

**Man Gone Mad:**  
**R. G. Collingwood and the De-Fragmentation of Human**  
**Consciousness**

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## Man Gone Mad: R. G. Collingwood and the De-Fragmentation of Human Consciousness

If man outrages his body by refusing to eat, he dies. If he outrages his mind by injuring the foundations of his emotional life, he goes ant mad.<sup>1</sup> –R. G. Collingwood

History is what we make it.<sup>2</sup> – Benedetto Croce

The last corruption that can visit a society is a corruption of its consciousness, and from this the politically active cannot protect it. If a society is to be saved from a corrupt consciousness it will be saved not by having its values and civilisation protected , but by knowing itself and having its values recreated.<sup>3</sup>

“History is the Development of the Mind<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> R. G. Collingwood. “Man Goes Mad” in R. G. Collingwood. *The Philosophy of Enchantment: Studies in Folktale, Cultural Criticism, and Anthropology*, Eds. David Boucher, Wendy James, Philip Smallwood. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.) 327.

<sup>2</sup> Benedetto Croce. *Politics and Morals*. (New York: F. Hubner & Co., Inc., 1945) 202.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Oakeshott. “The Claims of Politics” in *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life*, ed by. Timothy Fuller. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993.) 95.

<sup>4</sup> Giovanni Gentile. *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act*. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1922.) 40.

## Introduction

R. G. Collingwood made himself conspicuous in his lifetime as being a noted philosopher and the primary expert on Roman Britain,<sup>5</sup> of which he wrote voluminously – “a hundred and twenty-five papers, five books and twenty one reviews”<sup>6</sup> - yet nowadays he is most well-known for a work, *The Idea of History*, which does not even approximate the perspicuity and refulgence of some of his other works.<sup>7</sup> Collingwood mainly wrote in the interwar period and during the Second World War, until his untimely decease in 1943, in the hope of yanking man back from the precipice of self-annihilation. In the present paper, I will canvass Collingwood’s anatomy of the mind to a large extent based on his last work *The New Leviathan*, and his chief aesthetic work *The Principles of Art*. Given the fact, that the former gives a more satisfactory picture of the structure of consciousness primary recourse will be had to it, and whenever theories from the latter work can be incorporated, it will be done so. I will also resort to using one of Collingwood’s early essays, “Sensation and Thought,” and several of his moral philosophical lectures and essays on practical reason in expounding the anatomy of the human mind. In the second part of the essay, I will delineate the forms of consciousness / experience as canvassed in early works, such as *Speculum Mentis* and *An Outline of Philosophy of Art* and their collapse, using works from Collingwood’s middle and

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<sup>5</sup> Jan van der Dussen. *History as a Science: R.G. Collingwood’s Philosophy*. (New York: Springer, 2012), 190.

<sup>6</sup> William M. Johnston. *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood*. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967.) 37.

<sup>7</sup> Collingwood’s disciple, T. M. Know, who was responsible for editing *The Idea of History*, tampered with the text to a significant degree, including rewriting certain phrases and adding paragraphs from a fragmentary work of Collingwood’s, *The Principles of History*, the publishing of which he suppressed in spite of Collingwood’s explicit wishes for it to be published. R. G. Collingwood. *The Idea of History with Lectures 1926-1928*. “Preface” by Jan van der Dussen. (Oxford: University Press, 1994.) v.

later period, such as *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, *An Essay on Metaphysics*, “Art and the Machine,” and “Man Goes Mad.”<sup>8</sup>

Since my primary concern is outlining the anatomy of the mind and the forms of experience that are attached to them, I will significantly differ from well-respected and established Collingwood scholars, the focus of whom is more perspicuously directed at Collingwood’s aesthetic theory and his historical theory of re-enactment. I do not claim that the examination of these is not of crucial importance; however, I do find it aggravating that both the re-enactment and the aesthetic theories are lifted out of their respective context and are being examined as theories, which can give directions as to how to conduct philosophical history or a philosophy of art. This practise I find to signify some otioseness in Collingwood scholarship. The main concern of the paper is not whether these theories are right – in fact I do not even intend to touch upon the question – but the focus will be placed on why Collingwood felt the need in his given historical and cultural context to develop these theories and what he hoped to attain by them. It is absolutely irrelevant in this context whether Collingwood’s theories of history or art are correct per se. What is of significance is the “why” and not the “what.” Why did he engender his theories? What was he trying to achieve by them? What was it that he was trying to salvage? These are the questions which should be asked but Collingwood scholars are too busy debating re-enactment and artistic theory to realise that it is the context under the aegis of which these theories were engendered that bestows them their importance, not the theories themselves. Collingwood wrote down these theories in the hope of reviving tradition, to persuade people that they were committing mass suicide. Obviously, he was not alone in considering the danger that modernity imparted on

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<sup>8</sup> The adoption of periods in the Collingwoodian *oeuvre* is resorted to as a matter of expediency. In fact, I am of the same opinion as Rubinoff, that Collingwood wrote a “blueprint for a program,” which he largely followed, but of course historical contiguities coerced him into modifying his plan. As opposed to Knox, I staunchly believe that there was no major transition in Collingwood’s philosophy and those changes which came about did so smoothly and gradually. *The Idea of History*. “Preface.” xx.

man to be possibly mortiferous, as he was in line with such philosophers as Croce and Oakeshott, who felt the need to canvass an outline of the human mind and the forms of experience built upon mind to save humanity from corruption. Collingwood's intentions regarding his theory and its ends are made perfectly clear from his second book, *Speculum Mentis*, onwards.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, in spite of what is commonly claimed – that Collingwood only thought rational thought to be capable of re-enactment – I will show that according to Collingwood all five forms of experience can be re-enacted and thereby human consciousness can be saved. If these conditions are still extant today, these theories are important. If not, they should be consigned to oblivion. I think that is the peculiarity of the present time that the questions Collingwood asked and tried to answer are still relevant. War, irrationalism, the death of art and religion have basically all but destroyed what a rational person could label civilisation. It is in this light that it is especially poignant to read Collingwood and his fears of a coming barbarism. Barbarism is upon us, modern man has really gone mad, lost all his values. We live in a society which does not think straight, which has lost all of its respectable values.

Another major element that I find missing in the secondary literature dealing with Collingwood is his debt to the Italian neo-idealists, especially Croce.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, I will resort to the writings not only of Collingwood but the Italian neo-idealists, namely Benedetto Croce, Guido de Ruggiero and Giovanni Gentile. This is of paramount importance because Croce obviously updated Hegel's *Philosophy of the Spirit* and I believe that that was what Collingwood attempted to do, too. It is also of paramount importance to highlight the fact that in spite of commonly attaching the label of neo-idealism to the Collingwoodian *oeuvre*, Collingwood explicitly denied belonging to any school, however, he did affiliate himself with

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<sup>9</sup>R. G. Collingwood. *Speculum Mentis, or the Map of Knowledge*. (Oxford: University Press, 1924.) 9.

<sup>10</sup> However, there are countless differences between the two men. *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood*. 80-83.

the Italian neo-idealists.<sup>11</sup> Collingwood denied being an idealist because at the time of his tenure at Oxford everybody who was opposed to the philosophy of the realists was considered a follower of T. H. Green<sup>12</sup> and there are significant differences between Collingwood and the school of Green. He and Croce thought highly of each other<sup>13</sup> and as can be gleaned from the fragments of correspondence between Collingwood and de Ruggiero, a very definite friendship outlines itself.<sup>14</sup> Fred Inglis refers to the relationship between the two men as “friend[s] and philosophical all[ies].”<sup>15</sup> However, Collingwood intentionally kept his distance from English idealism since he thought that the most prominent school of British idealists – T. H. Green and his followers – ushered in realism and positivism. Of this he consistently insinuates T. H. Green and the most famous British idealist, F. H. Bradley, particularly in his *Essay on Metaphysics*.<sup>16</sup> Many are keen to link Collingwood with Michael Oakeshott, but Oakeshott was the product of modernity in propagating the manifold nature of experience – and not the dialecticism<sup>17</sup> of the concept of the unity of the manifold – and besides, a subjective<sup>18</sup> idealist.<sup>19</sup> He did not propagate dualism; he expressly noted that all forms of

<sup>11</sup> Perhaps Collingwood’s refusal of the idealist title is somewhat due to his hatred of utilitarianism and most of the Oxford idealists owed much to Mill, whom Collingwood renounced many times. Fred Inglis. *History Man: The Life of R. G. Collingwood*. (Princeton: University Press, 2009.) 70.

<sup>12</sup> *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood*. 79.

<sup>13</sup> British idealism was established in the Victorian era against the anti-religious tendency of the prevailing naturalism by stating the unity of experience – “the coherence theory” - and hence protecting religion. It started in Oxford and Scotland, however, it quickly spread to Cambridge. It was the leading philosophical and politician stance even in the Edwardian era, however, by 1920 it was on the defensive against realism and positivism. David Boucher and Andrew Vincent. *British Idealism and Political Theory*. (Edinburgh: University Press, 2001.) 2-3.

<sup>14</sup> See excerpts from the letters throughout Jan van der Dussen. *History as a Science: The Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood*. (London: Springer, 2012.)

<sup>15</sup> *History Man*.. 97.

<sup>16</sup> R. G. Collingwood. *An Essay on Metaphysics*. (Oxford: University Press, 1940.) 153-154. 160-162.

<sup>17</sup> “By means of the variety and conflict of the spiritual forces, dialectics continuously enriches and ennobles life and imprints upon it its only and complete meaning.” “Truth is not something ready-made, but a perpetual becoming; not a thing, but a thought, in fact, thought itself.” *Politics and Morals*. 112. 148.

<sup>18</sup> “There is, then, no object apart from the subject; no subject independent of the object.” Michael Oakeshott *Experience and its Modes*. (Cambridge: University Press, 2002.) 60. What is more laughable is Oakeshott’s boast that “it is impossible to separate nature from our knowledge of it.” *Experience and its Modes*. 197. i.e., if something is not perceived, it means that it does not exist and we are back to the conundrum which Berkeley masterfully avoided by asserting that human subjects might not be cognizant of every object but every object is existent, since God sees them. R. G. Collingwood. *The Idea of Nature*. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1945.) 114-115.

<sup>19</sup> In fact, in his subjective idealism Oakeshott goes as far as to assert that the terminology of “subjective and objective” strictly belongs to psychology and should be banned from philosophy. He adds that science is *sub*

experience had to be kept as separate as possible, lest they lost their relevance.<sup>20</sup> “For a philosophy, if it is to stand absolutely on its own two feet, and anything which tends to obscure this fact must be regarded with suspicion.”<sup>21</sup> Oakeshott’s philosophical monism was not apposite to the questions to which Collingwood was seeking the answer, and in hindsight, had such a position towards all kinds of philosophy had been adopted, the situation can be supposed to have become even more perilous, even sooner. A further problem that Oakeshott failed to elaborate was that he took the working of the mind – even those faculties which underlay thought – to have been inseparable<sup>22</sup> – though he does not hint at a dialectical solution,<sup>23</sup> hence his statement becomes easily attacked- while maintaining that the modes of experience emanating from the workings of the mind are not only separable but separate. This does not make any sense in any school of philosophy.

Collingwood, most of all, was a problem oriented philosopher. He posed a question the answering to which he dedicated his whole life. He focused on the solution, no matter in what way the solution came about. He had neither the time, nor the patience for the “bickerings of philosophical sects,” which only served as “an amusement for the foolish.”<sup>24</sup> Therefore, in the paper Collingwood – honouring his wishes – will not be referred to as an idealist – except as a short-cut - but as a dialect philosopher of a neo-Hegelian bent towards objective idealism.

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*specie quantitatis* and psychology largely corresponds to quantification but it is so lowly-developed that it cannot be described as pure scientific experience. *Experience and its Modes*. 61.227 240. Later on, Oakeshott goes on – according with the common idealistic doctrine – to reprehend psychology as a positivistic doctrine. *Experience and its Modes*. 178. With this tenet, Collingwood would have partly agreed owing to his suspicion regarding an empirical science trying to usurp the place of logic and ethics but Collingwood definitely did maintain a separation between the objective and the subjective. *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 81-101.

<sup>20</sup> *Experience and its Modes*. 5.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 7.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 10.

