves the absolute individuality of God unattained (SM, 219). Scientific consciousness replaces the concept of God with the concept of law, but with the consequence that "(w)hat is individual and organized as a system of individuals is not the world but only the concept" which keeps law separated from true individuals to the

extent that any such individual is only a particular instance of the law. The failure of each of these forms of experience is redeemed by the success of history, which reaches the idea of an object "beyond which there is nothing and within which every part truly represents the whole."

This absolute whole is the concrete universal; for concrete universality is individuality, the individual being simply the unity of the universal and the particular. The absolute individual is universal in that it is what it is throughout, and every part of it is as individual as itself. On the other hand it is no mere abstraction, the abstract quality of individualness, but an individual which includes all others . . . . The principle of its structure is not classification, the abstract concept, but the concrete concept, which is relevance, or implication. . . . (T)he concrete universal is the daily bread of every historian, and the logic of history is the logic of the concrete universal. (SM, 221).

It is doubtful whether every historian would recognize that his "daily bread" consisted of "the concrete universal" in the sense of being the "system of systems, the world of worlds"--including the later Collingwood himself, as we shall see in Chapter IX: while the historian brings to his study an a priori concept of the past, as well as presuppositions about the coherence of the past, he feels himself under no obligation to consider the whole of it as an absolute object consisting of an infinity of facts (IH, 240-45, 303). In fact it is under the burden of such a goal that history collapses by the "inner dialectic" of its own version of the monism-pluralism dilemma. If history exists, its object is an unknowable in-

finite whole; and if its parts are atoms, then history disappears and science takes its place, with its own unresolved problems of universality and particularity (SM, 234). In either case, the absolute object remains unachieved.

Thus history is the crown and the reductio ad absurdam of all knowledge considered as knowledge of an objective reality independent of the knowing mind. Here for the first time we place before ourselves an object which satisfies the mind; an object individual, concrete, infinite, no arbitrary abstraction or unreal fiction, but reality itself in its completeness . . . . The progressive alienation of the mind from its object is in history complete. The world is triumphantly unified as object, only to find itself separated from the mind by a gulf which no thought can traverse. (SM, 238).

We shall resume this discussion in the next chapter, where we shall be concerned with the rapprochement identity of absolute knowledge as it is presented in Speculum Mentis, but at this point we must make several observations about the concept of history herein presented. The reader has no doubt wondered why it is necessary for history to postulate itself as an absolute object at all, for if it were not for this the final "reductio ad absurdam" would not occur at all. It appears that the chapter on history is only a stage along the way to establishing the demands of absolute knowledge--i.e. the demand for an object that will fully satisfy the mind. What mind? The mind of an absolute idealist, one concludes--for there is only token effort to take into account the actual praxis of historians in Speculum Mentis, other than the occasional remarks about Herodotus and Thucydides, Mommsen and

Gibbon. What we are confronted with instead is what amounts to a very abstract view of the subject matter, one which tends to assimilate historical thinking to perception and memory, and the historical object to the world of fact--all of it. Little consciousness is exhibited of the uniqueness of human acts in the range of facts, of the need for cross-examination of facts by the historian's critical intelligence, or the legitimate role of the historian's presuppositions in this process.

We are therefore a long way from the view of history presented in the Autobiography--but this itself is consistent with the autobiographical interpretation, since Collingwood states that in these years the rapprochement between history and philosophy was incomplete, and was subject to a long and painstaking development. The evidence for this development is contained in the essays written between 1920 and 1930, and to these we must now turn.

#### 4. The Ideality of History as a Scale of Forms.

There is no clearer index to Collingwood's views on the philosophy of history than that which can be obtained by careful attention to these essays from the decade of the twenties. In them one finds a gradual shift away from a definition of history solely in terms of the realism-idealism controversy and toward a clear recognition of the multi-layered

senses of the term. Between these two ends of the scale we shall find not only most of the "principles of history" mentioned in the Autobiography making their appearance, but we shall also see parallel discussions of both the static logic of historical assertions (for example concerning "categorical judgements" and "the concrete universal") and the dynamics of history in terms of processes and dialectical development.

A.--In "Croce's Philosophy of History" (1921) and "Can the New Idealism Dispense with Mysticism?" (1923) Collingwood writes, as we have already seen, as a sympathetic critic of Italian and German idealism, and in the process of his discussion of this philosophy he formulates (and explicitly approves) the notions of a "living past," history as dealing with thought, and the basic process of "re-thinking" past thoughts (EPH, 6-10; FR, 274-75).

History goes on in the mind of the historian: he thinks it, he enacts it within himself: he identifies himself with the history he is studying and actually lives it as he thinks it, whence Croce's paradox that "all history is contemporary history." . . . History is thought, annals the corpse of thought. But has thought a corpse? and if so, what is it like? . . . Croce's general "philosophy of the spirit" supplies him with a ready-made answer. Nothing exists but the spirit; but the spirit has two sides or parts, thought and will . . . Thought is the synthesis of subject and object, and its characteristic is truth; will is the creation of an object by the subject, and its characteristic is utility . . . Annals are not thought but willed; they are constructed--"drawn up"--by the historian for his own ends. (EPH, 6-7).

In this 1921 essay Collingwood goes on to criticize Croce for mixing idealism with naturalism (which, we recall, is a synonym for realism), and he calls on Croce to purge his philosophy of its naturalistic elements in order to "reach the point of absolute idealism" which the essay appears to assume to be a step forward (EPH, 22). While Collingwood is critical of Croce for reducing philosophy to the methodological moment of history, and for absorbing philosophy into history (EPH, 20-21), the idea of a living history of thought remains untouched. It comes fairly close to the "first principle" of history as Collingwood formulated it in the Autobiography (A, 110).

In the 1923 essay Collingwood presents in even stronger terms the contrast between the idealistic and the naturalistic view of history. We already quoted the passage in which Collingwood contrasts Croce and Gentile on the issue of the "metaphysic of being" which presents a philosophy of the realistic concept of change, and a "metaphysic of knowledge" which presents a philosophy of idealistic concept of history (FR, 274). Although Collingwood does not explicitly state the extent to which he would subscribe to either Croce's position or Gentile's, these passages do show an awareness of a distinction between process in general and historical processes. When taken in conjunction with his charges against Croce, it is not unreasonable to infer that Collingwood leaned toward a view on the ideality of history not significantly different (at this

point) from that of Gentile. By 1923, Collingwood appeared to have accepted the basic ideality of history, i.e. that thought is essential to it. Later Collingwood will drop the idealism-realism emphasis, while retaining the distinction between natural change and historical processes.

B.--In "Are History and Science Different Kinds of Knowledge?" (1922) and "The Nature and Aims of a Philosophy of History" (1924), Collingwood examines the epistemological claims of history vis-a-vis other forms of knowledge. These two essays represent a position intermediate between that of Religion and Philosophy (in which various forms of knowledge are identified insofar as they are directed toward the same intentional object) and that of Speculum Mentis (in which forms of knowledge are distinguished on the basis of the manner in which they grasp their intentional objects--as successive approximations to the truth).

In the 1922 essay Collingwood denies that there are any epistemological grounds for a distinction between history and science: "when both are regarded as actual inquiries the difference of method and logic wholly disappears" (EPH, 33). It is not the case that the scientist deals with the universal and the historian with the particular exclusively, nor that it is the function of the scientist to generalize and of the historian to particularize; both deal with the world of individual fact, and both activities involve the interpreta-

tion of individual facts in terms of general concepts (EPH, 26-27).

Interpretation is not the employment of a previously constructed tool (concept) upon a separately-given material (fact): neither the concept nor the fact is "possessed" (thought and observed respectively) except in the presence of the other. To possess or think a concept is to interpret a fact in terms of it: to possess or observe a fact is to interpret it in terms of a concept. Science is this interpretation . . . . The object which the scientist cognizes is not "a universal," but always a particular fact, a fact which but for the existence of his generalizing activity would be blank meaningless sense data. His activity as a scientist may be described alternatively as the understanding of sense-data by concepts, or the realizing of concepts in sensation, "intuiting" his thoughts or "thinking out" his intuitions . . . . (T)here is no such thing as knowledge either of the particular or of the universal, but only of the individual: and . . . the sense-datum (pure particular) and concept (pure universal) are false abstractions when taken separately ((and)) yet, as elements in the one concrete object of knowledge, the individual interpreted fact, are capable of being analytically distinguished. (EPH, 28-29).

In the 1924 essay Collingwood seems to reverse his earlier position: he declares that "history and science are not identical a parte subjecti" because "scientific thinking is an abstract thinking, historical thinking a concrete thinking" (EPH, 45). We recall from Religion and Philosophy that by "a parte subjecti" Collingwood understands precisely the activity of the knower qua historian, scientist, etc.--in contrast to "a parte objecti" which refers to the reality or object studied by a given form of knowledge (RP, 51; FR, 84-85). In short, Collingwood seems to be saying here that, contrary to his earlier judgment, there is an epistemological ground



for distinguishing science from history--the distinction being that between abstract and concrete thinking respectively.

The apparent contradiction is reconciled somewhat when one pays careful attention to the shift of levels between the two essays--the first dealing with the praxis of the two kinds of inquiry (" . . . regarded as actual inquiries . . . "), the second with the ideals of the two forms of knowledge. The distinction is important for an understanding of Collingwood's emerging philosophy of history, and the point of view which he adopts in Speculum Mentis. Both science and history, he wishes to tell us, deal with individual facts, and both make use of generalizations and the application of generalizations (particularization) to concrete cases. But each proposes a different ideal for itself.

Ideally, historical thought is the apprehension of a world of fact. Actually, it is the presentation by thought to itself of a world of half-ascertained fact: a world in which truth and error are at any given moment inextricably confused together. Thus the actual object of actual historical thinking is an object which is not "given" but perpetually in process of being given . . . . The philosophy of history, therefore, is a study of historical thinking: not only psychological analysis of its actual procedure, but the analysis of the ideal which it sets before itself. Historical thought is one among a number of attitudes taken up by the mind towards the objective world; it is an attitude which assumes that there exists a world of facts--not general laws, but individual facts--independent of the being known, and that it is possible, if not wholly to discover these facts, at any rate to discover them in part and approximately. The philosophy of history must be a critical discussion of this attitude. (EPH, 44).

But this distinction (based on mental dispositions, be it noted) still does not extract Collingwood from his difficulties, since (a) to distinguish between what a form of experience or thought is ideally from what it is in practice, or actually, is, on Collingwood's own grounds, to commit the error of realism (SM, 313; cf. RP, 8, 29-33; FR, 47, 66-68); and more seriously, (b) the historian does not always deal with the same set of "facts" as does the scientist--a point which Collingwood had already acknowledged in his 1923 essay on the New Idealism, wherein he recognized that the facts with which the historian is concerned are consciously performed processes in contrast to the events of nature: "that which has a history . . . is a mind, for matter may change but it cannot be said to have a history" (FR, 274). To be subject matter for science an event must merely be capable of being thought. With events that are already thoughts the scientist has no direct concern, since the facts which he is proposing to explain are not artifacts but rather natural events.

Collingwood makes no note of these objective distinctions in his 1924 essay since he is limiting himself to a discussion of the differences in ideals between history and other forms of knowledge. Consequently he stresses the manner in which the historian, as opposed to the scientist, seeks to express his judgments about the "facts" he is investigating. Although both hypothetical and categorical forms are used in

science and history, the scientist seeks to express his judgments primarily in the hypothetical mode, in which the antecedent is the ground of the consequent ("if equals be added to equals, the sums are equal"), whereas the historian aims at categorical judgments. "The ideal of history, then, is to be a single categorical judgment, articulated into an infinity of coherent categorical judgments, asserting the reality and expounding the nature of an infinite individual world of fact articulated into an infinity of individual facts" (EPH, 46). The historian assumes the objective independence of these facts from the knowing mind, so that "these actual happenings are always the object of his thought, and never his thought itself"--this being the realistic bias of the historian (EPH, 46-47).

As in Speculum Mentis, which was published in the same year as the essay under consideration, Collingwood is unclear about what he understands by "categorical judgement," and his example does not clarify his usage. Collingwood uses as an example of a categorical judgment used by scientists the statement: "all whales are mammals"--which he then criticizes as not truly categorical since it "does not imply an enumeration of all actual whales but rather tells us that whatever we can identify as a whale, if and when we do so identify anything, we can further identify as a mammal." The implication seems to be that (a) categorical judgments do imply an actual enumeration of all the entities involved--that is, some sort of

quantification; and (b) that categorical judgments as used by scientists refer to their objects only hypothetically, and hence fail to be truly categorical. In the 1924 essays the doctrine of categorical judgments is vague, and requires further clarification.

But Collingwood does further specify what sort of "single categorical judgement" the historian's ideal would be, and what the limitations of such an intentional object would be.

The infinite whole of fact which it is the historian's business to determine is . . . a world whose centre is the historian's "immediate" perception, and whose radius is measured by the depth to which he can see into the significance of that perception . . . . The world of every historian is limited by the limits of his knowledge . . . . Each historian sees history from his own centre, at an angle of his own: . . . so the various "perspectives" of historians are arranged in a "space of perspectives;" each historian is a monad which mirrors the universe from a point of view that is irrevocably not any other's point of view . . . . But a monad has no windows, and the historian as such cannot do the work of co-ordinating the infinity of possible perspectives. He can only travel from one perspective to another . . . . But in reflecting, that is philosophizing, about his own thought he recognizes that he is a monad, and to realize that one is in the "egocentric predicament" is to transcend it. When thought returns upon itself and faces the question of its own relation to its object, by criticizing the point of view from which it has regarded that object it transcends this point of view. (EPH, 53-55)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Although Collingwood twice uses the expression, "space of perspectives" in this essay, it never again occurs in his writings. The term strikes the reader familiar with Husserl and Lonergan as similar to the notion of "horizon."

It is here that we have the rudiments of an answer to the first of our two paradoxical questions at the beginning of Section 3. Although the historian's ideal is to articulate a single categorical judgment, in practice he is always partially separated from the object of his thought, so that his thought and its relation to its object is at best one of similarity and not one of total identity. As an historian, then, "he is always the spectator of a life in which he does not participate: he sees the world of fact as it were across a gulf which, as an historian, he cannot bridge" (EPH, 47). But as a philosopher the historian can also reflect on the fact that he himself "is part of the world of fact, and that his own historical thought is a product of the historical process which he is studying" (EPH, 47). In other words the historian qua historian is limited by his "realist" assumption about the independence of the facts he is observing, but the historian qua philosopher is capable of transcending (by sympathetic interpretation and by critical reflection) this separation of subject and object. History is therefore the "self-knowledge of mind" when it becomes self-consciously or critically reflective about itself, or when it becomes philosophy. (Cf. EPH, 85-86).

Furthermore the way in which history becomes critically reflective is by attending to the way in which historical problems arise within the historian's own experience (EPH, 51-

53). Before something can become an historical issue "the problem must arise within historical thought; it must, that is to say, arise somehow out of the attempt to perceive more adequately the world that exists here and now for our perception" (EPH, 53).

Hence although Collingwood does not use the terms "encapsulation" and "re-enactment" in this essay, the concepts and their relationships are the same as those which he expresses in the historical principle which we have called "HIST-3" (number 5 of Table 4) in our summary of the Autobiography. The experience in question, says Collingwood,

is . . . subject to the distinction between truth and falsehood: hence we have not only to read, but to criticize. The recognition of this truth is what differentiates history in the higher sense of the word from the mere absorption and repetition of stories . . . . This critical work is sufficiently difficult to require somewhat elaborate training, which involves the incidental construction of . . . historical methods. As the word method suggests, these sciences consist of empirical generalizations or rules of procedure, instructing the student how to proceed in typical cases . . . . Their business is to solve the problem "how can the historian check his sources"? to which the general answer is, "the historian who knows his business can always invent methods of checking any source." (EPH, 51-52).

The only element lacking in this account, as compared to that of the Autobiography, is the fully developed notion of the "real life" or "practical problems" which constitute the "superficial or obvious present" of the historian: these elements are added in his 1930 essay, "The Philosophy of History," which we will consider presently.

But we must observe in passing that in the above passage Collingwood is beginning to relate several concepts which are of very high importance for his later philosophy: (1) he is beginning to acknowledge explicitly that there are levels of meaning to the concept of history; (2) he recognizes that in the higher sense of the term, truth and falsehood are distinguished by means of critical thinking; (3) that this critical thinking gives rise to historical methods; and (4) that these methods consist of rules of procedure on how to proceed in typical cases. Furthermore (5) it is noteworthy that in this 1924 essay (as well as in Speculum Mentis, published the same year) he first recognizes that "the various forms of thought (art, science, history, philosophy) are not species of a genus," but rather form what he was later to call a "scale of overlapping forms" such that "art and science are contained in history, not excluded from it: yet contained in a form transmuted by their subordination to the historical end," while history "is not contained in this manner in art or science" (EPH, 48).