<sup>23</sup> This, he corrects to some degree between differentiation between immediate and mediate experience. But when he asserts that “sensation is not thought, thought is not sensation, and both are forms of experience,” he fails to note that thought already incorporates sensation, thus when sensation becomes thought it ceases to be sensation. Even though, here to he fails to apply the dialectical method which is uncondusive to his aim, this sentence conceals further problems that emerge in his work, namely the explicit denial that the mind has an ascending and descending function and in the ascending function all the lower elements are transmogrified. *Ibid.* 10-14. 16-21.

<sup>24</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 13.



## Chapter 1: The structure of human consciousness

“Spirit is a system of different elements and therefore a unity. If it were not for the differences there would be no unity, since a unity without internal differences is a mathematical abstraction, no concrete or organic reality. And if it were not for the unity, there could be no differences, for there can only be differences within some unity that comprises them; otherwise the word loses significance and becomes mere vocal noise.”<sup>25</sup>

Collingwood subdivides consciousness into five parts which presuppose each other and the stage reached at a given point is always the acme of the process, i.e. a scale of forms, in which the positive elements of the previous stages are incorporated and summarised and the negative aspects gainsaid and omitted.<sup>26</sup> Thus, ideally Collingwood purports that human beings are rational, i.e. they have reached the state of reason. As we will see in the following, he will specifically imply that people propagating Fascism, Nazism, utilitarianism, positivism and realism might not be rational at all. This is especially conspicuous in his obloquy against realism, which according to Collingwood bases knowledge on mere intuition and apprehension and not on reason and therefore realism “is based upon the grandest foundation a philosophy can have, namely human stupidity.”<sup>27</sup> The first division is sensation, the second appetite, the third passion, the fourth desire and the fifth and last is reason.

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<sup>25</sup> Benedetto Croce. *My Philosophy and Other Essays on the Moral and Political Problems of Our Time*. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1951.) 153.

<sup>26</sup> R. G. Collingwood. *An Essay on Philosophical Method*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933.) 89. The scale of forms was a commonplace in philosophy. Croce utilised it as well, for example, but with the caveat that he did not start from the bottom and ascended to the top but descended from the top and reached the bottom. This approach is also different because it implies that the scale of forms begins and ends somewhere. Benedetto Croce. *What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*. (New York: Russel & Russel, 1912.) 6-7.

<sup>27</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 34.

### 1.1. Sensation and feeling

Collingwood separates consciousness into an “*apanage*”; i.e. sensation and its emotional charges and “constituents,” i.e. thoughts themselves.<sup>28</sup> Sensation and the emotional charge carried with it is the foundation of all thought.<sup>29</sup> Sensation consists of “sensa” or “sense-data” and its concomitant feelings,<sup>30</sup> both of which are fleeting and cannot be remembered,<sup>31</sup> this Collingwood terms the “evanescence of feelings.”<sup>32</sup> Sensa and their accompanying emotional charges form a logical, yet not a temporal, priority and posteriority, hence they constitute one single experience.<sup>33</sup> The only feelings one can have recourse to are “here-and now”<sup>34</sup> feelings, i.e. the ones one is experiencing at any given moment. However, once one makes propositions about these,<sup>35</sup> feelings and sense can be recalled with the help of memory.<sup>36</sup> Making propositions about feelings means expressing the feeling and the sense-datum, such as being cold or thirsty, either by dint of a bodily gesture<sup>37</sup> or by naming the feeling in speech.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>28</sup> R. G. Collingwood. *The New Leviathan or Man, Society, Civilization and Barbarism*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942) 18.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 16. 20. 26.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* 21.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* 33.

<sup>33</sup> R. G. Collingwood. *The Principles of Art*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938) 252.

<sup>34</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 21.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* 34.

<sup>36</sup> R. G. Collingwood. “Sensation and Thought” in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series 24. (Wiley: 1923-1924.) 58.

<sup>37</sup> *The Principles of Art*. 244 At the level of crude sensation feeling is “uncontrollable [as] a grimace of pain or a start of fear is an action; but as it occurs in us, it is something that simply comes to us and overwhelms us.” *The Principles of Art*. 234. Collingwood asserts that all art whether painting, poetry or dancing is language. In “Words and Tune,” he asserts that speech, with its concomitant “pitch, duration and intensity” is in effect no different from songs. He asseverates that “all speech is already song, more or less highly organised” and in *The Principles of Art* he claims that “dance is the mother of all languages.” R. G. Collingwood. “Words and Tune” in R. G. Collingwood. *The Philosophy of Enchantment: Studies in Folktale, Cultural Criticism, and Anthropology*, Eds. David Boucher, Wendy James, Philip Smallwood. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.) 10. 15. *The Principles of Art*. 244.

<sup>38</sup> Collingwood asserts that language is prior to knowledge both logically and temporally. “Take away the language and you take away what it expressed; there is nothing left but crude feeling at the merely psychic level.” *The Principles of Art*. 244.

Therefore, language<sup>39</sup> is present even at the lowest level of consciousness.<sup>40</sup> “Without language there is no thought.”<sup>41</sup> Until one has failed to name the feeling and the sensum, the experience remains “preconscious.” If one fails to name the feeling, i.e. attend to them<sup>42</sup> or convert them into thought by the help of the imagination<sup>43</sup> as expressed by *The Principles of Art*, one “disowns”<sup>44</sup> the emotional charge of the sensum because one finds it too perturbing or irksome to attend to. This, psychologists call repression.<sup>45</sup> Although Collingwood was prominently hostile to some branches of psychology, he accorded the utmost import that feelings and sensa be attended to since they constitute the foundation of thought and if they are disowned, thought will become false.<sup>46</sup> However, Collingwood denies that a sensum and feeling can be absolutely unattended to, i.e. unconscious, because if one does not know about the feeling, one has no possibility of disowning it.<sup>47</sup> This act of disowning the emotional charge of a sensum, Collingwood calls the “corruption of consciousness.”<sup>48</sup>

A corrupt consciousness remains a slave to sensation and fails to attain the higher forms on the scale, whereas “by self-assertion we dominate our feelings; they become no longer experiences forcing themselves upon us unawares, but experiences in which we experience

<sup>39</sup> By using language, either in bodily gestures or speech, man shares his consciousness with his fellow men. R. G. Collingwood. “Goodness, Caprice, and Utility” in R. G. Collingwood. *Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. David Boucher. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.) 80.

<sup>40</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 45-46.

<sup>41</sup> *The Principles of Art*. 212.

<sup>42</sup> When a sensum and its emotional charge are attended to, it always presupposes that other sensa and their emotional charges are excluded to a certain degree. However, it is important to note that this is not yet tantamount to repression or disowning the emotion, it is just subduing it in favour of another sensum and its accompanying emotion. “Sensation and Thought” 65.

<sup>43</sup> Collingwood uses attention more in *The New Leviathan* and imagination more in *The Principles of Art*, nevertheless the two terms are interchangeable.

<sup>44</sup> *The Principles of Art*. 216. Collingwood notes that disowning an emotion results in “repression,” “projection,” “dissociation” and “fantasy-building.” *The Principles of Art*. 218-219.

<sup>45</sup> According to Collingwood, the disowning of the emotional charges of sensa is most common among educated European man, and least common among savages, children and artists. *The Principles of Art*. 162-163.

<sup>46</sup> *The Principles of Art*. 164.

<sup>47</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 38.

<sup>48</sup> *The Principles of Art*. 217. Disowning an emotional charge is especially dangerous because unless it is attended to by the imagination, it dominates the consciousness. *The Principles of Art*. 208.

our own activity.”<sup>49</sup> Once a sensum and its emotional charge have been subjected to the attention, they become dominated by consciousness.<sup>50</sup> Sensation, i.e. “seeing or hearing,” which has not yet been attended to and turned into thought by the imagination is the first-level object of consciousness whereas its second-object of consciousness, which has been attended to and thereby turned into some kind of thought by the imagination is always some kind of abstraction, which in the case of sensation, is called “looking and listening.”<sup>51</sup> Sensation remains inseparable from thinking as the scale of forms ascends since without sensation thought “finds nothing to think about”<sup>52</sup> and without sensation as a “concomitant”<sup>53</sup> of thought, “all our thought would be hypothetical.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* 222.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* 222.

<sup>51</sup> *The Principles of Art.* 204.

<sup>52</sup> “Sensation and Thought.” 65.

<sup>53</sup> “*Ibid.*” 72.

<sup>54</sup> “*Ibid.*” 62.

## 1.2. Appetite

By having attended to the emotional charges<sup>55</sup> in *sensa*, man develops “conceptual thinking.”<sup>56</sup> The first form of conceptual thinking is appetite, “the inherent restlessness of the mind,”<sup>57</sup> which consists of two consecutive stages: hunger and love.<sup>58</sup> Like all thinking, appetite carries with itself an emotional charge, which Collingwood labels “pleasure-potential.”<sup>59</sup> Appetite arises from the individual realising that his present state is unsatisfactory and he is in a quest for a more satisfactory state, i.e. he wants to achieve an “ideal self,” by virtue of which he can rid himself of his “actual self.”<sup>60</sup> The first stage of this process is hunger, which is longing to become omnipotent, thereby bereaving oneself of all of one’s shortcomings.<sup>61</sup> By this act, the self would become its own “idiomorphic god,”<sup>62</sup> which would be tantamount to complete self-obliteration,<sup>63</sup> thereby the individual strives to lessen his feelings of inadequacy by finding an object to love and thereby becoming “attached,” which attachment would ameliorate his feeling of weakness.<sup>64</sup> As stated in the foregoing, love develops out of hunger,<sup>65</sup> whereby man ceases to become his own “idiomorphic god” and endows the beloved object with the title of the “heteromorphic god.”<sup>66</sup> It is in the act of loving that man first becomes conscious of the difference between the self and the “not-self.”<sup>67</sup> However, due to the “Law of Primitive Survivals,”<sup>68</sup> hunger lives on in love as a form one has

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<sup>55</sup> Collingwood uses emotion, emotional charge and feeling interchangeably.

<sup>56</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 53.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* 53.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* 54.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* 54.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* 54.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* 55.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* 56.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* 59.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* 56.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* 57.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* 57.

<sup>67</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 56.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* 65. In any scale of forms, the present stage is the summation and at the same time the negation of the negative elements of the forms that have gone before the present point. Thereby, in any form something of the previous forms out of which it has grown remains extant. *An Essay on Philosophical Method*. 89.

learnt to despise.<sup>69</sup> According to T. H. Green appetite rules the person when he - fearing punishment fails to be a moral agent - thus aiming to realise his self-perfection in duty.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 66.

<sup>70</sup> T. H. Green. *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*. (Kitchener, Ontario: Batoche Books, 1999.) 87.

### 1.3. Passion

In passion the scale of forms ascends further in turning love into fear.<sup>71</sup> Fear is the phenomenon by which the self realises the independence of the “not-self” and the contrast between the two selves.<sup>72</sup> Fear is especially dangerous because yielding to it completely can engender a regress in the scale of forms, or even the complete annihilation of the self.<sup>73</sup> If man cannot rise above his fear, he relapses<sup>74</sup> into love. The only way this relapse can be eluded is by dint of rebellion against the not-self, which rebellion begets anger.<sup>75</sup> If the self can rise above its fear, “being contrasted or contradicted by the not-self”<sup>76</sup> engenders shame, which is “the renunciation of the cowardly self.”<sup>77</sup> In shame and anger the self does not want to be rid of fear, it wants to be triumphant over it because at this point of the scale, the self is always ashamed of being at the mercy of the “not-self.”<sup>78</sup> In the idealistic theory shame comes into being by the fear of the opinion of others,<sup>79</sup> thereby following Vico’s theory in primitive Gentile man’s fear of the wrath of Jupiter, which engenders morality.<sup>80</sup> In domesticating and taming the passions, they are not extinguished but are overcome to a degree that is sufficient for them to give birth to desire. If the passions are not tamed sufficiently to give birth to desire, man becomes a sadist. Croce’s make up of the dialectic of the human mind closely resembles that of Collingwood’s with the marked expression that between passion and reason, there is no intermediate.<sup>81</sup> When passion breaks down by the historical judgement, it

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<sup>71</sup> *The New Leviathan*.. 69.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* 68.

<sup>73</sup> In any scale of forms, the present point is the acme of the general concept, in our case, consciousness. There is nothing in a scale of forms that necessitates its progress. *The New Leviathan*. 65.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* 65.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* 71.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* 68.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* 71.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* 72.

<sup>79</sup> *British Idealism and Political Theory*. 131-132.

<sup>80</sup> Giambattista Vico. *The First New Science*. (Cambridge: University Press, 2002.) 45-46.

<sup>81</sup> *My Philosophy*. 52.

inevitably turns into historical truth, that is theoretical reason. For Croce the breakdown of passion – as for Collingwood, the breakdown of desire – inevitably leads to the “good life.”<sup>82</sup> In fact, Croce regarded the destruction of the passions as one of the main benefits of writing history.<sup>83</sup> As we shall see, T. H. Green posited that Christian values deprived the individual of his passions, which in turn lead to an ascension on the scale of forms in mental life as opposed to the theory of evolution which promulgated pre-determinism in the form of evolution, and not in the sense of Hegelian emanation.<sup>84</sup> Green considered utilitarianism dangerous because it promoted passion, and not reason.<sup>85</sup> Utilitarianism according to Green always promoted negative liberty,<sup>86</sup> thereby robbing the individual of his morality.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* 152.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* 53

<sup>84</sup> *British Idealism and Political Theory*. 40.

<sup>85</sup> *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*. 17.

<sup>86</sup> The essay will deal with the types of liberty later on.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* 17.



## 1.4. Desire

Desire is begot by anger<sup>88</sup> and is the first form in which propositional thinking is present.<sup>89</sup> Propositional thinking denotes the asking of questions and answering them and thereby becoming cognizant of the fact that the self has alternatives.<sup>90</sup> In desire the self asks “which do I want, a or b?”<sup>91</sup> Desire, although a significantly higher form of consciousness than appetite, is more reminiscent to it than to passion. The foremost distinction between desire and appetite is that in appetite the self is not aware of the fact that it wants something, whereas in desire it is not only aware of wanting something but knows what it wants, as well.<sup>92</sup> The lack of cognizance of wanting something engenders in appetite the fact that it is infallible, i.e. there is no such thing as false appetite, whereas desire can be deceptive<sup>93</sup> because that which is desired is only an abstraction.<sup>94</sup> In desiring something the self always yearns for “the good,” however, what the self cognizes as good may not be such at all. The further question emerges that while in desiring the self longs for something it deems good, goodness is a utilitarian term, i.e. something is good as a means if it is capable of serving a certain end.<sup>95</sup> If the self realises that what it has formerly deemed good does not serve the wished for end, or the self changes the end he strives to accomplish or if the self rejects the given alternative from the outset, desire turns into “loathing” or “aversion.”<sup>96</sup> The chief object of desire is the “internal and [...] external well-being” of the self, which become manifest in

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<sup>88</sup> *The New Leviathan*.. 72.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* 75.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.* 74. “Every statement that anybody ever makes is made in answer to a question. [...] He knows that his statement is an answer to a question and knows what that question is. [...] A question is logically prior to its own answer. When thinking is scientifically ordered, this logical priority is accompanied by a temporal priority.: one formulates the question first, and only when it is formulated begins trying to answer it.” *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 24.

<sup>91</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 76.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* 74.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* 76. 80.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* 80.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* 80.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* 75.

“virtue” and “power.” Since these two are, according to Collingwood, corresponding terms, they are not wholly separable.<sup>97</sup> If the self is in possession of them, it has attained happiness, whereas bereft of them the self remains unhappy.<sup>98</sup> Possessing virtue and power, the self rids itself of passion and any influence the not-self can exercise over it.<sup>99</sup> It can be inferred that unless the self comes into the possession of at least some virtue and power, it will remain “bad” and “weak”<sup>100</sup> and consequently will deteriorate to the level of passion. However, since happiness and unhappiness are “abstractions from desire,” they can never be fully attained.<sup>101</sup> While a certain amount of unhappiness begets “self-denial” and the “renunciation of virtue,” a sufficient amount of happiness engenders “self-respect” which originates in the self having attained “freedom” from desire itself.<sup>102</sup> The liberation of the self from desire consists in naming the desire.<sup>103</sup> Having rid the self of desires, which form a “closed” system,<sup>104</sup> the self enters the territory of reason. If it has not rid himself of it, he remains a “psycho-physical” man, i.e. somebody who is irrational, such as Fascists and Nazis.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* 81.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* 84-86.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* 84.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* 87.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* 86.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.* 92.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* 93.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* 90.

<sup>105</sup> Inglis. 207.

## 1.5 Reason

Reason consists of an “open” system, the chief characteristic of which is choice.<sup>106</sup> In desire the self could decide between that which it wished for and that towards which it suffered aversion, however in reason the self has innumerable alternatives from which it can choose.<sup>107</sup> Reason itself consists in practical and theoretical thinking.<sup>108</sup> Theoretical thinking means “trying to think out the truth about something,” whereas practical thinking consists of “trying to think out what to do in a given situation.”<sup>109</sup> Theoretical reason, even if it is a higher function of consciousness, exists for the sake of action, and “thinking [...] always starts from and returns to practice,”<sup>110</sup> since “mind is pure act.” Mind is not anything apart from what it does.”<sup>111</sup> The question-answer activity is extended into the “that” and the “why,”<sup>112</sup> and “rational thinking”<sup>113</sup> replaces propositional. This kind of thinking is “criteriological,”<sup>114</sup> i.e. one can think well and one can think falsely, which Collingwood calls “the bipolarity of thought.”<sup>115</sup> In Collingwood’s assigning the method of question and answer to Bacon, we might observe his significant divergence from British idealism. Both Durkheim and Comte were self-avowed Baconians and Bosanquet’s very apposite condemnation of the Baconian method of gathering materials for observation without any plausible theory according to which the gleaning of materials was to be executed was ludicrous, therefore Bosanquet directly attacked the naturalistic theory and method of positivism.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* 90.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.* 90.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* 97.

<sup>109</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics.* 106.

<sup>110</sup> *The New Leviathan.* 125.

<sup>111</sup> R. G. Collingwood. “Notes Toward a Metaphysic” in *The Principles of History and Other Writings in the Philosophy of History*, eds. William Dray and Jan van der Dussen. (Oxford: University Press, 1999) 220.

<sup>112</sup> *The New Leviathan.* 99.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* 99. For further information about rational thinking and the logic of question and answer see: R. G. Collingwood. *An Autobiography.* (Oxford: University Press, 1939), 29-43.

<sup>114</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics.* 109.

<sup>115</sup> *The Principles of Art.* 157.

<sup>116</sup> *British Idealism and Political Theory.* 94-95.

Collingwood describes three types of practical reason: utility, right and duty.<sup>117</sup> The first two contain a certain element of “caprice,” though as the scale ascends the role of caprice is significantly decreased. Utilitarian action is capricious in not explaining why it resorts to a certain means to achieve a given end<sup>118</sup> and “why [the self] wills the end.”<sup>119</sup> Regularian action cannot explain why the person adheres to the rule<sup>120</sup> according to which he acts, the fact that rules abound<sup>121</sup> and why the self chooses the given rule as opposed to another,<sup>122</sup> and the fact that rules do not apply to all situations, however carefully prescribed; therefore doing right in some circumstances equals to doing wrong in certain others.<sup>123</sup> In duty, however the self possesses both “possibility,” i.e. the act can be done<sup>124</sup> and “obligation,” i.e. it has to be done.<sup>125</sup> Duty is “both possible and necessary”<sup>126</sup> and is bereft of any kind of caprice<sup>127</sup> or as Croce put it all human action has to be directed at performing our duties.<sup>128</sup> Green calls it the “rational will,” the possession of which is tantamount to having a personality,<sup>129</sup> and a “free morality, which is [the] highest good.”<sup>130</sup> It will be important later when Fascism and Nazism are discussed as originating in herd mentality, that these people cannot have attained the concept of duty or rational will. This is the main difference between duty and the other forms of theoretical reason. In duty, free choice - according to the theory - is non-existent, but of course if one avoids his duty, he does it of his own free will. This is one of the main reasons why Collingwood despised empirical psychology, which denied the free choice of the human

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<sup>117</sup> Michael Oakshott counters that practical reason is a contradiction in terms since what is practical cannot be thought. *Experience and its Modes*. 2. 262-263.

<sup>118</sup> R. G. Collingwood. “Duty” in R. G. Collingwood. *Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. David Boucher. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.)158.

<sup>119</sup> “Ibid.” 152.

<sup>120</sup> “Ibid.” 152.

<sup>121</sup> *New Leviathan*.117.

<sup>122</sup> “Duty.” 152.

<sup>123</sup> *The New Leviathan*.116-117.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.* 121.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.* 120.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.* 124.

<sup>127</sup> “Duty.” 152.

<sup>128</sup> *What is Dead and What is Living of the Philosophy of Hegel*. 74. 171.

<sup>129</sup> *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*. 20.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.* 169.

being and assigned natural causation to it.<sup>131</sup> Collingwood asserts in *Religion and Philosophy* that man's will is free and "self-explanatory" and cannot be explained by empirical means<sup>132</sup> thus empirical psychology reduces human free will to mere mechanism.<sup>133</sup> Collingwood was also more of a neo-Hegelian than a post-Kantian, in spite of Gary K. Browning's book, *Rethinking R. G. Collingwood: Philosophy, Politics and the Unity of Theory and Practice*, in which he tries to present Collingwood's philosophy as more Kantian than Hegelian,<sup>134</sup> as opposed to Guiseppina D'oro's book, *Collingwood and the Metaphysics of Experience*,<sup>135</sup> to which Browning's book served as an answer. Kant did not believe in the free will of humans, he associated free will with teleological, empirical final causation, i.e., he regarded will as a natural occurrence.<sup>136</sup>

Human actions are determined like all other external events.<sup>137</sup> Customs according to Kant are not parts of a tradition but are simply outside natural events, in which nature augments the human species. They are "Part of the Purpose of Nature",<sup>138</sup> whereas Collingwood asserts both in *The Idea of History*<sup>139</sup> and *The Principles of History*<sup>140</sup>, that such events which do not consist of an inside – that is they are not actions but mere events – cannot be part of history because they do not belong to the realm of thought. However, Collingwood also asserts that the customs with which people built up the organisations of such events really are parts of

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<sup>131</sup> *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood*. 45-50.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.* 53.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.* 53.

<sup>134</sup> Gary K. Browning. *Rethinking R. G. Collingwood: Philosophy, Politics and the Unity of Theory and Practice*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.)

<sup>135</sup> Guiseppina D'Oro. *Collingwood and the Metaphysics of Experience*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002.)

<sup>136</sup> Emmanuel Kant. "The Principle of Progress" in *The Principles of Politics*. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1891.) 68.

<sup>137</sup> Emmanuel Kant. "Principles of Political Right" in *The Principles of Politics*. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1891.) 52.

<sup>138</sup> "Ibid." 52-53.

<sup>139</sup> R. G. Collingwood. *The Idea of History* in *The Idea of History with Lectures 1926-1928.*, ed. Jan van der Dussen. (Oxford: University Press, 1993.) 117.

<sup>140</sup> "Can Historians Be Impartial?" in *The Principles of History and Other Writings in the Philosophy of History*, eds. William Dray and Jan van der Dussen. (Oxford: University Press, 1999.) 217.

thought, and are not predetermined by the animal nature of humans, i.e. they are part of thought, and thought is a part of free will.<sup>141</sup>

Collingwood's close associate and *de facto* mentor, Benedetto Croce<sup>142</sup> -for whom he became a "public apologist,<sup>143</sup> as Croce's philosophy was abhorred in Oxford<sup>144</sup>- implies that duty is one of the most preponderant aspects of political action, therefore duty and morality are ideally speaking two sides of the same coin, which utilitarians would be glad to sever, however, such sundering would usher in barbarism rather quickly. What exactly Croce laments is that normative reasoning is not utilised when talking about politics in relation to morals, i.e. moral and immoral actions within the political sphere are not differentiated.<sup>145</sup> As we have seen, mind and life constitute a unity and any kind of dualism, especially the one regarding morality is the sign of an unhealthy civilisation, especially in the sphere of political morality. Therefore, modern civilisation has to find a way whereby utility can serve its purpose while safeguarding morals and without impinging on its territory. Such a duty can be brought about by unifying ethics; i. e., what is publicly considered moral should be considered moral in the private sphere and what is publicly immoral should be condemned as such elsewhere, as well.<sup>146</sup> That this dualism remained intact is actually an after-effect of negative liberty,<sup>147</sup> the remnants of which have to be swept away. However, Croce labours under the rather naïve conception that political life is dialectical and not eristic – if political life was

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<sup>141</sup> *The Idea of History*. 215. *The Principles of History* in *The Principles of History and Other Writings in the Philosophy of History*, eds. William Dray and Jan van der Dussen. (Oxford: University Press, 1999) 93.