Similarly, the philosopher must in a sense be an historian and the historian in a sense a philosopher; but the philosopher is suppressed in the historian, and the historian is preserved but subordinated in the philosopher; history is included in philosophy while philosophy is excluded from history. (EPH, 49)

Here we catch a partial glimpse of an answer to the second of our two paradoxical questions at the beginning of

the previous section of this chapter: the realist is a philosopher who attempts to ignore the history of his own subject matter, which, on Collingwood's view, is a self-stultifying process. Not only is realism the root of all forms of formalistic and abstract dogmatism (which would mean, in terms of the account given in Speculum Mentis, that it erred as much through neglecting history as it did through neglecting art, religion, and science--that is, it neglected them as concrete but partial modes of thought), but it is a philosophy which neglects the historical appreciation of concrete fact, which is its own basis. The full flowering and ultimate consequence of the realistic attitude towards the objects of knowledge is history; but to deny that subject and object can ever be reconciled to one another (which is the same thing as to affirm that objects of knowledge are unaffected by the knowing of them) is to prevent the historical viewpoint from ever reaching its highest point of development--viz. a self-consciously critical process, the self-knowledge of mind.

C.--But the complete answer to our two questions is possible only by an explication of two further lines of thought: (1) the idea of history as a developmental process, and (2) the nature of historical evidence. The latter is developed in two essays published in 1928 and 1930, which we shall consider shortly; the former is worked out in three essays in which Collingwood deals with the cyclic view of his-



tory and its companion notion (in the 19th century at least) the idea of historical progress.

In "Oswald Spengler and the Theory of Historical Cycles" (1927) Collingwood criticizes Spengler for writing history as though he were describing a natural phenomenon, which reduces it to so many episodes in the natural life-cycle of an atomic "culture," which is elevated to the status of a thing with definite characteristics. Collingwood's objection to Spengler is similar in strategy both to his previous criticism of Croce and to his later criticism of Toynbee: an historian cannot treat his subject matter as if it were a natural entity with physical properties subject to natural laws, because it commits the positivistic error of regarding as given what in fact is constructed by the active process of interpretation on the part of the historian.

These are not superficial flaws . . . . They are sacrifices of truth to method; they are symptoms of a logical fallacy which underlies the whole book and has actually been erected into a principle. The fallacy lies in the attempt to characterize a culture by means of a single idea or tendency or feature, to deduce everything from this one central idea without recognizing that a single idea, asserted in this way, calls up its own opposite in order to have something to assert itself against, and henceforth proceeds, not by merely repeating itself, but by playing a game of statement and counter-statement with this opposite . . . . (W)here ((Spengler)) fails is in thinking out what he means by "characteristic." He thinks that the characteristic is a fundamental something whose logical consequences flow smoothly and unopposedly into all its manifestations; whereas it is really the dominant partner in a pair of opposites, asserting itself only so far as it can keep its opposite in check and therefore always colored by the hidden presence and under-

ground activity of this opposite. (EPH, 63, 65).

Now while Collingwood does not explicitly use the expressions "event" and "process" in this passage, it is clear that his critique of Spengler is based on the historical principle we have called "LG" in our summary of the Autobiography. Any single idea, tendency, or feature of a culture in history "calls up its own opposite" with which it plays a game of statement and counter-statement--becomes, in the terminology of the Autobiography, a process the components of which are not static characteristics that do not change, but rather "turn into one another":

(W)hile recognizing that a given culture has a certain self-consistent character, a fundamental idea which is working itself out into a complete social life, we must assert that this idea or character is not static but dynamic; it is not a single unchanged thing . . . but a process of spiritual development, an idea which grows out of other ideas, in an environment of other ideas, which asserts itself against these other ideas through a process of give-and-take in which it modifies them and is modified by them in turn. (EPH, 73).

In "The Theory of Historical Cycles" (1927) and "A Philosophy of Progress" (1929) Collingwood continues to develop the concept of history as a living thought-process rather than a dead set of events--first by showing that the cyclical view of history is a function of the limitations of the historian's own knowledge, and secondly by locating the theory of historical cycles within the context of range of possible viewpoints that the historian can take toward his subject

matter.

In the 1927 essay Collingwood stresses the need for a unifying principle in history in contrast to its pluralizing tendencies, which culminate in taking its data as so many atomic events. In addition to being held together subjectively by the historian's own thinking, it is held together objectively by a continuity of problems the successive resolutions to which form the fabric of history. So far as the historian can see history as a whole, he sees it "as a continuous development in which every phase consists of the solution of human problems set by the preceding phase" (EPH, 87).

But that is only an ideal for the historian; that is what he knows history would look like if he could see it as a whole, which he can never do. In point of fact, he can only see it in bits; he can only be acquainted with certain periods . . . . At any given moment, therefore, the historian can only present an interim report on the progress of historical studies, and there will be gaps in it. These gaps will appear as breaches in continuity, periods in which the historian loses track of the development . . . . In this condition, we see history split up into disconnected episodes, each episode forming a relatively intelligible whole, separated from its neighbors by dark ages. That is the point of view from which we see history in cycles. . . . The cyclical view of history is thus a function of the limitations of historical knowledge. (EPH, 87-89).

In "A Philosophy of Progress" (1929) Collingwood sets out to answer the question he had posed in his 1927 essay on historical cycles: do the moral categories of good and bad have a place in the evaluation of the course of history (EPH, 77)? His answer, in brief, is that "whether you think the

course of events is an upward or a downward course depends not on it but on you" (EPH, 109)--that is, on the presuppositions of the historian. Three views are possible: the Greco-Roman view in which history is a process of increasing decadence from a presumed golden age; the 18th and 19th century European view of history as giving evidence of progressive improvement of human conditions and man's ability to solve his perennial problems; and the more recent theory of historical cycles, in which there is an alternation between periods of decadence and of progress (EPH, 104-105). Since the third is nothing more than a combination of the first two, the real question is one which gets at the basis on which one measures progress or decadence, and Collingwood suggests that in the end the question is not so much factual or theoretical as much as it is practical. The historian who works to preserve and improve what he finds of value in the world and who therefore continues to find the world as it is a better place on the whole than it was, will view history as on the whole a progressive development leading to the present. One who resigns himself to inactivity finds it on the whole a worse place than it was in a previous age; he feels that a past age is not again achievable, and therefore writes as a pessimistic historian who views history as decadence. And finally, one who finds that some things at the present time are degenerate and require improvement (e.g. a present form of government) while others are already notably better (e.g. architecture and engineering) will

find both elements of progress and decadence in history, and opt for some version of a theory of historical cycles. But in any case the question is decided by the limitations in the present practical life of the historian:

The question whether, on the whole, history shows a progress can be answered, as we now see, by asking another question. Have you the courage of your convictions? If you have, if you regard the things which you are doing as things worth doing, then the course of history which has led to the doing of them is justified by its results, and its movement is a movement forward. (EPH, 120).

Here we not only have an illustration of Collingwood's use of "HIST-4" to solve an historical problem, we also have the second phase of the answer to the first of our two paradoxical questions. The process of history is taken by the historian as consisting of events that occur independently of his knowing them, but upon critical examination the nature or meaning of these events is determined by the historian's judgment. This judgment is limited by the limitations of the historian's own mind. But these limitations are not merely theoretical, they are also practical: at the level at which the historian is both agent and patient, or at the level in which subject and object are identified, the historical processes are additionally determined by the historian (e.g. whether or not they shall be progressive, retrogressive, or cyclical).

D.--If such a conclusion as this seems to destroy the last shred of historical objectivity, the balance is restored

in two further essays, "The Limits of Historical Knowledge" (1928) and "The Philosophy of History" (1930), which complete the sketch of Collingwood's development of the concept of history prior to 1932, and before he had written the series of lectures which were later to be published as The Idea of History.

The 1928 essay argues that although the historian is limited by the quantity and quality of the evidence he has at his disposal, this does not mean that the historical sceptic is correct in his claim that history is "the doubtful story of successive events." On the contrary, historical scepticism is only the negative aspect of a full definition of history which, when confronted by conflicting evidence, cannot stop short at the critical confrontation of one statement by its contradictory, but must proceed to the dialectical task of showing why one statement must be revised on the basis of another--why, in short, criticism is a phase in the complete process of historical thinking, which must present its arguments on the basis of all relevant evidence (EPH, 96). What the historian is seeking is not "what really happened," since this has about the same status as the Kantian unknowable "thing in itself." The past referred to by historical thinking is not, that is, what is demanded by that permanent tendency in all thought which is "sometimes called the plain man's realism--to think of the object as a 'thing in itself,' a thing out of all re-

lation to the knowledge of it, a thing existing in itself and by itself" (EPH, 99). Such thinking leads to the notion of a specious past--a "limbo where events which have finished happening still go on," where the past is something still existing in a "*ἑνὸς τόπου* of its own; a world where Galileo's weight is still falling, where the smoke of Nero's Rome still fills the intelligible air, and where interglacial man is still laboriously learning to chip flints" (EPH, 101). On the contrary, what the historian seeks is a present filled with those symbols of the past which Collingwood calls "evidence."

An event that has finished happening is just nothing at all. It has no existence of any kind whatever. The past is simply non-existent . . . . What the historian wants is a real present . . . . He wants to reconstruct in his mind the process by which his world--the world in those of its aspects which at this particular moment impress themselves on him--has come to be what it is. This process is not now going on . . . . He is trying to know the past . . . as it appears from its traces in the present . . . . (A)ll historical thought is the historical interpretation of the present. By leading to the present, it has left its traces upon the present; and by doing that, it has supplied the historian with evidence concerning itself, a starting point for his investigations. (EPH, 101-102).

The process of historical criticism, therefore, is a process of confronting one piece of evidence with another, related piece, from the point of view of establishing how the historian's own present came to be what it is (EPH, 98-99).

Thus far Collingwood has only determined that the historian's knowledge of the past is limited by evidence, and that this evidence must be something that constitutes part of

the historian's own present. In "The Philosophy of History" (1930) he not only refines the notion of evidence, but also adds a second set of limitations to historical thought, connects historical inquiry with Q-A logic, again attacks the realists' conception of a specious past, and outlines several of the remaining "principles of history" with which we are already familiar from the Autobiography--all this within the very compact space of the four concluding pages of the essay.

First, with respect to evidence and the limits of historical knowledge:

History is knowledge of the past, and the past consists of events that have finished happening. The past does not exist and cannot be perceived; our knowledge of it is not derived from observation and cannot be verified by experiment . . . . We come to know the past, not immediately, but by interpreting evidence. This evidence (or data) is something that exists in the present and is perceived by the historian . . . . But data are not enough. They must be interpreted. This requires principles, and the body of principles constitutes historical method or technique. Some of these principles are scientific in character, that is, they concern particular groups of evidence . . . . Some are philosophical, that is, they apply universally to all evidence whatever, and compose the logic of historical method. It is to this that we must refer such problems as, the nature and limits of negative evidence, the possibility of analogical argument, and so forth. Data, on the one hand, and principles of interpretation on the other, are the two elements of all historical thought. (EPH, 136-37).

This is one of those passages where the reader is confronted with a direct contradiction. Did not Collingwood, after all, state in the Autobiography that history is not concerned with past events (which begin and end) but with processes (which do



not)? Was this not the "first principle" of history ("LG")? Here the interpreter must tread with extreme caution, but in the process he will make a discovery of the first importance in understanding how to treat the many direct contradictions one finds in Collingwood's writings. Making use of his "dialectical principle," Collingwood often begins an expository section of his writing by making a statement that he thinks corresponds to the ordinary beliefs of his reading audience, and then in successive sentences and paragraphs, leads him beyond this point to the position he wishes to establish.<sup>5</sup> In this case Collingwood is starting from the point of view of the "plain man's realism"--that history is knowledge of an object, the past, which exists independently of his knowing it--and leads him to a modified notion of history as knowledge of a significant present. This is manifestly his intention, and it is made clear by filling in the first ellipsis in the above quote, and adding the concluding paragraph of the essay:

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<sup>5</sup>Cf. CRC, 9 May 1935, Collingwood to Ryle, p. 15: "(I)n the work of any competent philosopher I find that the part played by systematic fallacies is partial only; repeatedly, when real difficulties arise, his insight into the subject, sharpened by the sense of the difficulty, leads him to reject the fallacy even at the cost of inconsistency and to adopt a better procedure than that which he had followed . . . . Now this being so, a philosopher named as the victim of a fallacy might . . . say to me: 'You pillory me unfairly; on page X, it is true, I do fall into your fallacy; but on page Y I correct it; you ought to take my work as a whole, and interpret X in the light of Y; if you did so you would see that the error was only a temporary slip at worst; and, at best, you might wonder whether it was not merely the exploration of a provisional point of view.'"

A "realistic" theory, according to which knowledge is the "apprehension of a really existing object," is ruled out as absolutely inapplicable to history. . . . (T)he historian does not select, because no past facts are "there" before him, to select from, until he has put them there by sheer historical thinking. . . . Finally, since the past in itself is nothing, the knowledge of the past in itself is not, and cannot be, the historian's goal. His goal, as the goal of a thinking being, is knowledge of the present . . . . But, as historian, he is concerned with one special aspect of the present--how it came to be what it is. (EPH, 136-39).

We shall have occasion in the sequel to examine many other instances where Collingwood seems to take back with one hand what he had given with the other, but in the meantime we should note that a successful gloss on these passages would be something like the following: "Although from the point of view of the plain man's realism history is taken to mean knowledge of the past, where the past consists of events that have finished happening, since the past does not exist (as the realistic theory might lead one to suspect) one must revise the notion of the past to mean that aspect of the present which gives indication (evidence) of how it has come to be what it is--and this is the past the historian is concerned with." Such a reading does not violate Collingwood's "first principle of history," and in fact makes sense of the complete passage --especially its final paragraph. But be it noted, it still does not get Collingwood out of the woods, because the reader is still puzzled by what it would mean for historical objectivity for the historian to "put" facts before himself "by sheer historical thinking." For a clarification of what this

means we must next pay note to the role of Q-A logic in historical thinking:

The beginning of historical research is therefore not the collection or contemplation of crude facts as yet uninterpreted, but the asking of a question which sets one off looking for facts which may help one to answer it . . . . And the question must be asked with some reasonable expectation of being able to answer it, and to answer it by genuinely historical thinking . . . . We express this by saying that a question does or does not "arise." To say that a question arises, is to say that it has a logical connexion with our previous thoughts, that we have a reason for asking it and are not moved by mere capricious curiosity. (EPH, 137)<sup>6</sup>

Now although there is no mention in this passage of Q-A logic as such, it is clear (e.g. from the discussion of a question's "arising" by logical connection with the historian's own previous thoughts) that he has Q-A logic in mind, just as he had described it in the Autobiography--short, that is, of an explicit discussion of the relation of questions and presuppositions.<sup>7</sup> Hence this passage confirms that as of 1930 Colling-

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<sup>6</sup>Cf. CRC, loc. cit., p. 17: "Thus it seems to me that the individual 'proposition' assented to on any given occasion is assented to only in a context, never by itself; and this context is not a fortuitous context but a necessary one; I mean, 'It is not yet noon and the sun is shining' won't do as a substitute for 'It is not yet noon and it is half-past eleven.' The context is not (may I say?) a merely psychological context, consisting of anything else that we may happen to be thinking at the time; it is a logical context, consisting of other things which if we didn't think we couldn't think what ex hypothesi we are thinking."

<sup>7</sup>This distinction would not be in the province of the working historian anyway; and not even, according to the Essay on Metaphysics, the task of the metaphysician. It is the task of the logician. See EM, 54.

wood was making use of the principle of history which we have labelled "ARCH-1," and two of the corollaries of "HIST-3" in our summary of the Autobiography.<sup>8</sup>

Finally one finds an explicit statement of "ARCH-3" in the 1930 essay:

All history must be the history of something particular, and the most we can ever do is to express the present state of knowledge concerning this particular subject. As no history can be universal, so no history can be final . . . . All history is thus an interim report on the progress made in the study of its subject matter down to the present; and hence all history is at the same time the history of history . . . . (EPH, 138).

Here again we have Collingwood apparently contradicting himself, and then revising his previous statement. In the first part of the paper he states that second-order reflection on history, viz. the philosophy of history, must show how history "is somehow a universal and necessary characteristic of things, not merely a particular and contingent characteristic of a certain group of things" (EPH, 122).

"The philosophy of something" is a legitimate phrase only when the "something" in question is no mere fragment of the world, but is an aspect of the world as a whole--a universal and necessary characteristic of things. . . . If there is to be a philosophy of history, history must be . . . a universal and necessary human interest, the interest in a universal and necessary aspect of the world. (EPH, 122-23).

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<sup>8</sup>It also, incidentally, states what Collingwood means by a question "arising"--i.e., that the question has a "logical connection with our previous thoughts, that we have a reason for asking it . . . ." (SM, 137).

If history is concerned with a "universal and necessary aspect of the world," then how is it that "all history must be the history of something particular"? And how can all history be at the same time the history of history without infinite regress? The answer, insofar as one is possible on Collingwood's grounds, is the same for both problems: "history" is an equivocal term, with layers of meaning which it is the work of the philosopher to distinguish--but to distinguish in a manner which cannot but violate the expectations of someone committed to the logic of the abstract universal. If one considers history in terms of its limitations (both by its given evidence and by the historian's own principles of interpretation) history always deals with something particular; but if one regards history as that aspect of the present which explains how that present came into being, history deals with a universal and necessary aspect of the world. This sort of distinction is only possible from the philosophical point of view--the historian is not explicitly aware of it. But Collingwood views these levels of meaning of the concept of history not as several static definitions separate from one another but as themselves part of a developmental process in which the idea of history is progressively realized.