<sup>142</sup> Collingwood translated three of Croce's books and two books by his close friend and Croce's disciple, Guido de Ruggiero. These five books are the only translations that Collingwood made, therefore it is safe to assume that he was not only very impressed by Italian idealism but regarded Croce as his mentor. *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood*. 66. Like Croce, Collingwood did not like to use footnotes, therefore certain accusations that Collingwood plagiarised the Italians is false. He simply assumed that this fact was obvious to everyone. Furthermore, Collingwood – in a letter to Croce – explained that this was the general practice in English philosophy. *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood*. 67.

<sup>143</sup> *History Man*. 97.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.* 120.

<sup>145</sup> *Politics and Morals*. 2.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* 3.

<sup>147</sup> On page 19, Croce acknowledges that it is basically still negative liberty that is supreme. *Politics and Morals*. 19.

dialectical, wars would be practically nonexistent- and that politics bolster traditions and customs, since he equivocated the State with the people.<sup>148</sup> He is right so far as tradition and customs can act as safeguards in preserving morality – though the German herd-instinct definitely acted in an opposite way,<sup>149</sup> but what he seemed to have forgotten was that in a utilitarian civilisation mechanisation came first and foremost, means and ends were separated and in such a way not only were customs and traditions unable to preserve man in his morality but tradition became breached and thereby barbarism was unleashed upon the world. Croce, furthermore, fails to take two very important facts into consideration. First, he renounces greed and underlies it with the “relative stability of the law,”<sup>150</sup> thereby forgetting that utilitarianism and mechanisation in the very least usher in an insatiable cupidity in people. Second, he seems to forget that the liberalism that Hegel is supposed to have laid down with his dialectics might encourage war – especially in an age in which people waged war for the sake of it<sup>151</sup> – in differentiating between internal and external right,<sup>152</sup> and viewing the

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<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.* 7.

<sup>149</sup> However, in the *Theory and History of Historiography*, Croce denies the revolution in history – which Collingwood asserts – in part because that revolution originated with the Germans and Croce thinks that Nazism itself is a concomitant of the concept of a historical revolution, by which the Germans assigned themselves the role of being the modern “Roman Empire.” Benedetto Croce. *Theory and History of Historiography* (London: George G. Harrap and & Co. Ltd., 1921.) 46-47., 263. 271. 285. In *History as the Story of Liberty*, he reproaches romanticised versions of history and adds that these romanticisations give rise to racism and the romanticised history, hitherto condemned, is the reigning form of “history” in Germany. However, he also asserts that history is thought, therefore, it has to be “logical” and such romanticised histories which do not even bear any resemblance to the truth are “morbid.” Hence, contemporary Germany is one again condemned for its morbidity, for its lack of reason and its lack of having ascended the scale of forms of mentality up to the point to reason. Benedetto Croce. *History as the Story of Liberty*. (London: George Allan and Unwind Limited, 1941.) 15-19. 93-95. As can be seen in Gentile’s Fascistic writings, Germany did not stand alone in this morbid need for romanticising historical personages, since the very romanticisations of Mazzini and the spiritual unification of Italy by means of bloodshed were two of the engenderers of Fascistic theory. Giovanni Gentile. Giovanni Gentile. *What is Fascism?* (Selections.) in Giovanni Gentile. *Origins and Doctrine of Fascism: With Selections from Other Works*, ed. A. James Gregor. (London: Transaction Publishers, 2002.) 48. 65. Giovanni Gentile. “Origins and Doctrine of Fascism” in Giovanni Gentile. *Origins and Doctrine of Fascism: With Selections from Other Works*, ed. A. James Gregor. (London: Transaction Publishers, 2002.) 2-3. 10. 12. 16. 20-22. According to Croce, Fascism was a dolorous break with the liberal tradition of Italy. Gentile’s adherence to Fascism ultimately lead to his break with Croce. Gentile. xi. Roger W. Holmes. *The Idealism of Giovanni Gentile*. (Toronto: Macmillan, 1937.) 7.

<sup>150</sup> *Politics and Morals*. 9.

<sup>151</sup> “European civilisation, stricken with a terrible insanity. It not only elevated the negative into the positive by making its ideal of the good life war.” *My Philosophy*. 152.

<sup>152</sup> Croce denies Hegel’s distinction in the name of unity. *Politics and Morals*. 88. The external and internal theory of rights is already proposed by Kant. Emmanuel Kant. “Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitical Point of View.” ” in *The Principles of Politics*. (Edinburgh: T& T Clark, 1891.) 28 Also, negative liberty already appears in Kant. “*Ibid.*” 29. Kant also mentions that every subject in a commonwealth is

external – that is the foreigner – as innately inimical. Later on, in *My Philosophy*, he corrected this mistake, and severely condemned the doctrine of internal versus external right as “monstrous hypocrisy” and “obstinate egoism.” Croce’s naivety goes infinitely further when he discusses the good as duty and mentions people who “work eagerly on behalf of the good.”<sup>153</sup> Croce seems to forget that in a utilitarian age the good does not exist for itself and the question “to what end,” inevitably arises when performing an act. No good or duty can be spoken of when means and ends are so violently sundered. Croce somehow manages to top his naiveté upon asserting that even in the most tyrannical state there is consent.<sup>154</sup> If by consent he means dialectic reasoning by dint of which “disagreements” are turned into “non-agreements,” he is wrong, as in a tyranny only eristical methods exist. If he means, that the majority consents to the tyranny, it signals the political immaturity or cowardice of the people, which once again cannot be truly called consent.

“Human nature is mind”<sup>155</sup> and mind is crystallized most clearly in dutiful action. According to David Boucher, Collingwood implies that the aim of consciousness is to rid itself of all caprice<sup>156</sup> and this it can only do in dutiful action. As reason is tantamount to volition<sup>157</sup> in the Collingwoodian *oeuvre*,<sup>158</sup> it is noteworthy to remark that according to Collingwood, it is at this stage that the “social contract” comes into existence. The contract “must be a joint

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compelled to act according to the law, i.e. he is explicitly denied by T. H. Green, and implicitly by Collingwood. “Principles of Political Right.” 36. 46.

<sup>153</sup> *Politics and Morals*. 10-11.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.* 13.

<sup>155</sup> “Notes toward a Metaphysic.” 220.

<sup>156</sup> David Boucher. *The Social and Political Thought of R. G. Collingwood*. (Cambridge: University Press, 2002.) 110.

<sup>157</sup> “If men are the only animals that can be, strictly speaking, members of a society, that is because they are the only animals which have and can therefore share a social consciousness, or, which comes to the same thing, [...], a will.” *New Leviathan* 139.

<sup>158</sup> Here, Collingwood and Oakeshott agree. Oakeshott asserts that volition cannot carry us further than thought because thought is the acme of the mental process, however he fails to equate thought with volition. *Experience and its Modes*. 26.



activity of free agents.”<sup>159</sup> Here, for the further and proper understanding of Collingwood, the political doctrines of positive and negative liberty<sup>160</sup> have to be expounded at some length because without sufficient understanding of these, it is impossible to achieve an understanding of the political ideas of Collingwood’s day and his concept of duty. Positive freedom appears as a result of a thorough ethical and political education, which should be inherent in any school curriculum. Positive liberty is the equivalent of duty, whereas negative liberty includes in itself a stain of caprice.<sup>161</sup> In positive freedom the person is responsible for his fellow-men, “he is no longer alone in the world”,<sup>162</sup> i.e. the empirical ego of negative liberty is superseded, denied, and its positive qualities are affirmed and pasted into the transcendental ego of positive liberty. In superseding the empirical ego of negative liberty, man becomes free. Or as de Ruggiero puts it, “men are not born free but become free”<sup>163</sup> in the dialectical process of their own minds, which engenders a dialectical process in political institutions. In fact, de Ruggiero implies that a constant educational reform is a *sine qua non* in a liberal state because it is the only means by which it can make liberalism and dialecticism understood among people reared on materialism and positivism.<sup>164</sup> In positive liberty – which is the duty of the state to maintain and propagate – authority is replaced by persuasion and “enlightenment,”<sup>165</sup> i.e. negative liberty which did not really contain any dialectical or eristical qualities becomes in positive liberty decidedly dialectical, thereby strengthening the bond of society, bringing to light everyone’s duty towards himself and others and grants man the opportunity to reach the

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<sup>159</sup> *New Leviathan* 133.

<sup>160</sup> The best summary of negative liberty is that of Haller’s: “According to the right, in conformity with the law of strict justice, each man exists for himself and constitutes the object of his own action.” Croce’s reply to this in expounding positive liberty is: “According to the juridical relation, each man exists for himself; but according to the moral relation, according to the law of charity, each man is created to help his fellow man.” However, Croce goes to contradict himself in a matter of one single page, in which he asserts that inferiors have to obey their superiors, and equals have the same right, i.e. Croce on page 82. describes what positive liberty is, only to assert something completely different and more reminiscent of negative liberty a page later, under the facade of positive liberty. *Politics and Morals*. 81. 82. 83-84.

<sup>161</sup> Guido de Ruggiero. *The History of European Liberalism*. (Oxford: University Press, 1927.) 350-351.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.* 352.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.* 354.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.* 365. 369.

<sup>165</sup> Michael Oakeshott. “The Authority of The State” in Michael Oakeshott. *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993.) 75.

apogee of practical reason, which will ultimately lead him to embrace the acme of theoretical reason, thereby making him a philosopher – not in the professional sense. Oakeshott makes a remarkable point in arguing for positive liberty as superior to negative liberty when he asseverates that in liberty the fount of authority is the acting man,<sup>166</sup> i.e. the man, who owing to his dialectical process has reached a state of reason in which no one can or is allowed, for that matter, to tell him what to do because he knows what his duty is and is willing to do it. This duty of the man of practical reason is “self-supportive and inescapable.”<sup>167</sup> “With a real authority [our practical reason that has reached its acme] there is no question whether or not we shall accept it, we have no choice in the matter, for an authority which we can escape is an imposter.”<sup>168</sup> This shows the difference between liberty as conceived positively as an inherent activity of the person who is an agent and the dictatorships established in Italy and Germany,<sup>169</sup> which were “random, capricious and unstable.”<sup>170</sup> Oakeshott pointed out one more very important aspect of positive liberty- with which Collingwood would have most definitely agreed – i.e., you cannot have positive liberty, unless the consciousness of the agents are unified and unfragmented,<sup>171</sup> because positive liberty serves the whole consciousness, whereas negative liberty denies this wholeness. As we have previously witnessed, unity signified something different for both Oakeshott and Collingwood and therefore we need not go into this aspect in a lurid detail. It suffices to say, that seeing that modern man’s mind became defragmented, positive liberty could not reign in its unadulterated form because for that, a completely dialectical society would have been needed, and for a completely dialectical society, the people who made it up had to be possessed of a

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<sup>166</sup> “Ibid.” 78.

<sup>167</sup> “Ibid.” 78.

<sup>168</sup> “Ibid.” 79.

<sup>169</sup> Later on, after the Second World War, Oakeshott came to ascribe the birth of Fascism and Nazism to negative liberty. In an ever-growing pessimism Oakeshott concluded that war cannot be abolished because human beings are not dominated by rational reason but by the will to power, which itself contradicts reason. Michael Oakeshott. “Scientific Politics.” in Michael Oakeshott. *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993.) 102-105.

<sup>170</sup> “The Authority of the State.” 79.

<sup>171</sup> “Ibid.” 83.

consciousness that was the *non plus ultra* of dialecticism. This, obviously, was not the case in the era in which specialist wrote for other specialists. The best that could be achieved in the cradles of liberalism was to establish a liberty that was more pronouncedly positive but in lieu of a perfect dialecticism it had to contain elements that were inferior to duty. People could endeavour to reduce these capricious elements to a minimum, but complete success was impossible. T. H. Green –the leading exponent of idealism – posited that in the theory and execution of positive liberty, the individual was “doing God’s work, by attaining all of his “potential,” thereby helping the augmentation of society by his own work.<sup>172</sup> The moral development of the individual helped inspire others to develop in themselves their own potentials, thereby positive liberty was germane to morals.<sup>173</sup> Another leading idealist, Henry Jones, was preoccupied with moral development and the elevation of the working class, which needed education and equal opportunities.<sup>174</sup> The most prominent idealist - alongside Green – F. H. Bradley conceived the realisation of the opportunities and duties of the self as moral obligations of the individual, since the idealists gainsaid the atomism between the whole of society and the individual. It was the individuals that constituted society, hence considering them as monadic was not a valid theory,<sup>175</sup> thus British idealism embraced the “welfare” theory of society,<sup>176</sup> i.e. the providing of good living conditions for every member of the society, especially the proletariat and the peasant.<sup>177</sup> This theory included that institutions were created and maintained to attain morality and “civilised living conditions” for every member of society.<sup>178</sup> Thus the individual became a “Christed” person, as long as he embraced his moral duties and propagated them to the rest of society.<sup>179</sup> This implied for the

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<sup>172</sup> *British Idealism and Political Theory*. 9.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.* 9.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.* 10.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.* 10-11.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.* 22.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.* 13.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* 13. 29.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.* 37.