In the intermediate part of the 1930 paper (clearly a prototype of his later lectures on The Idea of History--cf. EPH, xxxiii) Collingwood shows how the step which elevates

history to the rank of a philosophical science was taken:

The essence of this development is the doctrine of the individual judgement. Ordinary logic distinguishes the individual judgement "This S is P," from the universal judgement "All S is P." Now, says Croce, "This S is P" is history, "All S is P" is science. But whenever we say "All S is P" we have before our minds a "this S." . . . . "All S is P" means "This S, in its character as S, is P." When the element of individuality is taken away we have, not a universal judgement "All S is P," but nothing at all. This conception can be expressed by saying that all knowledge is historical knowledge (individual judgement) and that science is history with its individual reference neglected. (EPH, 135-36).

We shall have occasion in the sequel to return to this theme in connection with some of Collingwood's later remarks about historical and scientific judgments, about the concrete universal, and about the structure of philosophical concepts. But for now it is sufficient to notice that the formal opposition between universal and particular judgments is taken (by Croce and, on approval, by Collingwood) to be overcome by the individual judgment of history, which is not merely a particularized universal judgment, but a judgment distinguishable from a particular judgment as the base-line of its intelligibility (when individuality is taken away we do not have a universal judgment but "nothing at all").<sup>9</sup> But such distinctions as these are made by the philosophy of history which, as Collingwood was so often to point out, is not something different or separate from history itself, but is history with its presuppositions made explicit (cf. EPH, 125).

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<sup>9</sup>This view is later criticized by Collingwood (IH, 303).

## 5. Conclusion.

In our survey of Collingwood's essays in the philosophy of history between 1920 and 1930 we managed to find direct or indirect evidence which substantiates his claims in the Autobiography concerning the development of his ideas on the relation of philosophy and history--with one notable oversight. One principle that is totally missing in these essays is the one we have called "HIST-4"--history as the science of human affairs. It is the absence of this principle that mars his discussion of the object of history, so that it seems that the object of history is the whole of changing reality, and hence "science is history with its individual reference neglected."

Now it so happens that not only is this principle the central issue of his 1936 British Academy lecture, "Human Nature and Human History" (IH, 205-31; cf. A, 116-17, n. 1), but the principles of history which we have called "HIST-1, -2, -3, and -4" appear almost verbatim in this essay. Even assuming that Collingwood read the substance of his 1936 lecture back into his earlier essays on the philosophy of history, and that therefore the development of his ideas on the relationship of philosophy and history was not as complete as he said it was as of 1930, the real question that arises in understanding Collingwood's early reconciliation between history and philosophy concerns the manner in which he finally dis-

tinguishes them within some sort of unity. For what kind of unity would that be? History, science, art, etc.--his "forms of experience" in Speculum Mentis--are not, he insists, species of a common genus, "knowledge," as the realists had asserted. That meant that each of the forms of experience has an epistemology proper to it. At the same time Collingwood feels obliged to show that all forms of experience are manifestations of a single process, mental activity, and are therefore variations on a single theme.

We have already had occasion to notice that Collingwood was not entirely successful in his several attempts to distinguish history from other forms of knowledge solely on the grounds of the manner in which they express their judgments. In his 1922 essay on science and history he admitted that both of these forms of experience make use of particular and universal judgments and therefore cannot be separated on the basis of the sorts of judgments they use. But in his 1930 paper he asserts that the judgment peculiar to history is individual judgment ("This S is P") which he distinguishes both from the particular judgment ("Some S is P") and from the universal judgment ("All S is P"). But since judgments of science are merely the judgments of history with their individuality suppressed, it follows (as Croce had said) that "all knowledge is historical knowledge" and that "science is history with its individual reference neglected" (EPH, 136). But



then it would seem that science is a species of history, or that both of these are (as Speculum Mentis seems to leave one believing) unsuccessful forms of philosophy. In any event we have the sort of genus-species situation within knowledge that Collingwood had hoped to overcome. On the other hand the attempt to distinguish different sorts of knowledge on the grounds of their subject matter is equally unsuccessful. If history deals with a "universal and necessary aspect of things"--i.e. their "becoming"--then it is clear that it is indistinguishable from the science of nature, since everything in nature is also subject to a process of becoming (EPH, 122-24). Starting from either direction then, one arrives at the conclusion that the forms of knowledge are indistinguishable from one another. "Everything," Collingwood writes in 1930, "has a past; everything has somehow come to be what it is; and therefore the historical aspect of things is a universal and necessary aspect of them" (EPH, 124). On this account there would not only be a history of Greece and Rome, but of the San Andreas Fault and the moon.

Perhaps Collingwood assumed that the reader would recall what he had written in his 1923 essay on the New Idealism, where he says that "that which has a history . . . . is a mind, for matter may change, but it cannot be said to have a history" (FR, 274), and would supply this reservation as the distinguishing feature of history. But he does not tackle the

issue explicitly in his published writings until his British Academy lecture of 1936, where it is assaulted head on and solved in the manner described in the Autobiography.

The thesis which I shall maintain ((writes Collingwood in "Human Nature and Human History")) is that the science of human nature was a false attempt--falsified by the analogy of natural science--to understand the mind itself, and that, whereas the right way of investigating nature is by the methods called scientific, the right way of investigating mind is by the methods of history . . . . Since the time of Heraclitus and Plato, it has been a commonplace that the entire world of nature is a world of "process" or "becoming." But this is not what is meant by the historicity of things; for change and history are not the same . . . . (H)uman history shows change not only in the individual cases in which . . . ideals are realized or partially realized, but in the ideals themselves . . . . The processes of nature can therefore be properly described as sequences of mere events, but those of history cannot. They are not processes of mere events but processes of actions, which have an inner side, consisting of processes of thoughts; and what the historian is looking for is these processes of thought. All history is the history of thought. (IH, 209-11, 215--emphasis mine).

Collingwood's solution to the problem then is to distinguish between two classes of intentional objects--mere events and "actions" of historical agents, the latter having deliberate thought as part of its essential structure. Natural science deals with the former, history with the latter. But Collingwood is also saying something further in this essay, and that is that the processes with which historical inquiry deals are developments of a self-making mind (IH, 226). What exactly "mind" is, and what part "thought" plays in the life of men with minds, is something that Collingwood works out in some detail in The Principles of Art and The New Levi-

athan. But the notion of mind as a self-making activity is explicitly present in Speculum Mentis, and goes as far back as Religion and Philosophy.

In the latter Collingwood wrote, it will be recalled, that "there is no such thing as human nature in the sense of a definite body of characteristics common to every man," and that therefore "the question to be asked about mind is not what it is, but what it does; a question with which the logic of things and qualities does not deal" (RP, 164-65; FR, 266). In Speculum Mentis the doctrine of mind as a self-making activity is put forward as the final realization of all knowledge:

Knowledge polarizes itself into abstract or erroneous and concrete or true. Abstract knowledge is the same as error, because, separating what is thought to be from what is, it erects that which it thinks into a false object over against itself, an external world . . . . But in concrete knowledge the mind sees itself face to face, and knows even as it is known. Here the object is the subject . . . in the sense that the object finds its very life in being known by the subject, the subject in knowing the object . . . . In an immediate and direct way, the mind can never know itself: it can only know itself through the mediation of an external world, know that what it sees in the external world is its own reflection. Hence the construction of external worlds--works of art, religions, sciences, structures of historical fact, codes of law, systems of philosophy, and so forth ad infinitum--is the only way by which the mind can possibly come to that self-knowledge which is its end. (SM, 313-15).

In Collingwood's view the process of creation of these "external worlds"--of art, religion, science, history (as historiography), and philosophy--is the very process of history, and

the historian in the very best sense must be the one who can recreate all these processes over again by "re-thinking" them in his own historical imagination. In the process of doing so, and in confronting the "evidence" of these worlds in a critical fashion, he not only discovers the past to which he is heir but re-creates that past, and in the process builds the structure of his own consciousness:

Man has been defined as an animal capable of profiting by the experience of others. . . . The body of human thought or mental activity is a corporate possession, and almost all the operations which our minds perform are operations which we learned to perform from others who have performed them already. Since mind is what it does, and human nature, if it is a name for anything real, is only a name for human activities, this acquisition of ability to perform determinate operations is the acquisition of a determinate human nature. Thus the historical process is a process in which man creates for himself this or that kind of human nature by re-creating in his own thought the past to which he is heir. (IH, 226).

That such a view, so eloquently expressed and so close to the standpoint of European existentialism, would bring Collingwood to loggerheads with behavioral psychologists requires no special demonstration; we shall see in a future chapter how this aspect of Collingwood's philosophy developed into the anti-positivistic polemic in the Essay on Metaphysics. His antipathy to behavioral psychology is neither something entirely new in his philosophy nor is it inconsistent with its central tenets. We have already seen that as early as Religion and Philosophy Collingwood assaulted "psychology" as the pseudo-

science of mind, since it treats of mental activities as mere events (RP, 42; FR, 77). And we have had occasion to notice that Collingwood's fundamental view of human mentality makes deliberate activity (in a manner yet to be explained) its central and irreducible aspect. But the issue of immediate interest here is the support that one finds throughout Collingwood's philosophy, and not merely in the period following the appearance of the Autobiography, for the reconciliation of history and philosophy through the concept of mind as a self-making activity. Although "HIST-4" does not appear explicitly prior to the 1934 British Academy Lecture, it is a principle latent but operative in his early philosophical writings, and takes no great feat of interpretive skill to discern in his discussions concerning history.

It remains to pull all of these strands together into some sort of summary of our survey of Collingwood's earlier reconciliation of philosophy and history. What we have seen emerging from Collingwood's essays on the philosophy of history is a discussion which not only confirms most, if not all, of what he had said about his discovery of the "principles of history" as he described them in the Autobiography, but in addition a fuller discussion of several of these topics which parallels and complements the autobiographical sketch. The main ideas of this complimentary account can be summarized in tabular form as follows:

TABLE 6

THE MEANINGS OF HISTORY

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1. (EPH-1) "History" is an ambiguous term, the meanings of which display a progressive and orderly development with both a temporal and logical structure, the highest point of which relates the diversity of these meanings in the unity of a philosophical concept. (EPH, 39-40, 124-25).
2. (EPH-2) History understood as the ideal of the historian is the knowledge of a unified and meaningful whole of acts of historical agents, expressed in a single categorical judgment. (EPH, 46).
  - a. The objective aspect of this ideal is the drama of history as a single developmental process, which consists of the successive resolution of problems relating to human self-consciousness (in the form of art, religion, science, etc.).
  - b. The subjective aspect of this ideal is the continuity of this drama provided by the historian's own consciousness, i.e. his expectation that the object of history will be an organized and coherent whole. Minimally this is the view that history has a plot. (EPH, 37, 111, 137-38).
3. (EPH-3) History understood as the practice of the historian consists of the two fundamental elements: historical data, or evidence, and principles of interpretation. Each of these limits the ideal anticipations of the historian. (EPH, 137).
  - a. Objectively, historical thinking is limited by the evidence which provides the data for historical analysis. Such data (i.e., traces of the past existing in the present) requires critical analysis before serving as evidence of (for or against) any historical thinking at all. (EPH, 136).
  - b. Subjectively, historical thinking is limited by the historian's own "point of view"--the principles of in-

terpretation he brings to the data he is analyzing. Such principles include the nature and limits of negative evidence, the possibility of analogical argument, views of history as cyclic or linearly progressive, etc. (EPH, 89, 137).

4. (EPH-4) At the level at which theory and practice (and subject and object) are identified, the historian is also an historical agent, not only observing history but making it. This is the philosophical concept of history, in which subject and object are identified--where, in the case of history, the historian is both agent and patient. (EPH, 46, 49, 120).
  
  5. (EPH-5) The philosophical concept of history is concerned with a fully articulated answer to the question, "How has the world (of human affairs) as it now exists come to be what it is"? The answer to this question is conceived as the first stage of an activity to either keep it that way or to initiate an alteration of it. (EPH, 89, 92, 102, 109, 120; cf. EPA, 144).
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One must pay careful attention therefore to which level of significance the particular use of the term "history" refers in any given passage in Collingwood's writings. To accuse Collingwood of "radical historicism" in his later years (as critics do who read the Essay on Metaphysics without seeing it in the context of his other writings on history) may be either utterly true or totally false, depending on what one understands by "history" and "historicism." As a philosophical concept, history is identified with philosophy, and therefore the reduction of philosophy to history is the identification of philosophy with itself--a harmless tautology. On the other hand as an empirical concept (the collection of events which Collingwood calls raw data, or the uninterpreted evidence, of history), history is not only not identical with philosophy, but can hardly be said to be identical with itself. Nevertheless in our examination of Collingwood's later philosophy of history we shall have to attend to the manner in which he tries to retain a criteria of historical objectivity while yet rejecting the realistic historian's emphasis on extra-mental "facts." But meanwhile we must turn now to what Collingwood understood by his "identities" in conjunction with the issue of what he expected of a "rapprochement" philosophy, and therefore what method he used to achieve this end.



## CHAPTER VI

### RAPPROCHEMENT, RELIGION, AND ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE

#### 1. Introduction.

Just as in his discussions of Q-A logic and the philosophy of history, Collingwood made his approach in the Autobiography to the discussion of a need for a new branch of philosophy, devoted to the work of reconciliation, from a critique of realism.

It was during World War I and his daily reflections on the Albert Memorial that he discovered the "vulgar error" of the realists--their false belief that problems of philosophy were eternal, and that different philosophies were different attempts to answer the same questions (A, 60). The first instance he cites of his own clear recognition of the truth about eternal problems came in political theory, where it became obvious to him that the political theories of Plato and Hobbes are not two theories of the same thing--the "nature of the state"--because there were genuine differences between the ideal states (and not just the empirical ones) being discussed in each case, ideals that are ignored in treating them as if each intended the same thing (A, 61). There is a relation between them, but the relation is not the sameness of an abstract

universal, but the sameness of an historical process; and the difference between one thing which in the course of that process has turned into something else (A, 62). Collingwood went on, he says, to apply this "clue" to the problems of ethics and metaphysics, and in the case of the latter it bore fruit in his ultimate discovery that metaphysics is an historical science (A, 63-65). And finally, he found that his discovery could be generalized to the whole field of philosophy: "By degrees I found that there was no recognized branch of philosophy to which it did not apply" (A, 67).

Later in the Autobiography (in Chapter XII, "Theory and Practice") Collingwood picks up the discussion of rapprochement again and spells out the nature of his reconciliation in ethics. In addition to his reconciliation of history and philosophy (as instanced in his reflections on the political notion of the state) he was also working on a rapprochement between theory and practice in order to counteract the "moral corruption propagated by the 'realist' dogma that moral philosophy does no more than study in a purely theoretical spirit a subject matter which it leaves wholly unaffected by that investigation" (A, 147). In so doing he subjected the familiar topics and problems of moral philosophy first to an historical treatment (to show, presumably, how the problem developed as an historical process wherein the differences were truly integral to it and changed the nature of the problem as it developed), and secondly to an analytic treatment (which, by criti-

cal argumentation, both differentiated the problem into its correlative parts, and then showed them to be aspects of one and the same identical entity). Naturally enough in a chapter on theory and practice, the example Collingwood used was one of action--first distinguished as moral, political, and economic, and then unified insofar as every action is moral, political, and economic--not separated into three classes, but seen as three characteristics, distinguished and yet united in any actual act (A, 148-49).

We have recalled these passages here to remind the reader not only of the anti-realist context of Collingwood's remarks about rapprochement, but also to recall the two phases (historical and analytic) of his earlier reconciliational philosophy. We have said enough in the previous section about the historical phase of his rapprochement methodology to give the reader a sense both of how he felt it should be carried out and what its intrinsic and unresolved problems were. In this section, therefore, we shall concentrate on Collingwood's "analytic" phase. In doing so we must pay heed to one further proviso:

These were the lines on which I treated the subject in my lectures of 1919. I continued to lecture upon it yearly during the whole remainder of my life at Pembroke College, with constant revision. The scheme I have just described obviously represents a stage in my thought at which the rapprochement between history and philosophy was very incomplete . . . . The rapprochement between theory and practice was equally incomplete. I no longer thought of them as mutually independent; I saw that the relation between

them was one of intimate and mutual dependence, thought depending upon what the thinker learned by experience in action, action depending upon how he thought of himself and the world . . . . But this was only a theoretical rapprochement of theory and practice, not a practical one. (A, 149-50).

If we are to approach this topic in Collingwood's early writings, therefore, in the spirit of the Autobiography, we must not only take into account the sense of the term "analytical" as used by Collingwood, but also the fact that he regarded this "analytic" to be incomplete. How it was completed (and the sense in which his early analytic was incomplete) Collingwood leaves to the reader to work out for himself (A, 149).<sup>1</sup>

The evidence from Collingwood's writings is insufficient to establish what the actual topic was to which he first applied his rapprochement method; although he lectured on ethics and political philosophy since 1919, his first publications specifically on these subjects were not until six years later (cf. "EPS," 1925), and by then both Religion and Philosophy and Speculum Mentis had appeared. While it is true that he treated the subjects in ethics and political science in these later publications much as he says he did in the Autobiography, for our purposes the earliest instance, in his pub-

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<sup>1</sup>The only further clue the reader has from the Autobiography is Collingwood's unreserved praise for his Essay on Philosophical Method, which he recommends as his "best book in matter; in style, I may call it my only book" (A, 117-18). The reader must conclude that as of 1933 rapprochement methodology was fairly complete.

lished writings, of rapprochement is in the area of religious philosophy. Not only is religion as a "unified life of all the faculties" the first published topic on which Collingwood exercised his early reconciliational technique, but it provides us with an index as to how that technique was modified between 1916 and 1924, when Collingwood once again dealt with the subject in Speculum Mentis.