British idealists an adherence to the philosophy of Hegel as opposed to Kant,<sup>180</sup> who separated practical and theoretical reason, and therefore negated the emanation theory of Hegel, of which idealism was born. Liberty as conceived by Bentham and J .S. Mill was inevitably a negative one, in which the person only had to look after himself.<sup>181</sup> This conception was utilitarian and British idealism quickly discarded the idea upon conceiving the nature of the liberty that should be espoused. However, positive liberty conceived of an equality between people, and it was the duty of the state to provide everybody with “health, warmth, light, rest, food and fresh air.”<sup>182</sup> British idealism also demanded education for everyone, pensions provided by the state, school lunch provided by the state, and proper hospital treatment for everybody.<sup>183</sup> Isaiah Berlin, for example, wrote that as far as people did not have these, it would not matter to them whether liberty was positive or negative<sup>184</sup> because as long as a person was so poor as not to have these rights provided from the state, he would not be able to realise any of his liberties.<sup>185</sup> Besides, Berlin, looking at liberty from the hindsight of a later generation asserted that negative liberty put a stop to despotism, whereas positive liberty unleashed it.<sup>186</sup>

Since Collingwood refers to the social contract as a binding “obligation”<sup>187</sup> in any of its forms, it can be deduced that even duty forms something of a scale of forms,<sup>188</sup> in which the contract based upon negative liberty is at a lower scale, than that based on positive liberty.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.* 39.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.* 135.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.* 172.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.* 174.

<sup>184</sup> Isaiah Berlin. “Introduction” in Isaiah Berlin. *Liberty: Incorporating Four Essays on Liberty.*, ed. Henry Hardy. (Oxford: University Press, 2002.) 34.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.* 45.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.* 37-40.

<sup>187</sup> *New Leviathan.* 133.

<sup>188</sup> “Free will is a matter of degree.” *The New Leviathan.* 144.

<sup>189</sup> Cf: “The words society, social contain a reference to free will.” *The New Leviathan* 137. When Collingwood discussed liberty, he meant it in its positive sense: “Every party, by making the contract, declares the will to pursue the common aim of the society. [...] No society has a claim on its members involving more than this. It is

Since all societies are derived from communities, the scale goes lower in a society based on negative liberty than one based on positive liberty. Apart from political maturity, the main distinction between a community and a society is that societies rule themselves, whereas communities do not, or as Collingwood has it, “a non-social community needs for its existence to be ruled by something than itself.”<sup>190</sup> That is, in a non-social community, such as Fascism and Nazism, the agent and the patient, the object and the subject are coercively disunited, whereas in a healthy society, these are always one and the same. The disunification is only possible because the object has never developed or has relinquished his will.<sup>191</sup> This is exactly what Kant imagines as the cause of war. According to Kant people in a society hate others but they hate foreigners more, which is the cause of war and is naturally predetermined, i.e. for Kant only a non-social community exists.<sup>192</sup> Kant goes on to describe the plan of nature, according to which societies come into being as the “coercion and restraint” of the natural proneness of human nature, which is restrained by the natural plan for the augmentation of mankind.<sup>193</sup> Therefore, in a non-social community, such as the dictatorships of Collingwood’s day and Great Britain to a certain extent,<sup>194</sup> the individual has lost his own

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in the nature of a society that the obligations of membership should be limited to obligations involved in the pursuit of the common aim.” *The New Leviathan*. 145.

<sup>190</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 140.

<sup>191</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 142-143. Collingwood notes a different case in which somebody has and retains his will in the social contract but loses his membership because of an adequately strong will. *The New Leviathan*. 145.

<sup>192</sup> “Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitical Point of View.” 9.

<sup>193</sup> “Ibid.” 13.

<sup>194</sup> Great Britain was susceptible to becoming an agent of Fascism and Nazism because of the policy of appeasement and the outright lies politicians and the printed media told the population as canvassed in *An Autobiography* but the breakdown of British liberalism was also owing to the fact that the Liberal Party did not understand the dialectical function of politics and engaged in conversation with the Conservatives in an eristical manner, owing to which progress – as represented by the Liberals – ceased to be applicable to the political life of Great Britain, since a liberal country is based on the political tenet of dialecticism in its affairs with the other side, an eristical point of view, on the other hand, must belong to dictatorships. *The New Leviathan*. 211. Oakeshott in an essay of 1939, entitled “The Claims of Politics” made a point reminiscent of the one Collingwood made in *An Autobiography*, saying that most people of intelligence wished to be informed on national and international events and were looking for guidance in the printed media as to whom to vote for, since by voting an intelligent person feels that he has performed his duties and gave back to his community all the services he had been imparted by it. Michael Oakeshott. “The Claims of Politics.” 91. However, what Oakeshott fails to mention or failed to notice was that the corruption that the pro-appeasement government had imparted to the popular media.. As such, this could not give birth to an idea of positive liberty since even if the person voted according to his best intentions, his information was corrupt, therefore what he did was not his duty but acted according to the caprice of the government under the facade of duty. The most inauspicious part in this,

free will and thus we cannot talk of a society anymore, which is a “joint will”<sup>195</sup> but only of a community which by its own very nature is severely disunited and fragmented and in which owing to the above factors, human consciousness has never reached its acme or has regressed in a most lachrymose way, to the extent that people have lost sight of the common aim, their own free will, the view of themselves as free agents acting for their own and the common good and have embraced the fragmentation of consciousness and the massacring of all that which is endowed with value.<sup>196</sup>

The social consciousness is the consciousness of myself together with certain others all deciding to do a particular thing, to divide that thing into various parts, and to distribute these parts, which together make up the enterprise, among the persons who together make up the society. Without this consciousness of joint free decision to undertake and share a certain action there might be membership of a non-social community, but there could be no membership of a society.<sup>197</sup>

Ultimately, this means that if the fragmentation and disunification continues, even the men possessed of the strongest volition might end up losing their capacity to engage in a social whole. This is further aggravated by the fact that Collingwood assigns will not only to the

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of course, is that if Collingwood’s suspicions were right the British government wilfully fragmented the consciousness of the British people, hampering their development, hindering the world in attaining peace and taking a Gargantuan part in the fragmentation of the consciousness of the ordinary British subject, who owing to being deceived was no longer an agent but an object. R. G. Collingwood. *An Autobiography* 155-156. 163. *My Philosophy*. 31. The corruption of the press and the lies with which people were brainwashed is mentioned by Croce, as well, therefore, it is very much probable that Collingwood did not exaggerate but told the truth. Collingwood describes the eristic process which the Liberal Party engaged against the Conservatives as a “civil war among the rulers,” whereas a dialectical process would have entailed a direction in which common ground was to be sought, at which the Liberals failed miserably, since an eristical will is a will towards despotism, which is the very negation of Liberalism. *The New Leviathan*. 212-213.

<sup>195</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 148.

<sup>196</sup> Collingwood notes that “authority” does exist in a society but it is followed because it is in the interest of society to follow it, whereas in a non-social community, the equivalent of “authority” is “force,” which does not induce men to act according to their will but according to their desires by inciting fear and giving hope of reward. This is a natural condition in children who can outgrow it with the sufficient education and also the criminal, whom by the sufficient punishment can be reverted into a member of the social whole. *The New Leviathan*. 154. 157-158. 160-164. See Collingwood’s theory of punishment: R. G. Collingwood. “Punishment and Forgiveness” in R. G. Collingwood. *Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. David Boucher. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.) 124-132. and R. G. Collingwood. “Punishment” in R. G. Collingwood. *Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. David Boucher. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.) 133-143. Here, Collingwood echoes Green’s conception of punishment. *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*. 136. 141-149.

<sup>197</sup> *New Leviathan*. 147.

civilising process but to barbarism as well, which is “the suicide of will”<sup>198</sup> and is most observable in the German tradition of the worship of the herd. The theory of the behaviour of the herd originated with Le Bon and was adopted by British idealism. The theory of the herd basically expounds that in a community, individuals behave in a way they would not behave individually. This theory was labelled by British idealism the “instinct theory” and its most illustrious propounder was Wilfred Trotter, who in 1917 published his *Herd in Peace and War*.<sup>199</sup> Oakeshott delivered an even more ruthless, however, at the time proper observation about herd-instinct than Croce or Collingwood did, by dint of which the Collingwoodian notion of the herd-worship of the Germans was not a sign of “sociality,” because according to Oakeshott even animals had a social life, sometimes much more developed than that of men;<sup>200</sup> and thereby if we take into account Collingwood’s frequent allusions to herd-instinct, we can deduce that, for him, modern day Germans were no more higher on the scale of forms of mentality than any pack of animals, that is to say, they were completely bereft of any kind of reason. “Society is a moral fact and not a natural fact; it is a feature of the mind in relation, not bodies in proximity.”<sup>201</sup> What this means for us, in relation to Collingwood’s damnatory opinion of the German herd, is that Germany and its people were a natural fact and not a social one. As we have previously seen, in Collingwood’s philosophy both natural and societal facts are not facts but are processes in *fieri*. However, being in *fieri* might constitute both of their *esse*, their *esse* is so different that they are hardly even comparable. Natural facts, as stated by the theory of evolution, undergo changes. However, as Collingwood asserts in *The Idea of History* that with the evolution of the natural world, the *fieri* itself becomes deeply fragmented, non-reenactable, since when the superior form comes into being, the inferior form has already completely perished. That is, there are continuous moments in nature, and in

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<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.* 308.

<sup>199</sup> *British Idealism and Political Theory*. 104-105.

<sup>200</sup> Michael Oakeshott. “The Nature and Meaning of Sociality” in Michael Oakeshott. *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993.) 48-49.

<sup>201</sup> “*Ibid.*” 50.

that sense nature is just as much a process as history, but by being thus fragmented, the lower form does not survive in a latter<sup>202</sup> –as it does in history- therefore if a people dwells in a state of nature as the classical politics would have it, tradition would have to be denied to them, since tradition is engendered by the dialectical process which is the explicit denial of the fragmentation of the natural process. If the German people lived in a state of nature – i.e. were mentally no more than human animals – they could not have had a tradition that the Brothers Grimm or Max Müller strived to revive by unearthing the folktales of ages past. In this sense, the eristical nature of Nazism becomes complete comprehensible, since a people bereft of tradition, feeling threatened by other nations, whom because of their lowly-developed consciousness, imagined to be not a nation, but simply a people like they themselves were – which is a society in which dialectical means are supreme and the people included in the society have reached reason in their consciousness – were pretty much reminiscent of the savages of Hobbes and Puffendorf. Therefore, the German people might or might not have had a tradition in the folktales that the Grimms and Müller unearthed, but since the Germans became degenerate and lost touch with reason, the tradition which was put in front of them incited them not to continue what was positive in the tradition and climb the dialectic scale, but painfully misconstrued it – especially given Müller’s somewhat preposterous Aryan myth.<sup>203</sup> What this all boils down to is that once tradition is so lost and the people to whom the tradition itself belongs are put under the influence of factors that in fact make them descend the scale into desire and passion, there might come a point where such people are beyond redemption.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> *The Idea of History*. 224.

<sup>203</sup> R. G. Collingwood. *Tales of Enchantment* ” in R. G. Collingwood. *The Philosophy of Enchantment: Studies in Folktale, Cultural Criticism, and Anthropology*, Eds. David Boucher, Wendy James, Philip Smallwood. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.) 133-140. 178. 284-285.

<sup>204</sup> “Men are united, society is society, only in so far as they live after the guidance of reason.” “The Nature and Meaning of Sociality.” 60. As expounded above, herd-instinct and reason are contradictory terms and as canvassed above, in this sense German society was not a society but a random group of people inhabiting the same territory, which was called Germany.



All societies contain subjects whom in this case have to be considered objects because they have not yet reached the level of mental strength and consciousness to participate in society of their own free volition<sup>205</sup> – i.e. children<sup>206</sup> – but the above also implies that should this process continue, there would be no one socially conscious enough to teach these children how to engender the process by which they can traverse the scale of forms and become useful members of their own society.

Real liberty, which includes the dialectical process of the human mind, can only be achieved by what Collingwood terms the “three laws of politics.”<sup>207</sup> The only one of these three rules that is germane to our discussion is the second one, namely that “the barrier between [the ruler and the ruled] is permeable in an upward sense. That is, members of the ruled class must be susceptible of promotion into the ruling class. For the ruling class must not be allowed to die out; it always has work to do, and must always be fit to do it [...].”<sup>208</sup> Here, the educational leitmotif of Collingwood’s program can be observed, since this rule implies no more than that the people have to partake in a political education and should they be deemed fit, they can be admitted to the class of rulers, which is not an estate but a meritocracy. This in effect cannot

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<sup>205</sup> Collingwood differentiates two such cases of the non-social element of the “nursery,” i.e. children and that of the “cave,” –probably referring to Vico’s theory of the beginning of civilisation – i.e. criminals, or even more possibly the barbaric, non-reformable element in society. According to Collingwood the breakdown of classical political theory was engendered by the fact that it never took into account that in civilisation there will always be a non-reformable element. The most salient classical political theory is that of Kant’s. Kant’s theory of the possibility of perpetual peace by establishing a world-state came under severe attack from dialecticians, especially Croce, as it would lead to stagnation and the ending of the historical process would usher in not liberalism, which is process in history, but the death of civilisation. “Perpetual peace” is “self-contradictory as are all ideas that similarly attempt to break or alter the rhythm of life.” *The New Leviathan*. 269-270. “The Yahoo is always with us; that is why hopes for the abolition of war are vain. [...] No society is altogether a society. Every society, so called, is partly the society into which it is trying to turn itself, and partly the Yahoo herd it is trying to leave behind. [...] These defects in sociality are the source of war.” *The New Leviathan*. 241.

<sup>206</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 151-152. This is also characteristic of the scale of forms that the higher incorporates the lower and in the case of society it does not purge the lower of its negative elements, i.e. there is always a non-social part in every society but that part can be brought to such a consciousness as to cease to be what it used to be. However, with the birth of children, the non-social part will always regenerate itself. “The non-social family community consists primarily of children whom the parents hope to bring to a condition of physical and mental maturity. When the hope is fulfilled as regards any given child, the child emerges from the non-social community and, being now possessed of a free will becomes capable of social life.” *Ibid*. 171. 185.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid*. 184-191.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid*. 189.

come about in any kind of dictatorship, since the elevation of the people into the ruling class requires a dialectical process between the forces that would accelerate the process and those which would slow it down, that is between the Liberals and the Conservatives<sup>209</sup> who both know that the process of admission must of necessity come about but whereas the Liberals would hastily admit people of insufficient volition into the ruling class, the Conservatives would be recalcitrant to admit even those who are sufficiently qualified.<sup>210</sup> Croce put it very eloquently when he said that “the antitheses of parties find their synthesis not in the government, but in history.”<sup>211</sup> The second law of politics is also important in Croce’s *Politics and Morals*, in which he equates moral and political education.<sup>212</sup> He further adds, that “Aristocracy is truly vigorous and serious when it is not a closed but an open aristocracy, firm in keeping the common people away, but always ready to welcome those who have elevated themselves to its level.”<sup>213</sup> The very same tenet is observed by de Ruggiero;<sup>214</sup> therefore we might consider the three laws of politics as inherent in the liberalism of the day. De Ruggiero describes liberalism eloquently as “its nature, a nature strictly dialectical, draws nourishment from all oppositions, from discord no less than concord, dissent no less than consent.”<sup>215</sup> This means that in a one-party dictatorship the dialectical process can never come about, owing to the fact that the Bolsheviks were likely to accelerate the process and admit just about anybody, whereas the Fascists and Nazis were prone to do just the opposite. In a one party dictatorship it is also impossible to arrive at this point because it is a point in the scale of human progress and none of the three above-mentioned dictatorships could explain progress in its positive sense, in fact, they did not aim at progress and from Collingwood’s point they represented an inauspicious regress which threatened civilisation as a whole. The fact that

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<sup>209</sup> Cf. “Another Conservative once explained that he was a ‘brake’ on the vehicle of progress; and, he continued, it was necessary for a vehicle to have a brake.” *The New Leviathan*. 209-210.

<sup>210</sup> *New Leviathan*. 209. Croce also mentions this point in his *Politics and Morals*. *Politics and Morals*. 30.

<sup>211</sup> *Politics and Morals*. 42.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.* 26.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.* 118-119.

<sup>214</sup> *The History of European Liberalism*. 358. 361-363.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.* 442.

Germany and Italy could descend into such dictatorships means – according T. H. Green – that these people were observant only of “positive laws,” i.e. laws which originated with the authorities.<sup>216</sup> However, Green emphasizes the fact that the individual, if he is in moral disagreement with the law, it is his duty to resist it,<sup>217</sup> even if it causes punishment for him<sup>218</sup> since the state by coercing him into doing something which goes against his consciousness “violates his natural rights” and thus reduces him to “slavery”<sup>219</sup> The fact that Germany and Italy could descend into such dictatorship signifies the corruption of the mind of people on the scale of forms and their herd mentality. The form which embodies morals and will is called the “law of opinion”<sup>220</sup> and is at a higher stage on the scale of forms. The moral duty of the subject is “self-perfection,”<sup>221</sup> i.e. “natural law”<sup>222</sup> – which means in Green’s vocabulary positive liberty,<sup>223</sup> which somebody who is possessed by a herd mentality cannot comprehend or follow. Since having free will and free choice, the agent “realises his reason,”<sup>224</sup> but since as we saw, herd mentality renders free will impossible, Nazis and Fascists can never have free will or reason.

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<sup>216</sup> *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation.* 6. 90.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.* 9. 103. 108. 111.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.* 10. 82.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.* 105.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.* 7.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.* 7-8.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.* 14.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.* 16.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.* 8.

## Chapter 2: The forms of knowledge

### 2.1. The forms of theoretical reason

In *Speculum Mentis, or the Map of Knowledge* and in *An Outline of a Philosophy of Art*, written in 1924 and 1925, Collingwood constructs a thesis regarding the forms of human knowledge, in which each form of knowledge grows out of the one preceding it, “each of them [being] an implicit denial of the rest.”<sup>225</sup> The five forms have a “natural” ascending “order of their own.”<sup>226</sup> These are art, religion, science, history and philosophy.<sup>227</sup> Reflective of these five categories is that they are all normative, or as Collingwood prefers to call them “criteriological,” meaning that they incorporate thought, which is capable of deciding whether it has failed in the carrying out of what it meant to, i.e. was successful in solving the problem it set out to solve or not. Everything that partakes in the intellect is a criteriological science, i.e. it has a problem to solve and therefore it can be decided whether the problem has been solved successfully or not.<sup>228</sup> Every problem is an answer to a question; therefore we cannot know whether a problem has been solved successfully, unless we know what the question was.<sup>229</sup>

Collingwood in *Speculum Mentis* subjects these modes of experience to study as transcendental universals, i.e. as innate activities of the human mind. This is the everyday sense of the categories, in some of his later works, especially on history, the theoretical sense

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<sup>225</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 48.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.* 50.

<sup>227</sup> For the sake of brevity, the following account of the five different forms of knowledge will be taken from *An Outline of a Philosophy of Art* instead of *Speculum Mentis*. For more details see: *Speculum Mentis*. 58-305.

<sup>228</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 109-111.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.* 23-33.

gains ascendancy over the transcendental universal one and is studied as a science, which for Collingwood implies no more than a systematic and thorough investigation of a given subject matter.<sup>230</sup>

There is no science except where two conditions are fulfilled. There must be orderly or systematic thinking, and there must be a definite subject-matter to think about.[...] An ordinary science is the science of some definite subject matter, having special problems of its own that arise out of the special peculiarities of the subject-matter, and special methods of its own, that arise out of [its] special problems. [...]<sup>231</sup>

Collingwood laments the fact that he has to separate the forms of knowledge to some extent because he regards the “unity of the mind,”<sup>232</sup> which was destroyed by the Renaissance,<sup>233</sup> as one of the chief elements of mental and intellectual health. The Renaissance engendered individualism and thereby freedom, but this freedom is “a negative” one, it is merely “the freedom to outrage one’s own nature<sup>234</sup>. [...] “This is the fruit of the Renaissance.”<sup>235</sup> However, one of Collingwood’s main doctrines is the process of the mind, whereby sudden leaps cannot transpire.<sup>236</sup> Owing to this principle, the separation of the five forms of consciousness cannot have occurred in such a rapid mode as Collingwood presents it in *Speculum Mentis* but must have been brought about gradually and the Renaissance separation must have only meant the acme by which time the five different forms could not be subdued

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<sup>230</sup> R. G. Collingwood. “Outlines of a Philosophy of History” in R. G. Collingwood in *The Idea of History with Lectures 1926-1928*, ed. Jan van der Dussen. (Oxford: University Press, 1993.) 432.

<sup>231</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 13-15.

<sup>232</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 27. Croce and his fellow neo-idealists are of the same opinion. According to Croce, only a fully unified mind can grasp the concept of ethics and act accordingly to it and to reach that level a dialectical process of the mind is a *sine qua non*. *Politics and Morals*. 23. The unity of the mind, by which it develops in a dialectical process, Croce calls “the history of philosophy.” *Politics and Morals*. 110.

<sup>233</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 30.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.* 31.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.* 34.

<sup>236</sup> This was probably the only doctrine in which Oakeshott got the better of Collingwood – by being more Collingwoodian than Collingwood himself - in writing about historical experience by highlighting one of Collingwood favourite phrases, i.e. “process”. : Everything goes by degrees and nothing by leaps. Whatever may happen in “daily life, nothing appears *de novo*.” *Experience and its Modes*. 142.

to one another in order to maintain unity. Everything is a process as expounded by Kant,<sup>237</sup> Whitehead and Alexander.<sup>238</sup> Summarizing Whitehead's famous dictum, Collingwood asserts that "there is no nature at an instant." Nature is not body as distinct from event; it is body, no doubt, but body itself is only a complex of events; and since events take time, it takes time for nature to exist."<sup>239</sup> Thus, Collingwood's point that it was the Renaissance which caused a break in the unity of mind cannot be veridical especially since he adheres to the above-mentioned three philosophers. Also, given Collingwood's reverence for Croce, who asserted that liberalism never dies only goes through crises to once again emerge triumphantly,<sup>240</sup> it is highly illogical of him to propose a sudden leap in history, in which history itself is not regarded as process. "The world, which cannot perish and which has the will to live, must always return to the paths of liberty; however men may deny and. blaspheme it, be they few or many, they cannot change the law of the world."<sup>241</sup>

Collingwood's despair seems somewhat odd until further explanation is given to his reason why. What Croce meant to say was probably since the mind of people is dialectical and liberalism is the only dialectical form of politics, it cannot fail to rise again. However, Collingwood – in spite of his early declared neo-Hegelianism<sup>242</sup> – never considered any catastrophe in history as possibly conducive to emanationism as did Croce<sup>243</sup>, in which he did not believe, and that is the point that probably marks him off most from his Italian fellow neo-idealists. Croce reasserted the Hegelian viewpoint when he said that "history develops by crises."<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 258. As is well known, Kant's doctrine was that a body in motion does not reach v2 from v1 immediately but that it has to traverse all the points from v1 to v2.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.* 266-267.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.* 267.

<sup>240</sup> *Politics and Morals*. 120-121.

<sup>241</sup> *My Philosophy*. 238.

<sup>242</sup> *The Social and Political Thought of R.G. Collingwood*. 4.

<sup>243</sup> *Politics and Morals*. 174.

<sup>244</sup> *My Philosophy*. 59.