## 2. Religion, Philosophy, and the Incomplete Rapprochement.

At the time of his writing of Religion and Philosophy (published in 1916, but written some time earlier--see RP, v) the analytic phase seems to be only recourse Collingwood resorted to in his treatment of philosophical problems, the historical phase being only implicit in what he was saying, not in what he actually did.<sup>2</sup> We have already seen an example of this analytic phase in Collingwood's treatment of the identity of philosophy and history. Consequently we expect him to begin with a pair of concepts presumed to be isolated or "separated" from one another. In this case the reconciliata (the

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<sup>2</sup>Actually Speculum Mentis, for all its discussion of history and its relation to philosophy, does not actually display in its compositional format any more concern for the historical development of its subject matter than does Religion and Philosophy, except that the former has that same vague reference to historical development of forms of experience as does Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind. But cf. SM, 50-55 (an "ages of man" analogy), and 21-38).

term we shall henceforth use for viewpoints to be held together in the relationship of rapprochement) are religion and philosophy. But from the first words of the book we are aware that the orientation of the discussion to follow is primarily philosophical:

This book is the result of an attempt to treat the Christian creed not as a dogma but as a critical solution of a philosophical problem. Christianity, in other words, is approached as a philosophy, and its various doctrines are regarded as varying aspects of a single idea which, according to the language in which it is expressed, may be called a metaphysics, an ethic, or theology. (RP, xiii).

Collingwood also specifies the sense in which he understands the terms "religion" and "philosophy," at least for the purposes of discussion in this book:

Just as every man has some working theory of the world which is his philosophy, some system of ideals which rule his conduct, so every one has to some degree that unified life of all the faculties which is a religion . . . . We apply the term religion to certain types of consciousness, and not to others, because we see in the one type certain characteristics which in the others we consider to be absent. Further investigation shows that the characteristic marks of religion, the marks in virtue of which we applied the term, are really present in the others also, though in a form which at first evaded recognition. (RP, xvii-xviii).

Collingwood did not follow up these clues about the presence of one form of consciousness in other forms until

Speculum Mentis,<sup>3</sup> and while it is interesting to note that the germ of his later doctrine of a "scale of forms" is present in this early discussion of the nature of religion, in Religion and Philosophy the strategy he follows is based not on the construction of a phenomenology of forms of experience, but rather on the analytic method of his earlier (and still incomplete) rapprochement. Therefore he begins with what already amount to theories of religion, but theories which treat of religion as if it had no direct relationship to philosophy. Furthermore it is to be noted that Collingwood does not start out with a definition or description of religion that omits its philosophical aspect (e.g. "primitive religions") and then try to derive philosophy from this description. He starts out rather with "anti-intellectual" theories of religion--religion viewed as (mere) ritual, as conduct, or as feeling--that is, theories that deny that religion has an intellectual element and therefore deny that it is identical with philosophy. Each

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<sup>3</sup>In addition to examining the relations of religion to philosophy, history, and conduct (morality), Collingwood recognized a "fourth question" concerning the relation of religion to art, but declined to deal with the issue in Religion and Philosophy, promising to discuss the nature of metaphor, prose, and the philosophy of language (all being in the province of art) in a future volume (RP, xvi). In Speculum Mentis he recalls this promise, and indicates to his readers the extent to which he felt the earlier work to be deficient (SM, 108, n. 1).

of these theories is then subjected to a critique, and in the process of denying the premise (that religion is mere ritual, mere conduct, or mere feeling, each without an intellectual element) he affirms the consequence that creed is not non-essential to religion.

(a) The claim of religion to be mere ritual is based on anthropology's examination of religions of lower culture, which purport to show that ritual is prior to creed. But Collingwood argues that aside from the issue of what relation there is between primitive and modern religions (which may be one of analogy only), the theory still lacks an account of how ritual practices arise in the first place. The necessary nature of ritual implies a grounding in fears, and the ritual act is performed because the primitive people assume the universe to be governed by certain powers, and that their acts will somehow please or influence these powers in ways beneficial to the tribe. But such a judgment about the nature of the powers that govern the universe is a primitive theory, and the belief that acts will influence that power is creed. (RP, 6-7; FR, 45-46).

(b) Similarly the view that holds that doctrine has little or no bearing on conduct, and therefore holds that religion is primarily a system of rules guiding conduct, ignores the fact that action relies on knowledge of the situation



which calls for application of the rule. There is no such thing as conduct divorced from knowledge or knowledge divorced from conduct. Furthermore the conduct that is being recommended presumes a judgment that certain sorts of conduct are good and others bad, which is a judgment based on creed: it is the presumption of the truth of the moral creed that results in the good act. (RP, 7-9; FR, 46-49).

(c) Finally, religion as pure feeling trades on the ambiguities of the word "feeling," which in some cases (as when it refers to very indefinite and indistinct states of mind) seems to rule out any truly intellectual element, but in others (as when it implies absolute and positive conviction coupled with an inability to offer proof or explanation of the conviction) it does not rule out knowledge per se but actually means the same thing as knowledge, albeit unreasoned. But in the first case one could hardly call such feeling religious, because it does not hold to any truth at all, being too indistinct and indefinite (not all indefinite states of mind are therefore religious, nor are religious states of mind indefinite). And if feeling just means emotion, it must at least admit to a kind of emotion that is appetite for the desired thing--in this case, God--and consequently presumes some knowledge of God as desirable. In any event religious feeling requires some intellectual element. (RP, 11; FR, 49).

It can be seen from these arguments that if there is any "reduction" of religion that is to occur, at least Collingwood will not be content to let this be the humiliating reduction of religion to a lesser form of experience. Whether he allows for a kind of exalting reduction by assimilating it to a "higher" realm remains to be seen. But these passages (and especially when taken with the perceptive analysis of Christian beliefs concerning the fall and redemption of man, in the concluding chapters of the book) show a refined sense of awareness of the subject matter of religion, and an unwillingness to have it sullied by inappropriate and reductive comparisons.

Now at this point the reader would expect (if the "analytic" follows the pattern of the discussion of the relation of philosophy and history) a criticism of the view that philosophy has no religious element, the implication being that if it is not the case that philosophy does not have a religious element, then philosophy must have an essential religious dimension just as religion must have an element of philosophy. In other words, insofar as philosophy is essential to religion and religion to philosophy, religion and philosophy mutually imply one another and are hence identical (that is, non-separate). But what one finds instead in Religion and Philosophy is an identification of the two by their object, coupled with a denial that there is any such thing as a separate "philosophy of religion"--separate, that is, from theology

or creed.

(T)he theory of knowledge or logic does not consider differences of the object, but only processes of the subject; and therefore there is no distinction between the philosophy of religion (as theory of religious knowledge) and the theory of knowledge in general. If there is a general philosophy of knowing, it includes religious knowledge as well as all other kinds; no separate philosophy is required . . . . If the philosophy of religion is indistinguishable from philosophy as a whole, what is the relation of philosophy as a whole to religion or theology? Philosophy is the theory of existence; not of existence in the abstract, but of existence in the concrete; the theory of all that exists; the theory of the universe . . . . Now if philosophy is the theory of the universe, what is religion? We have said that it was the theory of God and of God's relations to the world and man. But the latter is surely nothing more or less than a theory of the universe . . . . Religion and philosophy alike are views of the whole universe . . . . If religion and philosophy are views of the same thing--the ultimate nature of the universe--then the true religion and the true philosophy must coincide . . . . (RP, 15-18; FR, 53-55).

We have already seen that Collingwood identified history and philosophy in much the same way--as both dealing with "knowledge of the one, real world." This occurs, in fact, in a chapter in which the relation between history and religion is being discussed, and the implication towards which the reader seems to be compelled is that since religion and philosophy are identical, and since history and philosophy are identical, religion is identical with history. The conclusion of the chapter even suggests that science is also not anti-religious, and therefore, by implication, identical with religion, philosophy, and history.

It goes without saying that such a Mulligan stew of subjects is more than a reader can be expected to digest. To simply identify religion and philosophy seems not only to lead to the confused state wherein what can be said as proper to each is now predicable of the other (as if one could resolve an honest dispute about some aspect of reality by engaging in prayer or sacrifice, or that one might celebrate ritual syllogism on a Sabbath morning and thereby appease a reasoning god), but renders suspect the autonomy of all other forms of thought as well. If two kinds of knowledge are identified by reference to their object, and if there is no distinction in the processes of the subject whereby a "philosophy of" something and a theory of knowledge in general may be distinguished, then there seems to be no remaining way of distinguishing between two ways of knowing the same thing, and consequently between science, religion, history, and philosophy. But then on what grounds can one even distinguish between subjective processes of knowledge and objective correlates of these processes?

These consequences of his position are not altogether evaded by Collingwood, as we see in a later chapter of Religion and Philosophy where he argues as follows:

My imagination of a table is certainly a different thing from the table itself, and to identify the two would be to mistake fancy for fact; but my knowledge of the table, my thought of it in that sense, is simply the table as known to me, as much of the table's nature as I have dis-

covered. In this sense, my "thought about" the table--what I think the table to be--only differs from the table itself if and in so far as I am ignorant of the table's real nature. My thought of the table is certainly not something "like" the table; it is the table as I know it. Similarly, your thought of the table is what you know of the table, the table as known to you; and if we both have real knowledge of the table, it seems to follow that our thoughts are the same, not merely similar; and further, if the mind is its thoughts, we seem to have, for this moment at least, actually one mind; we share between us that unity of consciousness which was said to be the mark of the individual. (RP, 100-01; FR, 172-73).<sup>4</sup>

Even with the proviso that in life "real knowledge" or the knowledge of the real nature of something (even artifacts, judging from the example) is seldom if ever perfect, so that "in a sense, no two people ever do, or ever could, think or will exactly the same thing" (RP, 106; FR, 177), such an assertion puts an intolerable strain on the notion of identity. For even if my knowledge of the table were "real knowledge," it would seem strange to assert that my concept of the table is subject of predication in the same sense that the table is --and therefore capable of supporting articles placed on it,

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<sup>4</sup>In a footnote to this passage Collingwood denied that his argument placed him in an idealistic stance: "I believe that the argument I have tried to express contains little if anything which contradicts the principles of either realism or idealism in their more satisfactory forms." (RP, 101; FR, 173). It is interesting to note that in his later philosophy when he puts forward his theory of historical re-enactment, which makes a similar claim to the identity of mind as in the present paragraph, he also juxtaposes it against both realists and idealists--see IH, 282-302.

capable of physical destruction with sufficient mechanical force, etc. And to assert that we never have "real knowledge" of anything seems to grant so much ground to scepticism that the argument in point seems futile.

Since Collingwood's rapprochement program is precisely one of showing that two forms of thought are not "separate" but rather are "the same"--whether that sameness be the sameness of an historical process or the sameness of question to which they are the responses--it is clear that at the root of reconciliation philosophy is a notion of identity that on the face of it (from our above example) is under disruptive pressures which threaten to split it assunder. For (a) if "the same" means merely "not different," then when two forms of thought are said to be "the same" they are being said to be "not different," and in their indifference they are not only no longer two forms of thought (and so the comparison is fatuous), but they are also indistinguishable from nothing at all;<sup>5</sup> but (b) if "the same" means "similar in some, but not all characteristics" then when two forms of thought are said to be "the same" they are being said to be "similar and dis-

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<sup>5</sup>The situation is aggravated rather than ameliorated in the case of the forms of knowledge, since Collingwood specifies their objects, in each case, to be the "whole universe" or "all of existence," which leaves no room a parte objecti for a distinction between them. And since the forms of knowledge have been identified with each other and with philosophy, a distinction a parte subjecti is also impossible.

similar" in specifiably ways--which is precisely what Collingwood seems to be denying.

But lest we be charged with a case of unfair pillory, we hasten to add that Collingwood shows even in Religion and Philosophy that he is aware of the difficulty, and goes so far as to try to meet it head on. In the same chapter from which the table example is drawn (a chapter, incidentally, which deals with intersubjective identity as the grounds of possibility for religious unity of God, man, and universe) Collingwood distinguishes between an abstract and a concrete unity, and says that "the unity whose possibility we are concerned to prove is the fully concrete identification, by their own free activity, of two or more personalities" not as a universal condition but as an ideal (RP, 106-07; FR, 178).

A person is undoubtedly himself, and can never help being himself, whatever he does; but this merely abstract unity, this bare minimum of self-identity, is much less than what we usually call his character or personality. That is rather constituted by the definite and concrete system of his various activities or habits . . . . The same distinction applies to the unity of a society. In one sense, any kind of relation between two people produced a kind of social union and identification; in another sense, only the right kind of relation unifies them, and a different relation would destroy the unity. In the first case, their union is what I call the purely abstract unity; in the latter, it is the concrete unity that has to be maintained by positive and harmonious activity. (RP, 107-08; FR, 178-79).

Aside from the question of what the "right kind of relation" might be, or by what criteria one decides rightness and non-

rightness of relations, there is still the puzzling and as yet unresolved question as to what the distinction between abstract and concrete unity refers to. Collingwood's answer seems to rely on a modification of the relation of whole and part:

But is unity the same as identity? There seems at first sight to be a very decided difference between saying that two things are part of the same whole, and saying that they are the same thing; the parts of one thing seem to be themselves quite separate and self-existent things, possibly depending on each other, but each being what it is itself, and not the others; while the whole is simply their sum. We have already expressed doubts as to the strict truth of this conception . . . . (I)f a whole was to be knowable, it must be of such a kind that the parts are not simply added in series to one another, but interconnected in such a way that we can somehow say that each part is the whole. In that case each part would also be in a sense the others . . . . Each part has its own nature, its own individuality, which is in the strictest sense unique; and apart from the contribution made by each several element the whole would not exist. Change one part, and the whole becomes a different whole. Not only does the whole change, but the apparently unchanged parts change too. (RP, 108-10; FR, 179-80).

Collingwood uses the instance of any whole consisting of three parts, x, y, z--whether that whole be a machine with three working parts, a society of three members, a stanza of three lines, or a syllogism containing three propositions. In such a system the definition of the part x can only take the form of a definition of the whole xyz, since the "thing" itself is "only a relation, an interchange, a balance between the elements which at first we mistook for its parts" (RP, 112-13; FR, 182-83).



The attempt to evade this analysis of relations and relata by pointing to the difference between what a thing is in itself and what it is in relation to its context or the whole of which it is a part is also, Collingwood says, unsuccessful, since "the character or self of a thing, what it is, cannot be distinguished from its relations" (RP, 112; FR, 182). Even though its "internal relations" seem not to change when a change of context or of its "external relations" occurs, it is impossible to deprive a thing of every context (as one would presumably be forced to do to prove that what it is in itself is not affected by its context), so that one can do no more than to replace one context with another.<sup>6</sup> Whether the "context" be spatial or temporal does not greatly affect the argument, since "the history of a thing in the past and its capabilities for the future are as real as its present situation" (RP, 111; FR, 182).

But even this analysis of the relationship of parts to whole, although presumed to be correct and even essential for his argument, is regarded by Collingwood as a variety of abstract unity. It is merely the lowest possible sort of

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<sup>6</sup>Collingwood seems unaware that his argument at this point begs the question: to "change a context" does not ordinarily mean to deprive a thing of all contexts, so to assert the impossibility of the latter does not affect the argument that there is a difference between what a thing is in itself and what it is in relation to its context.

whole, the necessary, abstract unity of its elements. It is not yet the "contingent unity of co-operation" between consenting minds that is required for a community of persons. Since Collingwood wishes to show that all personalities are components of a whole (the universe) and therefore "necessarily identified with each other and the whole, that is, with the universe considered as homogeneous with them, an absolute mind, God" (RP, 114; FR, 184), this minimum, abstract unity, although essential, falls short of the mark; it leaves us with an abstract God.

(T)he error lies in mistaking this fundamental assumption for the final conclusion; in assuming that this elementary, abstract unity is the only one which concerns us . . . . To call this formless and empty abstraction "the Absolute" is merely to abuse language; and to suppose that this is all philosophy has to offer in place of the concrete God of religion is completely to misunderstand the nature and aim of philosophy . . . . The Absolute . . . is not a label for the bare residuum, blank existence, which is left when all discrepancies have been ignored and all irregularities planed away . . . . A real philosophy builds its Absolute (for every philosophy has an Absolute) out of the differences of the world as it finds them, dealing individually with all contradictions and preserving every detail that can lend character to the whole . . . . The formless and empty Absolute of this abstract metaphysic perished long ago in the fire of Hegel's sarcasm . . . ((as)) the pseudo-Absolute, the "night in which all cows are black" . . . . (RP, 114-16; FR, 184-86).

We shall return in a moment to what Collingwood understands by "the Absolute," but for now we wish to show that in contrast to the abstract Absolute Collingwood proposes a "concrete identity of activity":

A mind is self-identical in this sense if it thinks and wills the same things constantly; it is identical with another, if it thinks and wills the same things as that other . . . . Now these two cases are typical first of the self-identity of God, and secondly of his identity with the human mind . . . . Further, this divine mind will become one with all other minds so far as they share its thought and volition; so far, that is, as they know any truth or will any good. And this unity between the two is not the merely abstract identity of co-existence, but the concrete identity of co-operation. (RP, 116-19; FR, 186-88).