According to the scale of forms there is always a primitive survival, that is, the past remains encapsulated in the present, but the present point of the scale is at once the opposition and the distinct of the form below it by denying it is an opposite,<sup>245</sup> by incorporating what the previous form had it in which was of positive value and realising what the previous form aimed at realising it is a distinct.<sup>246</sup> Therefore process<sup>1</sup> is always present in process<sup>2</sup>.<sup>247</sup> It means that the Renaissance was merely the acme, at which point the puerility of the sciences had grown so much they could no longer be subservient to each other<sup>248</sup> and another unificatory scheme had to be developed. In any case, the change cannot have been nearly as abrupt as Collingwood proposes it to be. In proposing a leap, Collingwood contradicts his Vichianism, his supposed post-Kantianism, his philosophical adherence to modern science and everything he propagated elsewhere about process. Croce expresses not only the Vichian notion but that of Collingwood's best upon claiming that "custom changes not at a blow, but gradually and slowly."<sup>249</sup>

Collingwood does not even endeavour to bring about such unity as was characteristic of the Middle Ages because such unity was heavily pregnant with a certain puerility of the forms.<sup>250</sup> What Collingwood endeavours to work out is in fact a scale of forms in which all the forms are dependent on the rest. However, unbeknownst to Collingwood, he does not end up with a scale, but with a circle – owing to the fact that he labels metaphysics as *scientia prima* and *scientia ultima*<sup>251</sup> – whereby he heavily implies that even though metaphysical inquiry is

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<sup>245</sup> *New Leviathan*. 65. *An Essay on Philosophical Method*. 89.

<sup>246</sup> *An Essay on Philosophical Method*. 63-65.

<sup>247</sup> *An Autobiography*. 98-99. 106. 113-114. 141.

<sup>248</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 36.

<sup>249</sup> Benedetto Croce. *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913.) 108.

<sup>250</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 26.

<sup>251</sup> The establishment of a new metaphysics was of primary importance to Collingwood, since he thought that the butchery and nationalism that was transpiring in his own day was to some extent the result of a flawed metaphysical system. *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 98.

inevitable if rational scientific undertakings are to be pursued – hence metaphysics is logically antecedent to any form of science, in the scale it is posited at the top owing to its being studied last. “The First and Last Science is therefore the science of that which stands as ultimate logical ground to everything that is studied by any other science.”<sup>252</sup>

Medieval life was an explicit denial of the highest form of practical reason, i.e. duty, since people did not act out of their own moral volition but according to god’s commandments. Duty is duty because volition has transcended caprice, expediency and pleasure, not because somebody else ordained it. Duty qualifies as duty only if the agent does the act out of recognising that in the given circumstance he can and must do something.

A duty is a thing, which for him in his present position, both internally or with respect to his ‘character’ and externally or with respect to his ‘circumstances’, is both possible and necessary: something he can freely decide to do, and the only thing he can freely decide to do.<sup>253</sup>

Therefore, Collingwood’s support of Christianity is not wholly compatible with his theory of practical reason.<sup>254</sup>

In *Speculum Mentis* and *An Outline of a Philosophy of Art*, Collingwood tries to restore the unity of the Middle Ages, at a higher level of union by giving some kind of freedom to all forms of knowledge.<sup>255</sup> According to Collingwood, art is pure imagination,<sup>256</sup> and imagination as such is incapable of making assertions.<sup>257</sup> The artist as such does not care about the truth

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<sup>252</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 10.

<sup>253</sup> *New Leviathan*. 220.

<sup>254</sup> However, in Collingwood’s writings it is obvious that duty is also performed according to man’s choice, whereas for Kant, it is not, because it is the plan of nature, thereby free choice regarding duty cannot exist. “The Principle of Progress.” 68. 70.

<sup>255</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 36.

<sup>256</sup> R. G. Collingwood. *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art*. (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994.) 3.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid*. 46.



value of his work because for him truth and reality are non-existent.<sup>258</sup> This, Collingwood labels the “monadism”<sup>259</sup> of art. The artist “paints to see”<sup>260</sup> and in art “our mind is made visible to itself.”<sup>261</sup> Yet, it is exactly this very monadism that causes the collapse of art.<sup>262</sup> In collapsing, art engenders religion, which aspires to assert the truth but in utilising the metaphors it inherited from art, what it asserts and what it means to convey are two different things. Religion is not aware that it resorts to using metaphors. Were it aware of this fact, it would be the death of religion.<sup>263</sup> In contradicting itself, religion gives birth to science which isolates language from thought, and appearance from reality, in order “to comprehend the purely intelligible world.”<sup>264</sup> However, such abstraction engenders mere abstraction and the very problem science poses in aiming at complete abstraction is insoluble. Science is an “ideal never realised,” replete with “law[s] which have no instances.”<sup>265</sup> Therefore, science needs to beget a new form of knowledge which solves the problem it has engendered. This new form of consciousness is history in which truth, imagination, language and appearance are amalgamated. History is a “universal that particularises itself.” However, in history the object and the subject remain separate entities, whereby a remnant of abstractness survives in history,<sup>266</sup> which causes history<sup>267</sup> to turn into philosophy in which the mind is both the object

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<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.* 13.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.* 27.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.* 80.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.* 44.

<sup>262</sup> In the third part of *The Principles of Art*, Collingwood radically changes his earlier position. Art becomes something by which man and the community face their common emotions in order to solve the emerging problems of society. *The Principles of Art*. 293-300. I disagree with Johnston thesis that there was no substantial difference between the theory of art as outlined in *An Outline of a Philosophy of Art* and *The Principles of Art*. The latter addressed art as telling people the truth about themselves, whereas in the former art is pure imagination, which does not distinguish between truth and fiction. The thesis of the earlier work is present in *Speculum Mentis* as well. Collingwood, I think, shifted his theory because he realised the degeneration of art in modern society and art being the primary source of consciousness, the degeneration of which engendered the misconstrual of the superseding forms. I also think that the shift occurred because Collingwood must have regarded Nazism and Fascism as the irrationality of the mind, which was engendered by a false conception and misunderstanding of art. *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood*. 93.

<sup>263</sup> *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art*. 90-91.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.* 92.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.* 93.

<sup>266</sup> By 1936, Collingwood modified this doctrine in enunciating the doctrine of historical re-enactment, whereby the historian can re-enact for himself the thoughts of the historical agent. For more details see: *The Idea of History*. 282-301. In the fragmentary *The Principles of History*, Collingwood goes even further in asserting that the historian can

and the subject, in which man “is creating himself by knowing himself, and so creating for himself an intelligible world of spirit in general.”<sup>268</sup> Philosophy is “the end and crown of all knowledge, the self-recognition of the mind in its own mirror.”<sup>269</sup> Therefore the scale of forms of human knowledge constitutes “a whole,” which would be demolished, should any one part of it be destroyed.<sup>270</sup> Logically, if philosophy were destroyed, the four inferior kinds of knowledge might remain intact, the biggest peril being that human consciousness would never, could never attain that kind of high-level consciousness of which philosophy is the incarnation. However, should art be destroyed, the whole scale would be destroyed with it, since art is the soil out of which all the other activities of human knowledge grow out of. In the following, I will canvass why Collingwood thought that these forms of knowledge have been largely demolished or were about to be demolished and the consequences of such destruction.

Collingwood canvasses the situation in which civilization wallowed in a multiple page-long passage in *Speculum Mentis*, which merits direct quotation of some of its parts for its poignancy and directness.

[...] The demand is not there, and the supply dissipates itself like an ‘earthed’ electric current. The philosopher cannot justify his existence as the writer of popular novels can; by saying he satisfies a need universally felt. [...] Religion to-day is in much the same state. [...] We actually see everywhere empty churches, or churches filled only by the popularity of the preacher or for some other personal reason, not because of the religious principles for which they stand are such as give peace and

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not only re-enact the thought of the agent but the accompanying emotions that necessitate the action of the agent, as well. *The Principles of History*. 67.

<sup>267</sup> *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art*. 93.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.* 94.

<sup>269</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 317. By 1939, Collingwood had managed to equate philosophy with history in asserting that they are inseparable. This is most conspicuous in his famous saying in the chapter titled “The Need for a Philosophy of History” in *An Autobiography*: “My life’s work hitherto, as seen from my fiftieth year, has been in the main an attempt to bring about a *rapprochement* between philosophy and history.” *An Autobiography*. 77. For more details see: *An Autobiography*. 77-88. In spite of this fact, I will treat philosophy and history as separate forms of knowledge to better illustrate their demise in the catastrophe-laden world Collingwood lived in.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.* 311.

consolation to the people who attend them. [...] Nor is art, in spite of the popular novels, in a better state. Thousands of man and women are trying merely to live by artistic production, and failing. It is not that their work is bad, nor even that there is too much of it for the demand. The actual output of the pictures and statues, poems and string quartets does not fail its market because its own low quality; for the purchasers do not buy the best, because they have not the skill to distinguish it. [...] The great man, when he appears, is more likely to be despised and rejected than to be crowned as king. [...] If God does not send us great men, we may be sure it is only because we do not deserve them; in other words, because we have made ourselves a world in which no great man could reach maturity and keep his greatness unimpaired. [...] Our concern is therefore with the ordinary artists, the ordinary ministers of religion and students of philosophy, who exist among us in great plenty and yet they fail to justify, in the world's eyes, their very existence. [...] They fail, and fail with a thoroughness which is a new thing in the world's history. [...] Art and religion and philosophy are not vain quests, they are normal activities of the human mind. This is the special problem of modern life. On the one hand, there is an unsatisfied demand for art, religion and philosophy. On the other, there is a crowd of artists, philosophers, ministers of religion who can find no market for their wares. Every street and every village in the country contains people who are hungering for beauty, for faith, for knowledge, and cannot find these things. And those who have them are starving for mere bread, because no one will buy. The producers and consumers of spiritual wealth are out of touch. [...] This coexistence of overproduction on the one side with unsatisfied demand on the other I have ventured to call the special problem of modern life. [...] There is no degeneracy in the human breed as yet, for all the rantings of our unsuccessful reformers. And yet the fault is not all the prophet's. He is the son of his age; and the generation that produces crazy prophets must be a crazy generation. [...] Every one agrees that our present condition is, in some peculiar way, a morbid one.<sup>271</sup>

Collingwood's father was a polymath, who lived in self-inflicted penury, as he thought that painting and other studies were more worthy of his time than being employed. He was convinced that there was no worthier occupation than earning one's bread by his own labour which one did out of passion and not obligation.<sup>272</sup> This way of thinking and his admiration for his father and his mentality is illustrated in the above passage. The way Collingwood was disappointed with the state of art reflected the Ruskinian idea that the state in which art was

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<sup>271</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 15-22.

<sup>272</sup> *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood*. 14.

found in, “reflected” the state of the nation itself,<sup>273</sup> therefore Collingwood was perfectly aware of the profligate spirit in which England was dwelling in and knew that unless something was rapidly done, there would be even graver consequences. Collingwood also inherited the Ruskinian idea that one has to engage in “hobbies” and all the forms of theoretical reason to keep one’s mind healthy.<sup>274</sup>

The above-quoted passage originates in 1924, when in spite of the inherent bleakness of Collingwood’s vision regarding the world he lived in, he did not yet fathom the severity of the crisis. In a few years, the “crazy prophets” he mentioned were to become even more insane with the emergence of Hitler and Stalin and in the later works of Collingwood, the very question of the ultimate death of civilisation is being tackled. In 1924, he was not yet aware that people and producers of “spiritual wealth” were not simply out of touch, but that people actually longed for mediocrity,<sup>275</sup> an escape from the “drudgery” of ordinary life and consumed low-quality products as drug addicts consume heroin, a metaphor that was a recurring theme in the later writings, especially in *The Principles of Art*, “Man and the Machine” and “Man Goes Mad.” F. R. Lewis published and edited the famous and – among the intelligentsia – very popular periodical, *Scrutiny*, which dealt with the same subject and tried to find a remedy for it. Lewis addressed his periodical to “an armed and conscious minority,” which was hostile to the degeneration of taste<sup>276</sup> and culture.<sup>277</sup> People did not conserve their previous way of life which was meaningful because they did not consider it

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<sup>273</sup> Ibid. 21.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid. 29.

<sup>275</sup> Croce, for example, associated the masses with mediocrity, Nazism, Fascism and communism., which systems he describes as “the insidious enemy of intellect.” Croce does not take into account that the attack from the left on Liberalism was engendered by Adam Smith’s doctrine of laissez-faire, hence his dismissive remarks regarding communism are somewhat dubious. However, Croce, unlike Collingwood, hails the Industrial Revolution and the mechanisation of the world, as freeing mankind from slavery, therefore, who shows no sympathy for the proletariat. *My Philosophy*. 26-27. “Man Goes Mad.” 330.

<sup>276</sup> Here we can see Ruskin’s overwhelming influence on Collingwood, who decried the very same mediocrity that he found in his own age. *History Man*. 228.