In Religion and Philosophy, however, Collingwood attempts little more than to show how such a unity is possible; since he has not built his Absolute "out of the differences of the world" as he found them, but rather built them out of abstract concepts by dialectical analysis, his philosophy of religion at this stage remains an unfulfilled promise. Furthermore the reader is left unsatisfied how there can be "other minds" at all, or how one distinguishes between the mind of God and the minds of men when they are thinking and willing the same thing.

We have covered a lot of ground since initiating our discussion about Collingwood's rapprochement philosophy, and it may be helpful here to pause and survey the territory. (1) We have seen that Collingwood claimed in the Autobiography that prior to 1932 he had only partially worked out his rapprochement philosophy, to the point where he saw that the relation between reconciliata was one of "intimate and mutual dependence." (2) As the first published example of this par-

tial reconciliation we took up the analysis of religion and philosophy in the book of that name, his first publication. (3) In contrast to the reconciliation of philosophy and history which we examined in the previous section (and found to involve an argument that showed history and philosophy to mutually implicate one another, and therefore to be "identical"), the reconciliation of religion and philosophy took a more complex and circuitous route. (4) The strategy of the latter argument turned out to rely on the epistemological assumption that forms of knowledge, and even minds, which intend the same object are identical--thereby identifying religion and philosophy as forms of knowledge about "all of existence" or "the universe," and incidentally identifying all other forms of knowledge as well. (5) Collingwood recognized that this was a kind of abstract identity, and attempted to correct this abstract notion of identity with a discussion of "concrete identity"--which turns out to mean a contingent unity of the activity of co-operation between minds. (6) Such an identity is the only true Absolute sought by philosophy and religion alike; therefore they are reconciled by sharing a common ideal object.

On route from reconciliation to Absolute we discovered a number of subsidiary issues, which we shall find of importance in considering Collingwood's further development of the notion of rapprochement. (1) In Religion and Philosophy, at least, Collingwood displayed both a remarkable sensitivity for

the issues confronting persons who attempt to reflectively understand their religious consciousness, and an equal obtuseness about the "division of knowledge" into provinces, to the point where the forms of knowledge--science, history, art--appear as species of the genus, "knowledge" (although he never explicitly says this). (2) But in trying to sort out the confusion that results from identifying forms of knowledge with each other, we discovered that for Collingwood there are levels of meaning for the concept of identity, just as there were levels of meaning to the concept of history. So when two reconciliata are said to be "identical" or "the same" one must carefully attend to which sense of "identity" is being used. We have observed at least three uses of the term so far: (a) a bare, abstract identity in which terms are related only as members of a class or genus; (b) a (dialectical) identity of whole and part, in which relations and relata are so intimately connected that any change in a part necessarily implies a change in the relations and in the whole, and vice versa; and (c) a concrete identity of mental activity, in which persons may cooperate in thinking truth or in doing good. The first two involve relations of necessity, the third a relation of contingency. The first two are also abstract, the third is fully concrete. (d) While the self-identity of the Absolute mind, or of God, is not specified as a fourth kind of identity, it is at least put forward as the limiting case of the concept

of identity--the self-identity of truth, in all its diversity, with itself (RP, 117-20; FR, 186-190). (3) For each sense of the term identity there corresponds a sense of the term "separate"--so that there will be (a) separate members of a class (abstract separation--entities treated as mere instances of a class), (b) separate elements of an organic whole (dialectical separation), and (c) personal separateness (concrete separation--if the unity of cooperation breaks down, for example). We would have to presume that a separateness or disunity in the self-identity of the Absolute mind or God would be impossible; the disunity would occur between God and man, and would fall into the category of concrete separation.<sup>7</sup> (4) Finally the reader is left to his own devices to decide what would constitute an instance of the first sense of the term, "identity," as well as its corresponding sense of separation, insofar as Collingwood's examples from the second meaning (what we have called dialectical identity and separation)--namely a three-part machine, society, poem, or syllogism (he even refers later to the stones forming the arch of a house)--seem to leave little room for an example of something that is not an "organic whole."

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<sup>7</sup>This issue is taken up by Collingwood in the concluding chapters of Religion and Philosophy in the discussions on evil, the self-expression of God in man (in the person of the Christ), and God's redemption of man (RP, 122-93; FR, 192-211, 251-69). These are interesting and occasionally profound chapters and utterly repudiate the thesis that Collingwood had neither interest nor insight into the nature of religious consciousness.

### 3. Speculum Mentis: Rapprochement and Developing Series.

Some of these themes and the issues they raise appear again in Speculum Mentis, and others in essays published between 1916 and 1926. In a footnote in Speculum Mentis Collingwood proposes that his chapter on religion be taken as a correction of the views he put forward in Religion and Philosophy, and says his "mea culpas" for the oversights of that earlier work:<sup>8</sup>

With much of what that book contains I am still in agreement; but there are certain principles which I then overlooked or denied, in the light of which many of its faults can be corrected. The chief of these principles is the distinction between implicit and explicit. I contended throughout that religion, theology, and philosophy were identical, and this I should not so much withdraw as qualify by pointing out that the "empirical" (i.e. real but unexplained) difference between them is that theology makes explicit what in religion as such is always implicit, and so with philosophy and theology. This error led me into a too intellectualistic or abstract attitude towards religion, of which many critics rightly accused me; for instance . . . I failed to discover any real ground for the distinction not only between man and God, but between man and man . . . . (SM, 108, no. 1; emphasis mine).

The way in which Collingwood revised the conception of his forms of knowledge and their relations is based on a more careful analysis of the language of art, religion, science,

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<sup>8</sup>The fact that Collingwood here and elsewhere explicitly acknowledges changes in his position on topics discussed in previous writings should alert the reader to beware of any claims by overzealous interpreters to find a radical consistency in all of his writings. It should also, however, be a warning to all who claim a "radical conversion" where no such change of heart is acknowledged explicitly by Collingwood. For an other explicit acknowledgement, see PA, 288, n. 1).

and history, as well as on a careful delineation of what the claims of any one form are (explicitly) as distinct from what the limitations of these claims are (implicitly) when seen from a "higher" viewpoint.<sup>9</sup> He withdraws his previous assertion that epistemology (in the guise of logic) "is a master-science having jurisdiction over the whole field of knowledge"--which he now regards as "pure intellectualism" (SM, 49); and he condemns all identifications of philosophy with religion, science, art, or history as "barren abstractions"

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<sup>9</sup>The "implicit-explicit" distinction, although singled out by Collingwood as very important and the essential difference between the argument in Speculum Mentis and that of Religion and Philosophy, is difficult to define in terms general enough to be acceptable to all levels of the scale of forms of knowledge as they are presented in the later work. Collingwood's characterization of the distinction tends to be in terms of mental dispositions. "In any given experience," he writes, "there are certain principles, distinctions, and so forth of which the person whose experience it is cannot but be aware: these I call explicit features of the experience in question . . . . On the other hand, an observer studying a certain form of experience often finds it impossible to give an account of it without stating certain principles and distinctions which are not actually recognized by the persons whose experience he is studying . . . ((for example)) theology makes explicit certain principles which are implicitly, but never explicitly, present in religious consciousness; and in general what we call philosophy reveals explicitly the principles which are implicit in what we call everyday experience" (SM, 85, n. 1). However in the course of the argument it becomes clear that what may be implicitly assumed in one form of experience (e.g. religion) may become explicit either in the next form (e.g. science) which appears as its successor in the developing series, or by the "dogmatic philosophy" of that form itself--the philosophy which is engendered by a form of knowledge when it attempts to justify itself as a total outlook on reality. Roughly, then, the "implicit-explicit" distinction is the distinction between something presumed and something asserted by the expression of a form of experience.



(SM, 246; cf. FR, 91). Having served his time on the Procrustean couch of logic, Collingwood is bent upon correcting his previous mistakes, and rises now to the occasion by roundly condemning the view that the five forms of experience are species of a genus, which may be substituted for one another or taken up in any order. They now form a series, and in this series there is an element of denial and distinction:

(O)ur forms of experience are not mere species of a genus, because each denies the others; and because they are not species they have not that indifference with regard one another which characterizes abstract logical classifications. They must form an order of some kind . . . . But what is even more important than the actual order is the suggestion of serial arrangement as such. For a series of terms implies that each term is as it were built upon or derived from its predecessor and therefore does not start in vacuo, is not wholly fresh embodiment of the universal, but is essentially a modification of the term before. Hence even if we only recognized three terms, and made a series by alternating them, abcabcabc . . ., there would be no repetition, for the second a would be not the mere first a again, but a modified by having been developed through b out of c; the third a would be a modified by the same process in the second degree; and so on. (SM, 55; cf. SM, 206-07).

We now see a glimmering of an answer not only to the question of what the way was in which Collingwood modified his original rapprochement philosophy, but also the way in which the "sameness of question" turns out to be not the sameness of a universal but the sameness of an historical process. The modification consists in the addition of a notion of what Collingwood would later call a "scale of forms" to the analytic

phase of his di-phasic (now tri-phasic) method of reconciliation. We shall see in a moment the radical way in which this modifies the notion of identity; but just on the analogy of his three-term system, it is clear from the comparison of this system with that offered in Religion and Philosophy that there is a shift of emphasis here from the mere assertion that the change of relations in a three-term system implies a change in the relata (in a system of dialectical identity) to the specification of how that change affects the relationship. The terms are related not merely "internally" (Collingwood avoids the "internal-external" metaphor in Speculum Mentis) but in an ascending series, in an order of development, such that when a term changes it is changed through the agency or mediation of another term in the series into something further which incorporates the others (its predecessors) into itself. But this is the way that Collingwood had defined historical change in his 1927 and 1929 essays on the philosophy of history: history is a process of spiritual development, a dynamic rather than static concept, in which ideas grow out of other ideas and modify these previous ideas while being modified by them (EPH, 73). The manner of identification of the forms of knowledge and the sameness of historical problems converge on the concept of a developmental series.

Collingwood is quick to reassure the reader that although the forms of experience and the stages of history dis-

play a developmental structure, the life of mind is "not the rotation of a machine through a cycle of fixed phases," and consequently one should not expect to have his nose held to a "dialectical grindstone" (SM, 56). It will be recalled from Religion and Philosophy that the "identity of cooperation" (which we now recognize as the identity of historical processes) was regarded as a contingent identity, and not a necessary one. Consequently it is not surprising that at the very beginning of a work which is to spell out the stages of development of a mind through successive forms of experience, stages which parallel the development of consciousness in mankind as a whole (cf. SM, 50-54), Collingwood should feel bound to deny that the relation between phases is one of compulsion or necessity--and this importation of contingency is a measure of Collingwood's distance from Hegel.

On the other hand (as will be recalled from our previous discussion of Speculum Mentis)--the test of each of these forms of experience (each of which claims not only to give the 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, 41)) is to be its inherent self-consistency. The "prize of truth" for which they all strive is to be gained by the form of knowledge which is self-consistent, or which proves its claim by "demonstrating the necessary inconsistency

of the other forms" (SM, 45). But then it would seem that the grindstone of dialectical necessity that Collingwood seems anxious to keep away from the noses of his readers is kept whirling a few inches away (perhaps to sharpen an analytical blade). How does a form of knowledge, which retains its claim to truth by demonstrating both its inherent self-consistency and the inherent and essential inconsistency of rival forms of knowledge--how does it do so without displaying itself as the necessarily true form of knowledge and the necessary successor to its predecessors? For if the other forms are inherently inconsistent, then it is clear that they cannot of themselves achieve ultimate truth, and therefore of necessity fail.

By now the reader should expect that the solution to the problem will more likely be to revise the notion of necessity than to withdraw one or the other of the pair of contradictory claims.<sup>10</sup> But to get an idea of how Collingwood actually viewed the manner in which such a series of terms are related we must (once again begging the reader's indulgence) take another look at the argument of Speculum Mentis. In so doing we shall deliberately take a different route from the one Collingwood laid out for his readers. Instead of beginning with artistic experience and proceeding through the

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<sup>10</sup>This is Rubinoff's strategy: see CRM, 61, 176-83. These passages are also the most flagrantly Hegelian in his whole book.

others until we reach philosophy, we shall begin where we left off in our discussion of Q-A logic, i.e., with science, and work first backwards to religion and then art, and then forward to history and philosophy.

Our reason for this strategy is primarily to test this new requirement for rapprochement: for if (a) the forms of knowledge constitute a series wherein each term is a modification of the one before, then in an analysis of a successor-form one should find traces of its predecessor--traces that will, when analyzed show how the successor-form is "built upon or derived from" its predecessor. Thus in the analysis of science which constituted much of our discussion of Q-A logic, we should be able to detect a religious element, and in the latter an artistic element. And if (b) there is no dialectical necessity involved in the series then when we progress from science to history the latter will resolve the inconsistencies of the former without being the necessary outcome of it, or necessarily implied by it. In short, when viewed retrogressively there will be necessary relations exhibited between terms in the series; when viewed progressively these relations will appear to be contingent.

One more final note before beginning our survey. From our discussion of the analysis of science in Speculum Mentis we notice that scientific consciousness is characterized in terms of (1) the sort of ideal object it intends to

grasp, (2) the faculty of mind by which it habitually operates, (3) its characteristic mode of expression, and (4) its fatal weakness, or inner contradiction, that renders it to be an unstable mode of knowledge. Besides these four, Collingwood further characterizes it (5) by the consequences it has for human action, insofar as it generates, when taken as a guide for conduct, a particular form of ethics. While important for Collingwood's rapprochement between theory and practice, and therefore another partial confirmation of his contention in the Autobiography that he sought to carry his program of reconciliation even into the realm of ethics and conduct, we propose to ignore this fifth aspect here in order not to further tangle the knotted threads of our argument.

#### 4. Speculum Mentis: Retrogressive Identity.

Science, as described in Speculum Mentis, is the conscious attitude of regarding its object always as an instance of a universal law (SM, 158-63). It operates by a faculty of understanding, which distinguishes between universals and particulars, and assumes that universals can be separated or isolated (abstracted) by thought and studied apart from its instances (SM, 166-67). Instances of such universal laws are not regarded as having mutual relations among themselves other than those specified by the law (SM, 162, 166-167). But scientific laws are not merely statements of what would be the case if certain uniform conditions obtain (the hypothetical-

deductive aspect of science), science also seeks to assert its laws as holding in the real world, and therefore referring to individuals or to the world of facts perceived by observers (the categorical-inductive aspect of science) (SM, 177, 183). In epigrammatic form, science is the form of consciousness which intends an object which can be expressed in universal, referentially true assertions.

Now it is not difficult to see that this sort of consciousness presupposes and depends for its existence on subordinate acts of consciousness. Scientific consciousness presupposes a distinction between universals (concepts, laws) and the particulars (perceptions, instances) to which they apply--a distinction, Collingwood insists, which is essential and irreducible for scientific thinking, given the sort of object (ideal) it intends.<sup>11</sup> But a distinction between a universal and something particular is a distinction between something merely entertained as a meaning (in imagination) and something to which this meaning refers as a real instance (in perception); it is not only an assertion, but an assertion with a referent, i.e., a real object (EPH, 135-36; cf. SM,

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<sup>11</sup>Collingwood states that "mathematics, mechanism, and materialism are the three marks of all science," but he reduces all three of these essential characteristics of science to the "assertion of the abstract concept"--they are all "products of the classificatory frame of mind" (SM, 167). For Collingwood's later view of what the characteristic marks of modern science are, see IN, 13-27.

238-39). It is, as we said, both hypothetical (a possible meaning) and categorical (referential). As hypothetical scientific consciousness is the exercise of making supposals, of entertaining questions and formulating hypotheses--all of which imply the consideration of an object without reference to its truth or falsity, or to its existence or non-existence. This is the defining characteristic of imaginary objects, and Collingwood's claim is that imagined objects are what the forms of consciousness known as religion and art intend. For art the entertainment and expression of imagined objects is necessary and sufficient to it as a mental activity; for religious consciousness there is the additional requirement that its objects be taken as truly existing--it is not indifferent to the existence of its object as is artistic consciousness (cf. EPA, 137-41).

Therefore it is clear that (1) if scientific consciousness requires that its object be expressed in scientific assertions, and (2) if scientific assertions essentially imply a distinction between universals and particulars, and (3) if this distinction demands expression in hypothetical assertions which (4) are not only entertained as possible meanings but also (5) are taken as categorically true, or as truly referring to particulars, and finally (6) if the latter two activities (that is, (4) and (5)) are characteristics essential to artistic and religious consciousness respectively, then (7)



we have demonstrated that scientific consciousness essentially and necessarily contains elements (or structures) that are characteristically religious and artistic.

If this is an acceptable summary of the argument in the first three portions of Collingwood's "dialectic of experience" it seems to be saying too much and too little at the same time. Is it not asking too much to expect us to believe that before a law of nature is taken to be scientific it must first be grasped artistically and then religiously--first painted by an artist and then worshipped by a priest?<sup>12</sup> This

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<sup>12</sup>Collingwood does point to an explicit inheritance of religion and art in science, but he presents it in the form of a mental disposition--a "bias toward abstraction." He writes: "This bias is allowed unconsciously to control its development . . . . Because the abstractness of science is a perpetuation of the abstractness of religion, science most naturally arises out of a religion which has not overcome this abstractness, that is to say, out of a non-Christian religion. Hence European science has its roots in the religion of pagan antiquity . . . . Science in the modern world is science Christianized, science fed by a religious consciousness in which the primary abstractness of religion has been cancelled by the notions of incarnation and atonement. This gives the distinction between the a priori science of the Greeks and the empirical science of the modern or Christian world. But religion, even in the form of Christianity, never really transcends its abstractness . . . . The aim of science is to avoid this fault; Greek science aims at avoiding the specific fault of Greek religion, modern science at avoiding that of Christianity, namely, its liability to misinterpretation in a sense which makes God an arbitrary tyrant, whose very gifts are an insult to a free man. The history of European science begins with the breakdown of a religious view of the world in the mind of ancient Greece, and the concepts of Greek science appear as a kind of depersonalized gods" (SM, 160-61). It appears that Collingwood would have agreed with Cornford against Burnet: "Principium sapientiae (quae scientiae) timor dei."

is something of the impression one gets by a forward reading of Speculum Mentis. But in reversing directions we see that it obviously is not what he has in mind. Collingwood is not speaking generically--he is not saying that one and the same object of consciousness is first taken as an art-object and then as a religious object and finally as a science-object. He is making what appears to be a logical point--that forms of consciousness and their characteristic modes of expression are bound to one another in a logically necessary fashion, such that in thinking scientifically one cannot help but also think (in an implicit way) religiously and artistically (but not necessarily vice-versa).

But then is this not saying too little? Our previous objection concerning the reduction of the forms of consciousness to one another as species of a genus seems to apply here as well. Surely in scientific consciousness there is an element of creed, if one takes creed as the form of expression of a consciousness which assumes its object to be real and asserts itself in statements about that object that are assumed to be true and distinct from other statements about it which are false. But to take the object of religious consciousness to be creed in this sense is to reduce religion to its mode of expression, and this would be an error as grievous as merely taking it as an event in the brain, insofar as both ignore what is properly and peculiarly being asserted by reli-

gious statements. Religion is not particularly concerned with objects sliding down inclined planes or the displacements of fluids by solid objects of a given weight; and science is not particularly concerned with the effect that natural laws will have on the moral behavior of those who believe in them. Furthermore religion expresses itself not only in credal assertions, but in exclamations, questions, petitions, demands, apologies, etc. By focusing on the mode of expression, and on only one mode at that, Collingwood seems to be ignoring what it is that is being expressed by that mode, and this is the sort of formalism Collingwood had criticized psychology for employing. And nothing is added by relating a mode of expression to a faculty of consciousness, since the same objection can be raised about the mode of consciousness which takes its object a certain way, but does not specify what is peculiar to the object it is so taking.

These objections would be more biting if it were not for the fact that Collingwood spends an entire chapter of Speculum Mentis trying to say what religion is, not only generically (as a form of consciousness sharing characteristics with other forms) but specifically. Religion is a form of consciousness which intends an object which is a unified whole (like the object of art), which is ultimately real (like the object of science and unlike the object of art), and which is taken as sacred or holy--that is, deserving of adoration (un-

like both science and art):

God, we are told by theologians, is the ultimate reality, conceived as spirit; spirit omnipotent, omniscient, creative, transcending all sense of immediacy, yet immanent in his church. But this language, well enough in theology, is very far from natural to religion . . . . From the simple and unsophisticated point of view of the religious consciousness, it is not the spirituality nor the immanence of God that is important, nor even his power or goodness, but his holiness, the necessity of falling down before him in adoration. This sense of the holiness of God is the explicit differentia of the religious experience. (SM, 118-19).

As in Religion and Philosophy, Collingwood is anxious not to characterize religion in a reductive fashion, so he is at pains not to be content, as some writers on religion had been, to describe "the holy" as a feeling of uncanniness for the divine. If it is a feeling, writes Collingwood, and one which is a universal characteristic of religion, "it must be bound up with its essential nature, and capable of being deduced from it" (SM, 119).

Holiness is to religion what beauty is to art. It is the specific form in which truth appears to that type of consciousness. As religion, therefore, is a dialectical development of art, so holiness is a dialectical development of beauty. Now religion is art asserting its object. The object of art is the beautiful, and therefore the holy is the beautiful asserted as real. . . . Further, holiness, like beauty, polarizes itself into the positively holy (God) and the negatively holy, that which we are forbidden to find holy or worship, the devil and all his works. But specifically, holiness is asserted as real, and therefore God is regarded as not our own invention, not a fancy work of art, but a reality, indeed the only and ultimate reality. Hence that rapture and admiration which we enjoy in the contemplation of a work of art is in the case of God fused with the conviction that we here come face to face with something other than ourselves and our imaginings,

something infinitely real, the ground and source of our own being. It is this fusion which constitutes the sense of holiness, and forms the basis and motive of worship. Neither the real nor the beautiful is as such the proper object of adoration: it is only the aesthetic attitude towards ultimate reality, or conversely the elevation of beauty into a metaphysical principle, that constitutes worship. (SM, 119-20).

Once again it is necessary to enter a caveat here against the possible misinterpretation of Collingwood's intent. In analyzing religion as a form of consciousness which intends an object that is defined by holiness, and then by defining holiness in terms of the object of artistic consciousness (the holy as the "beautiful asserted as real"), Collingwood is not simply saying that religion elevates an art-object, asserts its reality, and then falls down in worship of it. That he does not mean this is clear from his comments about idolatry:

(T)he enemy of religion is idolatry, or the attempt to worship an object which, however exquisite to the artist's eye, cannot claim to be the ultimate reality. The sin of the idolater is to worship his own works of art known to be such. This is not true religion, because true religion worships the real God, no mere figment of the imagination . . . . (I)n religion the mind becomes aware that it is in danger of illusion. God and religion are correlative; and to doubt the reality of God is to deny the validity and legitimacy of religion. There are no religions without a god or gods: what have passed by that name have been either philosophies, or religions whose gods have escaped the eye of the observer, or a kind of mechanical contrivance put on the market by a deluded or fraudulent inventor. (SM, 119-20).

In defining religious consciousness as the artistic object asserted as real, therefore, Collingwood is attempting to characterize what is actually a unified whole by means of terms drawn both (a) from a lower form of consciousness (art), which forms one of religion's distinguishable (but not truly separate) elements, and (b) from within that form of consciousness itself (the assertion of God as ultimate reality). But the lower term, in this case the artistic object, "the beautiful," is transformed into something different--into "the holy" or something deserving of worship. If "the beautiful" is taken generically, then "the holy" is a specification of that genus in such a way that the generic essence is modified by the specific difference of religious consciousness to the extent that it becomes identified with it: the genus, in short, is identified with the variable--the beautiful is asserted as real.

Now we have just seen that a very similar state of affairs appears to be the result of Collingwood's analysis of scientific consciousness. The genus provided by religious consciousness (creed: the assertion of the imagined object as real) is modified by what is specific to scientific consciousness (the principle of abstraction) to become not an object of faith and worship but an object of scientific inquiry--the conception of reality as particular instantiations of universal laws. And we see again from this analysis that the object

of religion (God as ultimate reality) is not taken over by scientific consciousness without modification: laws of nature are not merely the worshipped God reduced to the status of universals. The object of scientific consciousness takes the generic essence of religious consciousness as already abstract: it takes up only the notion of an imaginary object asserted as real and leaves aside the sacred or holy aspect of the object of religious consciousness. It becomes, in terms Collingwood does not employ, wholly profane science.

We see therefore a very important exemplification of what Collingwood's modification of the notion of identity was in Speculum Mentis. The relationship between forms of knowledge is as good an illustration as one can expect to find of what Collingwood meant by a "developing series" in which each term is a modification of the one before. It is also the basis upon which he will construct his analysis of a "scale of forms" in the Essay on Philosophical Method: "In a philosophical scale of forms the variable is identical with the generic essence itself" (EPM, 60). We do not have to proceed much further in our retrogressive survey before discovering another anticipation of a doctrine in the Essay on Philosophical Method: in a scale of forms there is no zero end of the scale, the minimum realization of the generic essence lying not at zero but at unity (EPM, 81). In this case the minimum specification of the genus, "object of knowledge," is the ob-

ject of artistic consciousness.

It is no accident that art occupies the primary position in Collingwood's survey of the forms of experience because to be an object of consciousness at all is to be entertained as an object in imagination, without which even perception is impossible (SM, 204-05; EPA, 57).

The first stage in this process ((viz. the life of spirit or awareness or consciousness)) is the life of art, which is the pure act of imagination. This is not only empirically the first stage observable in children and primitive peoples, it is necessarily the first stage. Awareness in itself . . . is an act of consciousness which presents to itself an object of whose relation to other objects it takes no cognizance . . . . (In religion that indifference to the distinction between real and unreal, which is the essence of art, is abolished. Religion is essentially a quest after truth and explicitly conscious of itself as such a quest. (EPA, 141).

Once again it is necessary to enter a word of caution to avoid a misunderstanding. Collingwood is not saying that art first asserts, then withdraws the aspect of truth or falsehood, or the reference to reality. Art is not asserting at all: its "apparent assertions are not real assertions but the very suspension of assertion"--and the non-assertive, non-logical attitude towards an object of consciousness, the indifference to its reality or unreality, is imagination (SM, 60). That is why art is prior to the other forms of consciousness, and even the discussion of its essential nature as the activity of imagination is not taking place from within artis-



tic consciousness itself, but is thought's way of describing its most primitive function.

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 . . . . Hence the relation between imagination and thought is that thought presupposes imagination, but imagination does not presuppose thought . . . . As thinking presupposes imagining, all those activities whose theoretical aspect takes the form of thought presuppose art; and art is the basis of science, history, "common sense," and so forth. Art is the primary and fundamental activity of the mind . . . . It is not a primitive form of religion or science or philosophy, it is something more primitive than these, something that underlies them and makes them possible. (EPA, 54-55).

But although artistic consciousness is the suspension of assertion (and it will be recalled from Chapter V that the suspension of assertion is one of the ways Collingwood defines a question and an hypothesis), it is not simply the "blooming, buzzing confusion" that William James ascribed to the world of pure sensation. Artistic consciousness has at least the coherence necessary to hold its object together as a single entity, and in so doing it makes a rudimentary distinction between beauty and ugliness. It is this minimal activity that permits us to call it consciousness or mental activity at all. Insofar as imagination is a constructive activity (which ultimately issues in the creation of works of art) it is a representative of mental consciousness striving to see its world as a whole, the whole in this case being the imagined object,

the work of art (SM, 63-65). And even though art proclaims its refusal to be bound either by any necessary relation to the world of reality, or by the restrictive, rule-governed world of thought, it nonetheless utilizes, at least implicitly the minimum realization of thought in its application of the principle of beauty:

Now this process of imagining a whole, or creating a work of art is . . . no mere rudderless drifting of images across the mind; it is a process of unification in which the mind strives to see its world as a whole, the "world" being just the work of art which for the time being absorbs the whole gaze of the mind . . . (T)he whole comes into imaginary existence only in the critical process of experimenting with its parts . . . . The law of this process, its guiding principle, is beauty . . . . Now art as such has nothing to do with principles or laws . . . . ((But)) beauty is not a concept. It is the guise under which concepts in general appear to the aesthetic consciousness. Beauty means structure, organization, seen from the aesthetic point of view, that is, imagined and not conceived. (SM, 65-66).<sup>13</sup>

The work of aesthetic consciousness, then, is the creation of coherence in its minimal form. "When one imagines," writes Collingwood, "one must imagine something; it must be a definite and not a self-contradictory imagination, and hence the necessary unity of the work of art" (SM, 70).

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<sup>13</sup> Although the general sense of what Collingwood is saying about beauty and art is clear, it is difficult to understand how beauty can be the "law of this process" of unification, "its guiding principle," and still not be a concept. Perhaps Collingwood is trying to present it after the fashion of Kant's a priori forms of intuition, space and time, which were also not concepts. Collingwood's later esthetic drops the notion of beauty altogether, while retaining the theory of imagination: see PA, 37-41, 137, and 149.

We see in the experience of art what Collingwood takes to be the minimum sense of unity--the identity of a coherent, imagined object in terms of structure or organization, its ability (from the point of view of consciousness) to be held before the gaze of consciousness as an object to it. To paraphrase Collingwood, to be one is minimally to be a coherent object of imagination, without consideration of truth or falsity, reality or unreality. But concern only for internal coherence is what is ultimately responsible for what Collingwood calls the "monadism of art:"

Every aesthetic act is an individual internally organized by the harmonious fitting-together of subordinate aesthetic acts . . . . Works of art always ignore one another and begin each from the beginning: they are windowless monads; and this is because they are acts of imagination, from which it necessarily follows that they are careless of mutual consistency and interested only in their internal coherence . . . . The work of art is a monad, and monadology is the philosophy of art. (SM, 71-72).

Since art as imagination is necessarily the fundamental form of consciousness, it is clear that we have reached the end of the line in our retrogressive survey of the forms of consciousness (at least those starting with science and its subordinate forms) necessarily presupposes its predecessors; each of the subordinate forms, that is, is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for its superordinate form, without which it could not be what it is. And although Collingwood is not altogether rigorous in exhibiting this dependence at all the levels of description we found him giving

of the forms of consciousness (i.e. as intentional structures, as objects of consciousness, as modes of expression, and as faculties of mind),<sup>14</sup> the main outlines of the rapprochement identity, when approached retrogressively, are clear--and its ideal limit is the minimal form of unity as the coherent object of imagination.

##### 5. Speculum Mentis: Progressive Identity.

When Collingwood begins the chapter on science in Speculum Mentis he summarizes the failure of both art and religion to fulfill the promise that they hold out as being complete and independent forms of consciousness. In so doing he takes up not what they are in themselves (forms of conscious-

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<sup>14</sup>While it is relatively easy to find passages in Speculum Mentis and elsewhere that illustrate the retrogressively necessary relationship of forms of consciousness, the basis for this relationship is given in terms of intentional structures (the way that consciousness intends its objects), faculties (imagination, understanding, faith, reason), and typical modes of expression (hypothesis, assertion, etc.), but not always in terms of their objects. When religious consciousness transforms "the beautiful" into "the holy" the transition between objects, while highly abstract, is fairly explicit. But when science takes up its object one might expect that "the holy" would now become "the true" or "the abstract universal" or some such entity. But Collingwood does not carry forward the analogy, perhaps because "the truth" is what is intended by all forms of thought as such, from science on up; or perhaps, again, because thought self-conscious of itself as such is best dealt with in its expressive mode in linguistic forms. But from the point of view of Speculum Mentis, Collingwood clearly felt that the different descriptive terms we have distinguished were just different ways of characterizing the same entities--art, science, religion, etc.

ness or intentional structures), nor what they intend as ideal objects, nor as faculties of mind, but the way they manifest themselves--art as imaginative expression, and religion as credal assertion. It is in this form that they most clearly show their failure to achieve fully satisfying results.

Art and religion, to the superficial observer, are forms not of thought but of language. Art . . . is simply language itself, language in its pure form apart from any meaning . . . . Art is not pure language, but thought failing to recognize that it is thought, mistaking itself for imagination. Religion is . . . a dialectical development of art, art realizing that it is not bare imagination but assertion, and then proceeding to misinterpret its own assertions and to suppose itself to be asserting the image or word when it is really asserting the meaning of the word. In a special sense both art and religion are thus linguistic functions, forms of expression rather than forms of thought. (SM, 154).

But if art and religion are both "phases in the history of a mind, preceding its attainment of complete mastery over the means of expression," science represents thought's completion of this development in the recognition that language is the servant of thought rather than either the whole of thought (as art assumes) or thought's master (as religion assumes) (SM, 155). Scientific consciousness explicitly distinguishes between metaphorical and literal meaning, and hence between thought and language (SM, 157). It does so by the assertion of the abstract concept, as we have already seen, and the historical locus of this event was in the world of post-Homeric

Greece, where scientific concepts appeared first in the guise of depersonalized gods (SM, 158, 160-61). Whereas (a) art fails completely to recognize the claim of thought on its conscious activity, being totally absorbed in the technique of expression, and (b) religion only minimally recognizes the claim of thought but misinterprets it by identifying thought with its own expression, language with reality, (c) science represents thought fully conscious of itself as thought, thought expressed rather than concealed (SM, 154-55).

From the point of view of the modes of expression of the forms of consciousness, then, each is an incomplete fulfillment of what thought is trying to achieve: each only partially conceives of an object which will fully satisfy its (the mind's) requirements. But when taken as ultimate and independent statements about what consciousness is, and what the relationship of consciousness is to its object, they are not only incomplete they are errors--mistakes that consciousness makes about itself and about its object. When made explicit by the labors of thought, these errors appear not as inadequacies of modes of expression but as actual contradictions within that mode. Thus art appears to non-assertively assert, religion to not mean what it says it means, and science appears to non-referentially refer (SM, 242-43; cf. SM, 311).

Now if one were of a formalistic cast of mind, which Collingwood clearly was not, one might easily demonstrate that from contradictory statements everything follows of necessity (because anything, including further contradictory statements, can be derived from any rule which allows contradictories to stand as simultaneously true). Therefore when any form of knowledge is shown to rest on a presupposition (when what it implicitly presumes is made explicit) that is inherently false, or self-contradictory, it would automatically rule out the possibility that any other form of self-consistent knowledge could proceed from it--and certainly not of necessity. Therefore from the collapse of one form of knowledge by self-contradiction no other form of knowledge can follow of necessity, and the progressive dialectical process, as we anticipated, would show no necessity: the relation of succession is not one of necessity but of contingency.

But this is not Collingwood's route. We saw in a previous chapter (Chapter IV) that Collingwood's commitment to an anti-realist position concerning the relation of knower and known necessitated the conclusion that any such error that consciousness makes about its object recoils on itself, altering the nature of conscious activity itself (SM, 241). When a form of consciousness is shown to express itself in an inconsistent manner, like the rift in the sail of a schooner, it need not abandon ship, because it has a greater resiliency

than strict logic might allow. It can repair its own damages by transforming itself into something that at first sight it was not--spontaneous and reflective thought. Therefore imaginative consciousness (art) can recognize that it is not utterly free of the imposition of thought, since it presumes a guiding principle of selectivity (the idea of relevance) in the construction of a coherent work of art (SM, 97). The consciousness of this controlling element in artistic creation is the birthplace of art criticism, and of esthetic philosophy (SM, 98-100). The distinction that is introduced is one of form and content, of the manner in which meaning in art is expressed as opposed to what is being expressed by that form (SM, 96). This distinction is the beginning of scientific consciousness,<sup>15</sup> and recognizing the danger that artistic consciousness may at this point cease to be itself and become science, esthetic philosophy--thought conscious of itself as art--resists the absorption of its primary form (artistic experience) by attacking science, perhaps in the form of an intuitionism that is read back into science as its (science's) essential nature (SM, 262). Esthetic philosophy "reduces all philosophical problems to terms of imagination or intuition," which describe the world as one of pure change, a monadic world in which every event is new in the sense of irrelevant

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<sup>15</sup>Notice that Collingwood here at least implicitly acknowledges that it is possible to pass directly from art to science--but only through the intermediary of some sort of explicit thought process, such as art criticism.



to what went before (ibid.).

The same dogmatic service of thought can be performed for the other forms of experience, and it is this polymorphous perversity (Collingwood of course does not use this phrase, apt as he may have found it) that prevents the phases of the dialectical series of forms of knowledge from becoming necessarily successive. Once a form of consciousness has at its disposal a battery of modes of expression (questions, assertions, supposals, etc.) provided by the capacities of thought, it can respond to the threat of destruction of itself by its own inner dialectic (self contradiction) either by becoming explicitly what it was only implicitly (rational thought, for example, instead of pure imagination; assertion instead of mere questioning) or by transforming itself into another form altogether (transforming the object of art into the object of religion, for example). Art can defend itself by becoming art-criticism or esthetic philosophy or it can allow itself to be absorbed by religion, science, or history as one of its essential constituents. Religion can develop a dogmatic defense as theology, science can develop a dogmatic defense as metaphysics and logic, and history (peculiarly enough, as we noted earlier) can develop a dogmatic philosophy in the form of realism; or each could be transformed in its successor

(SM, 260-87).<sup>16</sup>

We have at this point shown, therefore, how Collingwood, true to his epistemological assumptions, has maintained the contingency of the forward motion of his process of reconciliation between the forms of knowledge. Progressive rapprochement identity (according to the position proclaimed in Speculum Mentis, at least) consists in the unifying activity of a form of consciousness, deliberately attempting to preserve its integrity by overcoming errors which become manifest when its implicit assumptions are explicitly expressed. Since it can overcome error in a variety of ways, and with differing degrees of success, the possible modes of succession of thought forms are not fixed, and contingency in the progressive direction is preserved. The ideal limit to the process of overcoming expressed errors is total self-consistency, or absolute knowledge. Such a knowledge would not only grasp its intentional object in a non-misleading way, but would also account for the errors that it has made in achieving this totally adequate knowledge. Therefore it cannot intend an object that is utterly one, a bare blank identity (the abstract Absolute), but a unity-in-diversity, one for which differences are essential, a "concrete universal." But a concrete univer-

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<sup>16</sup> Although strictly speaking, tertium non datur, I see no reason why Collingwood would object to the suggestion that a form of experience could simply remain what it is, ignoring the contradiction within itself.

sal as an absolute object would have to be an infinite whole of fact, and a whole in which subject and object are not conceived as separate, but identified. Ideal maximal progressive rapprochement identity, therefore, is one of complete identity of subject and object.<sup>17</sup>

Since there is a whole battery of problems that arise in connection with Collingwood's concluding chapters of Speculum Mentis, especially concerning this progressive rapprochement identity in the form of "absolute knowledge," we propose to deal with these problems as a series of disputed questions with which we will close this chapter.

## 6. Disputed Questions.

(1) Why do forms of consciousness succeed one another? Collingwood's descriptive phenomenology does not set out to answer this question, but it certainly does "arise"--even on his own sense of that term. If there is no necessity (meaning logical compulsion) in the forward direction in a scale of forms of knowledge, then it would seem not merely contingent that they succeed one another but utterly accidental, even gratuitous or miraculous. Is the reader to assume a "nisus" or innate striving toward greater adequacy of thought? Does

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<sup>17</sup>Sources for the statements in this paragraph (the argument is nowhere, of course, stated as such by Collingwood) include: SM, 238-41, 288-97. More detailed, explicit references will be given in section 6, question 2.

thought have an inborn natural tendency to supersede or overreach or transcend itself and thus create different forms of itself? Is the logical requirement of self-consistency a motive force at all levels of consciousness?

In his "Outlines of a Philosophy of Art" (published one year after Speculum Mentis) Collingwood actually does posit a "nisis towards self-consciousness" at all levels of consciousness (EPA, 144), but in Speculum Mentis he does not give a consistent answer to this question. On the one hand, in the introductory and less precise passages of the book, Collingwood seems to lean towards the "nisis" thesis, if we may so call it, insofar as he assumes that the disease of modern man is self-alienation, the separation of the forms of experience one from another, and the cure for this disease to be their "reunion in a complete and undivided life" (SM, 36). But on the other hand, Collingwood denies that there is anything like a fixed "human nature" (SM, 296)--a denial he defended throughout his lifetime, and against which he threw all the weight of his reflections on the nature of history as a "self-making activity." But if there is no such thing as a fixed human nature, not even in the minimal sense of the term, then it is hard to account for any tendency for consciousness to become altered at all. In fact it seems utterly groundless to assert that consciousness would seek to grasp a fully satisfactory object unless there are fundamental and irreducible character-

istics of consciousness as an activity, and what could this be but a minimally essential human nature?

Collingwood does not acknowledge the problem at all in Speculum Mentis, the assumptions upon which it builds its argument being (1) that knowledge and consciousness exist (but in a divided state), and (2) that these mental activities claim fully satisfactory ideal objects (cf. SM, 39). It is not until he attempted a more complete analysis of mental activity in The Principles of Art and The New Leviathan that the emotive-expressive aspects of mental activity was fully integrated into his philosophy of mind.

(2) Even assuming that, for whatever reason, the forms of consciousness do succeed one another in a scale of developing forms, and in much the way Collingwood describes them, is there any end-point to the series? We have seen in our retrogressive survey of the forms of consciousness that there is a terminal point at the "lower" end inasmuch as the consideration by consciousness of a whole object, its mere entertainment by imagination, is the minimal sense in which intentionality can grasp its object at all. But we have also seen that the imaginary object is intended without consideration of its reality or unreality (i.e. without reference), and that this is the root sense of abstraction, insofar as the act which grasps an imaginary object does so by ignoring (Collingwood

will later say by "suppressing") its relations to any and all other objects. And abstraction, as the negative side of intentionality, is also the act by which consciousness cuts itself loose from its object, or sets the object apart as "separate" from itself. But this is the primitive act of separation of subject and object, the root error of realism.

From this analysis it is not surprising that the repair to the torn fabric of consciousness will be the reunification of subject and object by an act that is the very opposite of abstraction--viz. reconciliation. This in fact is Collingwood's strategy in Speculum Mentis: the termination of the scale of forms is philosophy (which succeeds history), and whereas history achieves concrete knowledge (and therefore rectifies implicitly the abstractness of science), philosophy achieves absolute knowledge (and therefore overcomes the last vestige of abstraction in the form of history's separation of subject and object--the historian contemplating a world of facts, and not fully aware that he is more than merely an observer of those facts) (SM, 238-39; cf. SM, 242-43, 311, and EPA, 143-44).

We shall see in a moment what the subject matter of this absolute knowledge is, and how it leads to further difficulties unresolved in Speculum Mentis. For now it is sufficient to notice that the argument that Collingwood provides

for us as a justification for the transition from history to philosophy does not appear to leave us with any alternative, and thus threatens the contingency of the forward dialectic. He not only argues (a) that if the distinction or separation between subject and object is invalid, then the last veil hung between the mind and its object falls, revealing (not Salome but) the mind itself in mirror reflection--the "speculum mentis" of his title; but also (b) that on either of two mutually exclusive alternatives, the result (the identity of subject and object) follows:

If subject and object are opposite, then they can only exist in synthesis: well and good. But if they are distinct concrete facts, they both fall within the world of fact, and of this world it remains true that everything in it determines the whole and everything else, it follows that subject and object are just as inseparable on this hypothesis as on the other. For the concept of the world of fact as the concrete universal has destroyed any distinction between a logic of opposition and a logic of difference.<sup>18</sup> The fundamental principle of history itself, namely, the concreteness of the object, thus makes it impossible for the object to ignore the subject, and compels us to recognize an object to which the subject is organic, in the sense that the subject's consciousness of it makes a real difference to it as a whole and to all its parts . . . . Being known, whether truly known or erroneously known, must make a difference to the object: to deny this . . . is to turn one's back on concrete thought and revert to the fallacies of abstraction. (SM, 244; emphasis mine).

With this passage it appears that the veil is not so

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<sup>18</sup>Collingwood here anticipates another doctrine of the Essay on Philosophical Method: "the kind of opposition which is found among philosophical terms is at once opposition and distinction" (EPM, 75).

much dropped as torn down, revealing not only the mirror of the mind but Collingwood's own presuppositions, and it becomes clear that the position he is advocating is naked epistemological idealism (albeit of an unusual variety). The suspicion (if one still needs convincing) is further confirmed in a later passage in a section dealing with the historical form of dogmatism, in which Collingwood praises German idealism for killing "scientific realism--the popular philosophy of today--as dead as a door nail" (SM, 287).

But the admission also threatens Collingwood's entire philosophical enterprise in Speculum Mentis. For if the forward movement of the dialectic of experience is not propelled by necessity, then the final transition, even more so than all the intermediate ones, seems hypothetical at best and arbitrary at worst. But the above passage, as the underlined words show, seems to contradict the thesis that the dialectical progression is not one of logical necessity.<sup>19</sup> The reader is shot as

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<sup>19</sup>Cf. SM, 292-93: "Not that such creation of an external world is capricious. The mind cannot simply think whatever it pleases, or even imagine whatever it pleases. It is bound by the laws of its own nature to this extent, that even though it can deform its nature by misconceiving it, it can never deform it out of recognition, because misconceiving is after all a kind of conceiving. Its scientific concepts, its religious imagery, its aesthetic imaginings must grow out of the soil of fact, and that fact is just its own nature as that stands for the time being. This necessity of all its actions, ignored in the life of imagination, is though ignored not done away. It is transformed, by being ignored, from a rational necessity to the blind necessity of instinct . . . . The discovery of necessity . . . is the achievement of the religious consciousness; but this necessity is there from the first."



from an historical cannon into the realm of idealistic philosophy.

We shall see in the next question that Collingwood's attempts to escape from the consequences of his own argument by denying that his position commits him to a metaphysical form of idealism are not convincing enough, as they stand, to exonerate his "absolute knowledge" from self-contradiction, and consequently from the necessity of positing even a further form of consciousness to repair the damage.

(3) Does philosophy have an object? The reader of Speculum Mentis is well aware that Collingwood wants philosophy to be a form of knowledge that (a) is self-consistent, (b) is self-consciously reflective, and (c) achieves the object of self-knowledge in a manner that escapes, or overcomes, the errors of subordinate states of consciousness (SM, 45-46, 247-49). We have just seen that Collingwood hopes to fulfill these conditions in the guise of absolute knowledge. By asserting that the differentia of absolute knowledge is the identity of subject and object (SM, 249), Collingwood argues that he has found a kind of knowledge that fulfills all the requisite conditions. (a) If it is identical with its object, there is no "externality of the object," and therefore no place for necessary inconsistency to conceal itself. And (b) so also it is not knowledge of an object that is other

than itself, but is rather that object knowing itself. But (c) the problem of inconsistency arises once again the instant one attempts to see how such a knowledge achieves its object in a manner that escapes error.<sup>20</sup>

The reason for this is that the instant one attempts to import any content into the abstract formula "the identity of subject and object" the air becomes murky with the gaseous remains of previous errors. The object of philosophy, he says, is not that of art, religion, science or history because each of these forms of knowledge intend an object that is assumed in some sense to be independent of the subject (SM, 306-09). Yet what the philosophical form of consciousness reflects on is nothing other than the succession of worlds created by art, religion, etc.

In an immediate and direct way the mind can never know itself: it can only know itself through the mediation of an external world, know that what it sees in the external world is its own reflection. Hence the construction of external worlds . . . is the only way by which the mind can possibly come to that self-knowledge which is its end. (SM, 315).

Absolute knowledge, therefore, consists in nothing more than a survey of the succession of errors by subordinate states,

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<sup>20</sup>In fairness to Collingwood it should be pointed out that he says that absolute knowledge is not secure from error, but rather it is called absolute because "in it there is no element of necessary and insurmountable error" (SM, 295).

recognized as such by a form of consciousness that takes its object to be nothing other than itself. But each of these subordinate forms of consciousness when recognized as illusory (erroneous portrayals of an object separate from the mind which contemplates it) are absorbed into philosophy: there is no "map of knowledge" because "there are no autonomous and mutually exclusive forms of experience" (SM, 306). Philosophy is therefore the consciousness of something which is also the consciousness of nothing.

The same conclusion follows if one proceeds in another direction--from a description of absolute mind. Here Collingwood's rejection of all possible content is even more sweeping. He says that whether the life of the spirit be described by a group of categories, a group of laws, a group of presuppositions, a world of objects, or a series of stages, it is an erroneous description of absolute knowledge because the descriptive terms are "versions of a single error: the error of abstraction, of failing to realize that subject and object, condition and conditioned, ground and consequence, particular and universal can only be distinctions which fall within one and the same whole, and that this whole can only be the infinite fact which is the absolute mind" (SM, 310). But the recognition of this "infinite fact" is an act which "abolishes the notion of an external world other than the mind" (SM, 310). But then it would seem that the infinite world of fact is

abolished with the external world, the baby discarded with the bath water, and absolute knowledge is left with nothing to contemplate.

Collingwood's attempts to evade the contradictory aspects of the concept only tend to add to one's puzzlement. For example he says that the abolition of an external world other than mind does not imply the abolition of the distinction between subject and object:

These distinctions are only abolished by the coincidentia oppositorum which is the suicide of abstract thought, and conserved by the synthesis of opposites which is the life of concrete thought . . . . But in abolishing the notion of an external world other than the mind we do not assert any of the silly nonsense usually described by unintelligent critics as idealism. We do not assert that the trees and hills and people of our world are "unreal" or "mere ideas in my mind," still less that matter is nothing but a swarm of mind-particles. The very essence of trees and hills and people is that they should be not myself but my objects in perception: they are not subjective but objective, not states of myself but facts that I know. None the less, my knowing them is organic to them . . . . They and I alike are members of one whole, a whole which the destruction of one part would in a sense destroy throughout . . . . (SM, 310-11).

But then what is this "whole" in which "subject and object are identified" and which nevertheless is one for which externality is an illusion; which is an "infinite world of fact" and yet not "one stupendous whole" (SM, 299)? How does a synthesis of opposites differ from a coincidence of opposites, unless the identity that is that synthesis is identifiable, describable, recognizable? If absolute knowledge is self-knowledge, and if

in it subject and object are identified, and if self-knowledge is only possible through the intermediation of subordinate forms, then how is it possible for objects of consciousness not to be "mere ideas in my mind"? Is it any wonder then that in the "progressive reduction of art, religion, science and history to philosophy" not only is it the case that "each one of these lives disappears; but philosophy itself disappears as completely as any" (SM, 293), leaving not so much as the smile of the Cheshire cat?

Now one might grant that what Collingwood is dealing with in these enigmatic passages is a mystery surpassing understanding, the mystery of self-consciousness and its existence in a world that appears external to the mind which nonetheless knows it. One might grant that in grappling with such a mystery one cannot help but lapse into forms of speech that are contradictory, the sort of language familiar to mystics and spiritualists. One might be so lenient with him, were it not for the fact that Collingwood himself is claiming consistency for what he is saying, that he uses logical criteria for deciding if the claims of consciousness can live up to their expressed performance, and that what he has led the reader of Speculum Mentis to expect is a coherent account of what it means to be a fully adequate form of knowledge.

Therefore we cannot rest content with accepting this state of affairs as a fitting conclusion to his search for rapprochement. We have the right to demand that if a "higher" form of consciousness is itself inconsistent on logical grounds, if it cannot live up in its performance to what it had promised, we must either (a) declare it to be an exception to the rule of consistency, or (b) posit an even higher state of reflective consciousness to further repair the damages. But it is easy to see that so long as a state of consciousness is distinct from its object, alternative (b) leads to an infinite regress, and therefore the goal of Speculum Mentis (and progressive rapprochement) will be forever frustrated, because self-knowledge will never be possible: it involves a contradiction in terms. And the first solution (a) acknowledges that the criteria of consistency (a supposedly higher form of consciousness--absolute knowledge) be affirmed as itself inconsistent. But then why not absolve any of the lower forms from an equivalent necessity to be self-consistent? Why not stop the series with history, for example? What need is there for philosophy?

As we shall see in a future chapter, Collingwood's solution was to opt for alternative (a), which is what we might expect for someone who felt himself to be committed to the Socratic view of philosophy as self-knowledge. But in taking this route Collingwood provided philosophy with one of those

rare occurrences--a bonafide metaphysical paradigm. If the criteria of consistency is itself inconsistent it may be so either by (1) asserting something to be both true and false at the same time and in the same manner, or (2) by asserting something that is neither true nor false. In the Essay on Metaphysics Collingwood took the latter option, and spelled out the consequences of this doctrine as a theory of "absolute presuppositions" which are the basis for truth and falsity without being themselves true or false (EM, 21-33).

(4) If absolute knowledge collapses for want of a coherent object, how are the various forms of consciousness described in Speculum Mentis reconciled to one another? Or does Collingwood's early rapprochement philosophy end in complete disaster? Is retrogressive identity the only acceptable basis for rapprochement?

We have had occasion in previous chapters, and this chapter is an extension of these reflections, to remark on the peculiar usage that Collingwood has for terms that appear as key words in all of the contradictory texts cited above-- "other than . . . , separate from . . . , identical with . . . , the same as . . . ," etc. These terms, and the understanding of them in context, count greatly toward contributing to the sense or nonsense of what Collingwood is trying to say in these highly elliptical and abstract passages. It is also

crucial for an understanding of rapprochement philosophy, since the entire effort of reconciliation is to show that the reconciliata are not "other than" or "separate from" each other, but are rather "identical" or "the same as" each other as parts of a "concrete whole."

Now we recall from section 2 of this chapter that in Religion and Philosophy four sorts of identity can be distinguished--abstract, dialectical, concrete, and absolute. The first two were bound, we noted, by relations of necessity, the latter two by relations of contingency. We also noted that each had a corresponding sense of "separate." If we come fresh from this discussion to the present problem in Speculum Mentis, we notice several interesting shifts in meaning, and as usual with Collingwood, a small investment of careful attention to these shifts yields dividends for the interpretative speculator.

If we return, for example, to the transition from history to philosophy we notice that the object of history is taken to be the "concrete universal" and that this "infinite whole of fact" is taken to be an object that ostensibly satisfies the mind:

There is thus no feature of experience, no attitude of mind towards its object, which is alien to history. Art rests on the ignoring of reality: religion, on the ignoring of thought: science, on the ignoring of fact; but with the recognition of fact everything is recognized that is



in any sense real. The fact, as historically determined, is the absolute object. The mark of the absolute object is individuality, for individuality is concreteness. The object as individual is the whole of what exists, and this is concretely articulated into parts each of which is again individual, and so to infinity . . . . The object as a system of fact so organized, is objective throughout, for every part is a true microcosm, and is truly infinite . . . . This absolute whole is the concrete universal . . . . It is the system of systems, the world of worlds . . . . The principle of its structure is not classification, the abstract concept, but the concrete concept, which is relevance, or implication . . . and the logic of history is the logic of the concrete universal. (SM, 218-21).

Aside from the fact that it is hard to see why an absolute mind knowing such an object would not be "one stupendous whole" (SM, 299) if its object is a "system of systems" and a "world of worlds," we notice an additional peculiarity in this passage. The description of the concrete universal corresponds fairly closely to the description of both dialectical and concrete identities as we discovered them in Religion and Philosophy. (1) The relations and relata are connected not as abstract particulars subsumed under an equally abstract genus, but as parts of a whole such that the parts reflect the whole and the whole reflects the parts--therefore a dialectical identity. But (2) they are also described as concrete in the sense of individual--and thus (like the identity of cooperation between minds in Religion and Philosophy, wherein the two minds share that unity between them which is taken to be the mark of the individual, and therefore become one mind) a concrete identity. If Collingwood is truly press-

ing these two sorts of identity into doing service in the single notion of the concrete universal, then it is not surprising that we should find in it relations of both necessity and contingency, since dialectical identity involved relations of necessity, and concrete identity involved relations of contingency. In the concept of the concrete universal, then, we have an attempt to express the overlapping of two senses of identity; it is therefore an instance of what Collingwood will later call the "overlap of classes" in his Essay on Philosophical Method (EPM, 26-53). Which brings us to our next question.

(5) Is there any way that absolute identity as the ideal for progressive reconciliation can be made intelligible? Unfortunately the suggestion from the last paragraph, i.e. that the concrete universal as an overlap-concept might be expanded to become the absolute object, runs headlong into the subject-object contradictions we have been at pains to reconcile. On the one hand the concrete universal turns out to be the absolute object, thus accounting for the fact that the identity of history and philosophy, while a "barren abstraction" like all such identifications, is less misleading than the others (SM, 246). On the other hand the object of history fails to be the object of philosophy, because the historical consciousness fails to be fully aware of the identity of subject and object. History as a separate form of con-

consciousness fails to apprehend the concrete universal (an infinite whole of fact) because of a remnant of the original sin of the mind--the abstract separation of subject and object (SM, 237-38); the historian simply cannot grasp an "infinite given whole of fact," and therefore in confronting the the panorama of history and the virtual infinite of historical evidence the historian must select his materials, arrange them into periods, etc.--all acts of abstraction.<sup>21</sup>

It is at this point that Collingwood introduces his hypothetical identity of subject and object by an act of absolute consciousness: "If therefore the infinite given whole of fact is the nature of the knowing mind as such, our problem is solved, and the possibility of knowledge is vindicated" (SM, 241). Once again we are brought to the brink of complete disaster for Collingwood's voyaging vessel of consciousness: the fabric of his mainsail is, as we have seen, ripped from top to bottom by inner contradiction.

In Religion and Philosophy, at least, he left an escape route open in the form of the Absolute Mind as God, with whom men may contingently be united through identity of pur-

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<sup>21</sup>Collingwood's description of historical abstractness is almost Heideggerian: "History, which seems to be essentially remembrance, is only possible through forgetfulness, a forgetfulness which in destroying what it takes away makes it impossible for us ever to understand what is left" (SM, 236).

pose with Jesus Christ. In Speculum Mentis this door also seems to be shut, both by his explicit assertion that the absolute mind is the mind of individuals and not that of some "world spirit" which he rejects as a "myth" (SM, 298-99), and his affirmation that the absolute mind is the mind of each of us (SM, 298).<sup>22</sup>

Fortunately, there is more than one way to reach absolute knowledge, and while we have been preoccupied with a discussion of consciousness and its objects, we have lost sight temporarily of another approach to the subject--one which Collingwood himself, in his haste to reach the absolute

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<sup>22</sup>Once again, in fairness to Collingwood it must be said that in this passage he says that "the mind of which we are speaking . . . must at least be the mind of each of us . . ." (SM, 298), thus leaving the way open for the insertion of a higher mind which does not share the inherent failing of human nature. But in a passage where the life of absolute mind is described by means of the religious metaphor of the fall and redemption of man, he seems to reject this possibility. The metaphor likens the fall of man to the loss of absolute knowledge through an act which forever separates subject and object, and redemption to the regaining of this knowledge through an act of divine transcendence--the incarnation. In his fallen state man fails to achieve self-knowledge: "not knowing himself as he ought to be, he cannot know himself as he actually is. His error is implicit just because it is complete" (SM, 269). However Collingwood criticizes the metaphor as having one flaw: the "transcendence of God." He has also asserted that "no one can worship the absolute" (SM, 151), and furthermore that the point of entry of God into a philosophical system marks unerringly the point at which it breaks down (SM, 269). Finally, the reader might also recall that Collingwood maintains that there is no fixed human nature, so that the imagery of the fall is further flawed insofar as it is inapplicable to man.

standpoint, may have overlooked. We noted above (section 4) that in the beginning of the chapter on science Collingwood called art and religion "forms not of thought but of language" (SM, 154). We have also seen him carry out his analysis of the explication of implicit errors of successive forms of consciousness in terms of their linguistic forms--expression (art), assertion (religion), etc. Even his discussion of knowledge as question and answer tends to focus on the language of conditionals, hypotheticals, assertions, and implications. In this discussion Collingwood drops an intriguing hint which is later picked up in his discussion of the nature of philosophical thinking. Discussing symbol and meaning in his chapter on religion, Collingwood writes:

To distinguish a symbol from its meaning is to put oneself in the way of explaining or translating the symbol. Now it is a matter of common observation that religion never explains itself . . . . To ask for explanations is the mark of extreme sophistication; in other words, it is the mark of the life of explicit thought . . . . Art is untranslatable, religion cannot translate itself. Art cannot be translated because it has no meaning except the wholly implicit meaning submerged, in the form of beauty, in the flood of imagery. Religion cannot translate itself not because it has no meaning . . . but because, although it has a meaning and knows it has a meaning, it thinks it has expressed this meaning already. And so it has, but only metaphorically; and this metaphorical self-expression, this fusion of symbol and meaning, requires translation . . . . For literal language is only language recognizedly metaphorical . . . . (SM, 128-30).

We have seen that in his apology in Speculum Mentis for the sins of Religion and Philosophy, Collingwood pointed

to the failure to recognize the distinction between symbol and meaning in religion as his major oversight in that earlier work (SM, 108, n. 1). And we also noted that when he originally published Religion and Philosophy he deliberately declined to deal with the issue of religious language (RP, xvi). And we have seen that in Speculum Mentis the distinction appears as the singular way that the error implicit in religion is made explicit--religion "asserts the reality of what is only a symbol and thereby treats a symbol as though it were a concept" (SM, 153). The same might be shown for all the other forms of consciousness: each manifests its latent error in the form of inadequate or self-contradictory expressions. Not only religion requires translation, it seems, but all the forms of consciousness: when science, for example, achieves explicit thought, it does so by means of its ability to express meaning in several ways, by means of overlapping metaphors in the form of alternative hypotheses and equivalent mathematical expressions, thus overcoming the fixed formulas of religious dogma (cf. SM, 155-57).

In the chapter on philosophy this line of thought is picked up again, and provides us with a possible key to unscramble many of the paradoxes of absolute thought:

We have hitherto allowed ourselves to say that in art, religion, and so forth the substance of truth was present, but was concealed in an inadequate form: that, for instance, religion actually solved the riddle of life

but presented its solution in a mythological form. This implies that the task of philosophy, regarded as the philosophy of religion, is the simple translation of this solution of the riddle of life out of the language of mythology into that of philosophy . . . . Translation itself is based on the fact that the meaning takes new colour and shines with a new light when we express it in different words. To set the meaning as an abstract self-identity over against the language makes translation pointless: to swamp it in a mere immediate union with the language itself makes translation impossible . . . . (T)hought in its concrete form is not indifferent to its own choice of language. It realizes that an unsuitable linguistic form affects its own inmost being, and that what we have called merely formal error is in reality material and essential error. Our distinction between formal error and material error was, in fact, only an abstract way of stating the very important fact that no error is wholly erroneous, but is always capable of a dialectical development into truth by simply bringing to light what is already implicit in it: what the thinker, as we paradoxically say, "really means," but "does not know that he means." This process of translation into progressively adequate language is simply the dialectical self-criticism of thought. (SM, 252-53).

I have quoted this passage at length because it is so important, so capable of being overlooked,<sup>23</sup> and so pregnant with possibilities. For (1) if philosophy is the process of making explicit what is implicit in other modes of thought, and (2) if the implicit errors of these modes of consciousness are only made explicit when expressed or translated into language, and (3) if the dialectical development of error into

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<sup>23</sup>Collingwood himself seems to have overlooked its significance, both in the conclusion of Speculum Mentis, where the suggestion is not followed up, and later in The Principles of Art, where the significance of language for thought and the role of philosophy as translation appear as discoveries, rather than as a development of a line of thought already initiated ten years earlier. Cf. PA, Chapter XI, pp. 225-69.

truth is a process of translation into progressively more adequate language (the dialectical self-criticism of thought), then it is clear that (4) absolute knowledge in the form of philosophy is the translation, by dialectical self-criticism, of expressions of subordinate forms of consciousness, into increasingly more adequate language. One is tempted to say (as Collingwood does not) that the object of philosophy is expressed in absolute language--i.e. language purged not of all error but only of its element of necessary and insurmountable error.

What such a language would be like is a matter for speculation, although Collingwood's later writings provide us with a few clues. It would have a peculiar grammar and the Essay on Philosophical Method and the methodological chapters of the Essay on Metaphysics are attempts to provide us with an informal account of what that grammar is like. It will deal with problems of the sort provided by art, by science, and by history, and The Principles of Art, The Idea of Nature, and The Idea of History are examples of what it would sound like when these problems are translated by philosophical consciousness into a more adequate language. And it would attempt to formulate an idea of what an object would be like that would totally satisfy the mind, and these reflections are presented in the Essay on Metaphysics--Collingwood's last word on the religious foundations of contemporary thought.



But aside from what an absolute language would be like, it is clear that the conception outlined in the quotation above has the potentiality for clarifying some, if not all, of the difficulties we found with the notion of absolute knowledge. (1) If the differentia of philosophy is taken to be the identification of subject and object, the difficulties with this conception arise when it is described in terms of consciousness and its object--the stumbling block always being self-consciousness. But if absolute knowledge or philosophy is described not in terms of consciousness but of language, then this particular difficulty disappears: language is quite capable of being self-referential, of discussing and describing itself, and of introducing modifications to overcome errors in the expression of its more primary forms (e.g. "natural languages"). Not only are subject and object identified insofar as both are embraced within the same whole--a world of language in which pronouns, reflexive forms, and self-referential assertions are all possible; but the subject is also both a receiver of meaning and a creator of meaning in this world. Therefore a change in one part (e.g. the creation of a new meaning--a poetic metaphor, a new scientific hypothesis) necessitates a change in the whole (the interconnected world of meaning) and in all the other parts (related meanings). Since the subject here is a user of language, he is identified with objects not immediately (he does

not actually "become" the object) but through the mediation of subordinate expressive acts--through the unreflective use of the language of art, religion, science, and history. He becomes one with his object not actually but virtually, symbolically, by an identity of meaning.

(2) As a world of language the "concrete universal" (as expressed judgment) could understandably be a "world of worlds" and a "system of systems." As an expressive form characteristic of philosophy it contains elements both hypothetical (calling forth alternative possible meanings) and categorical (in its referential determination of a given meaning); and in philosophical discourse the concrete universal can be engaged in questioning (like art), answering or asserting (like religion), abstracting (like science) or referring (like history). And it can claim adequacy at all these tasks without being "one stupendous whole," since not all entities are linguistic.<sup>24</sup> And even though not all entities are linguistic, there would still be no externality, no element of necessary and insurmountable error, insofar as there are no non-linguistic entities that are not capable of being

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<sup>24</sup>The terms "linguistic" and "linguistic expression" must be taken as having the widest possible extension--including not only the utterances of natural languages, but all sorts of artificial languages as well (including mathematics and logic) and even works of art (music, painting, dance, etc.). Cf. PA, 252-69.

described, referred to, or translated into linguistic entities. Therefore none are in principle "external to" or "separated from" a subject. Linguistic expression makes the whole world of objects, real and possible, actual and fictitious, true and false, accessible to the user of language, the subject.

(3) Philosophy as translational activity preserves the contingency (and hence the freedom) of the progressive movement of rapprochement insofar as there is no necessity to translate something erroneously expressed unless one is committed to the creation of, or preservation of, a higher mode of expression. Philosophy as translation aims at consistency, but not strictly speaking a formal consistency, but rather a consistency of coherent meanings--meanings which cannot help but overlap in specifiable ways, rather than abstract meanings which are mutually exclusive. And even though it aims at consistency, there is no fixed set of rules which prescribe a one-to-one translation of one set of terms into another. Translation must have a certain flexibility, aiming as it does at the transmission of meaning rather than at mimetic correspondence. Translation of meaning is impressionistic rather than photographic: its rules are not necessarily the rules of strict formal correspondence, but vary from loose metaphor to verbatim literal and grammatical transformational analysis. One cannot even say that the same ideal

is always adhered to, for in poetic translation a strict, word-by-word translation would be undesirable, even ridiculous. But philosophy, if nothing else, interprets itself as a guardian of meaning rather than a keeper of rules. As such the forward motion of philosophy is towards progressively more adequate meaning, and the means to achieving this is, if not the opposite of necessary inference, at least independent of it. Its resources are the resources of freedom rather than those of necessity.

(4) The ultimate identity that would serve as a maximal ideal for a progressive rapprochement would therefore be an identity of meaning, where through an identification of meaning and meant, subject and object (knower and known) are identified. The world of experience thus reconciled is an absolute built out of the differences of the world as it finds them, but not by a principle of abstraction (which leaves something always unsaid) but by the progressive consolidation of a world of expressed meanings, of articulated facts, bound together in such a way that the whole (itself a meaning) could not be what it is without its parts (which themselves are, or have, meanings) and vice versa.

But we have been allowing ourselves the license of an unrestricted flight of Collingwoodean fancy. How much of it Collingwood might have agreed with, we can only surmise. But

there is little doubt that his rapprochement philosophy is capable of the sort of flexibility that would include modifications along the lines we have suggested here; for indeed, for two or more reconciliata to reach rapprochement means for them to have, and to be shown to have, not the same objects unaffected by the knowing of them, but the same meaning.