<sup>277</sup> *History Man*. 227.

worthy of sustenance.<sup>278</sup> Much like Rome – which did not fall because of the barbarian attacks, but because Romans did not value their civilisation anymore,<sup>279</sup> - here Collingwood echoes Green<sup>280</sup> - the modern world was moribund not because of Hitler and Mussolini but because people did not want to preserve their traditions<sup>281</sup> and this caused a rapture in which the emergence of Fascism and Nazism as the harbingers of the death of modern society was inevitable. The problem with mediocrity was that it tended, more often than not, to be the despotism of the majority, a despotism coming from the lower, uneducated classes and easily turned into a dictatorship, whom the masses slavishly worshiped, as in the case of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. This was the reason that early-20<sup>th</sup> century liberals categorically rejected liberalism in which “the idolatry” of the equality of all men – unrelated to his moral character or his education – was taken for granted. Democracy was “not the triumph of quantity, but the triumph of bad quality.”<sup>282</sup> As asserted both by Collingwood and de Ruggiero, negative liberty engendered the outcry for democracy; however Collingwood actually seems to have agreed with the socialist outcry, or in the very least he was sympathetic towards it, but conceded that Fascism and Nazism and right-wing radicalism were the result of the bourgeois rising against socialism. He and de Ruggiero were in full agreement upon noting that the liberalism of the day was insufficiently prepared to tackle to problems of the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and had no weapons against democracy, socialism, Nazism and Fascism because it had lost its connection with the liberal tradition.<sup>283</sup> Perhaps worse, historical materialism denied the individual any kind of value that was not a segment of his environment and thus bestowed on him a false, corrupt and perhaps it is not an exaggeration

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<sup>278</sup> The similarity between Eliot and Collingwood is striking, since Eliot’s conclusion was also that the modern disease was the product of a culture which did not believe in the importance of its own propagation. *History Man*. 229.

<sup>279</sup> *New Leviathan*. 330.

<sup>280</sup> *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*. 92-94.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid*. 95. 99.

<sup>282</sup> *The History of European Liberalism*. 376-378.

<sup>283</sup> *The History of European Liberalism*. 384-386.

to say, morbid political education.<sup>284</sup> Liberalism – apart from being the *non plus ultra* of social life – was the only political form that was capable of bestowing a correct and valid education on the individual, be it political or not, because it taught duty as it was the result of duty itself, whereas all other forms taught caprice as they resulted in it.<sup>285</sup>

The only remedy is the reunification of human mind by which man will find his society worthy of sustaining. However, the modes of experience separated in the Renaissance because of their progress by dint of which they could not remain in oneness anymore. The solution, therefore, is uniting them in a dialectical process in which the many is one and the one is many.<sup>286</sup> Short of such dialecticism, the world was doomed and Collingwood made it perfectly clear in his subsequent writings. To make matters more complicated, philosophers, clergymen, literary-man were susceptible of being influenced by politics, which in itself led to the corruption of their own consciousness – as both Collingwood and Croce alluded to Gentile’s case without naming him,<sup>287</sup> in fact Croce alluded to him as “repulsive and disgusting”, as a warning that philosophers should never interfere in politics to be party-man.<sup>288</sup> Oakeshott goes a step further, since according to him it is not really politicians who govern, i.e., society is not governed from the foreground but from the background by its own intellectuals, thus it is a mortiferous danger if the carriers of spiritual wealth become entangled in party politics and do not look at the whole.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.* 387-389.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.* 437.

<sup>286</sup> *Speculum Mentis.* 28-38. 44. 48. 50.

<sup>287</sup> *An Autobiography.* 158. “There was once a very able and distinguished philosopher who was converted to Fascism. As a philosopher that was the end of him. No one could embrace a creed so fundamentally muddle-headed and remain capable of clear thinking.” *An Autobiography.* 158.

<sup>288</sup> *My Philosophy.* 115.

<sup>289</sup> “The Claims of Politics.” 96.

## 2.2. The death of art

Art contains reason because the artist obliges with his duty when he creates the piece of art he creates. At the time he is creating, that one piece is the only one which he can and does create. “Without sense, we cannot have intellect: without poetry, we cannot have philosophy, nor indeed any civilisation.”<sup>290</sup> Art, as we have seen in the foregoing, is the most elementary and in some ways the most pivotal form of knowledge, as all the higher forms are built upon it and grow out of it.<sup>291</sup> By 1936, Collingwood was severely disenchanted with the state of art. In “Art and the Machine,” he expresses his disillusionment with the mechanization of civilization which has engendered a common hatred for art and a serious rift between the minority who could appreciate real art from the “philistine majority,” who had no penchant for art and what it is expressed.<sup>292</sup> Collingwood regarded his generation, grown up in a world of “shattered institutions,”<sup>293</sup> as one infected with “a spiritual disease”<sup>294</sup> which consisted in the fact that everything which was not utilitarian was discarded and annihilated.<sup>295</sup> As we have seen, Collingwood regarded art as the form of knowledge which expresses human

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<sup>290</sup> *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*. 49.

<sup>291</sup> As Collingwood writes: “The lower elements are not purposeless, and cannot be killed without fatal damage to the whole, nor ignored without fatal ignorance of the whole. Respect not only your reason but your passions; not only your conscious mind but your unconscious mind; not only your mind but your body.” R. G. Collingwood. “The Rules of Life” in R. G. Collingwood. *Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. David Boucher. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.) 173.

<sup>292</sup> R. G. Collingwood. “Art and the Machine” in R. G. Collingwood. *The Philosophy of Enchantment: Studies in Folktales, Cultural Criticism, and Anthropology*, Eds. David Boucher, Wendy James, Philip Smallwood. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.) 295.

<sup>293</sup> “The Rules of Life.” 172.

<sup>294</sup> R. G. Collingwood. “The Prussian Philosophy” in R. G. Collingwood. *Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. David Boucher. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.) 203. Collingwood saw this problem well enough in 1924 and he expresses the same despair in *Speculum Mentis*: “We cannot ever be man at all; we are wrecks and fragments of men, and we do not know where to take hold of life and how to begin looking for the happiness which we know we do not possess.” *Speculum Mentis*. 35. Croce described the situation with much the same despair as Collingwood did: “All these things have already their appellations in the moral world, they are called spiritual tiredness, disintegration of the will, lack of moral sense, superstition about the past, timorous conservatism, cowardice which knowingly tries to excuse itself by equivocation and by appealing to historical necessity when the need is for resolution and action according to moral necessity—and so on.” *History as the Story of Liberty*. 42.

<sup>295</sup> R. G. Collingwood. “The Utilitarian Civilization” in R. G. Collingwood. *Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. David Boucher. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.) 197.

emotion, without which the whole foundation of thought becomes corrupt and rotten. He laments that those that invented the photograph, the radio and the cinema<sup>296</sup> did so in good faith, thinking they would propagate art and provide the less well-off with a chance to become more familiar with the fine arts, however, according to Collingwood, these innovations only provided people with “dope.”<sup>297</sup> The photograph distorts pictures by not being able to bring out all the colours and shades the original is endowed with and by diminishing the size of the original, the painting becomes utterly distorted.<sup>298</sup> Collingwood never trusted the photograph; hence he made approximately five thousand charcoal inscriptions of his archaeological findings.<sup>299</sup> The radio, being controlled by the uneducated listener, can never realise the loudness of the individual instruments, which original loudness is vital to the proper musical experience,<sup>300</sup> while the cinema bestows on people not works of art but “emotional drugs.”<sup>301</sup>

Collingwood notes that mechanical reproduction<sup>302</sup> is “a disaster for our civilization” and it leads people to despise real art<sup>303</sup> since the person who has only seen paintings in photographs and heard classical music on the radio, upon seeing or hearing the originals, will not think that he has been deceived by the mechanical reproduction of such works, but will continue professing them to be worthless because of the hate of art which has been inculcated in him.<sup>304</sup> Bosanquet also notes the “failure in mechanical civilisation to offer the highest values [...]”<sup>305</sup> This, Collingwood regards as an “educational problem,”<sup>306</sup> since the new generation,

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<sup>296</sup> It was a common theme among academicians that the cinema meant a perilous effect on culture. *History Man*. 230.

<sup>297</sup> “Art and the Machine.” 297.

<sup>298</sup> “Ibid.” 291-292.

<sup>299</sup> *History Man*. 83.

<sup>300</sup> “Art and the Machine.” 293.

<sup>301</sup> “Ibid.” 297.

<sup>302</sup> Collingwood holds that the only things worthy of mechanical reproduction are the worst quality of works, such as magazine covers or dance songs. “Art and the Machine.” 294.

<sup>303</sup> “Art and the Machine.” 295.

<sup>304</sup> “Ibid.” 295.

<sup>305</sup> Bernard Bosanquet. “Is Compensation Necessary for Optimism?” in Bernard Bosanquet. *Social and International Ideals*. (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1917.) 61.

<sup>306</sup> “Art and the Machine.” 302.



bereft of the means of appreciating art and beauty, which is the fountain of a “healthy mental life”<sup>307</sup> will only grow more corrupt, whereas if educators find a means of inoculating these young people with the love of true art, “children so trained will need no dope.”<sup>308</sup> This remark marks a tendency quite extant in the European thought of Collingwood’s day. Collingwood’s fellow idealist, Giovanni Gentile, wrote extensively about the need of educational reform in order to render people’s spiritual lives whole and de-fragment them<sup>309</sup> and Bernard Bosanquet also wrote at quite some length about the need for education,<sup>310</sup> particularly about the need of understanding the make-up of the mind of man, his passions and teaching children accordingly, and thus constituting a unity of the mind, which will lead to a healthy political life.<sup>311</sup> He said that “our common purpose is the excellence of the human soul,”<sup>312</sup> which for Bosanquet would obviously have meant a guarantee for internal and external peace. This for Bosanquet was of pivotal importance since he regarded the First World War as not an outcome of people or nations being inherently evil but appropriated it to the “unintelligent” interaction of people who were in search of common aims. Acting intelligently means that we achieve our aims, not at the loss of another,<sup>313</sup> but co-operating with the other so that both parties achieve their aim which approach will safeguard peace, hence the educational reform based on the nature of the human mind is crucial in ushering in a long-lasting peace among nations. If the passions, which demonstrate their own cupidity in a policy of expansion are “tamed,”<sup>314</sup> “politics [will become] the expression of reason in the relations that bind man to

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<sup>307</sup> “Ibid.” 301.

<sup>308</sup> “Ibid.” 303.

<sup>309</sup> Gentile’s writings on the reform of education are very similar to *The Idea as a Pure Act*, hence his main book about it will not be tackled here extensively.

<sup>310</sup> Although what was important for Bosanquet was the opposition between patriotism and nationalism and his educational reform tended towards establishing a need for endowing children with a healthy patriotism, which did not feel threatened by and in turn was not inimical towards other nations. Bernard Bosanquet. “The Teaching of Patriotism” in Bernard Bosanquet. *Social and International Ideals*. (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1917.)1-5.

<sup>311</sup> Bernard Bosanquet. *The Philosophical Theory of the State*. (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1930.) xiii.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.* xxxvii.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.* xlvi-xlvii.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.* xlvii-xlix.

man.”<sup>315</sup> Education has to be such that actively propagates positive liberty in enabling people to realise their potential and thereby render society better.<sup>316</sup> This way, it will be impossible to separate means and ends, which separation engendered the First World War<sup>317</sup> and the human being will become a social being, who will observe his duties and will not behave according to caprice.<sup>318</sup> Since every mind mirrors the world in which it dwells,<sup>319</sup> it is illogical to blame one group of persons or nations for the evil unleashed by the war. Therefore, the duty of education is to teach mankind to see the world in a different way, to stop being machine-crazed, and act in a military fashion. The reformer of education has to be a great man, since “a great man works with the ideas of his age, and regenerates them.”<sup>320</sup> Collingwood’s proposed educational reform is unique compared to those of others in the fact that owing to his own experience, he propagated that parents should teach their children<sup>321</sup> which was true for Collingwood as he was taught by his father – John Ruskin’s<sup>322</sup> secretary<sup>323</sup> and author in his own right, who moved to Coniston to be near his idol<sup>324</sup> – up until the age of thirteen. Collingwood started studying Latin at the age of four and Greek at six,<sup>325</sup> he was taught mechanics, he played the violin exquisitely, learnt to sail,<sup>326</sup> he went on archaeological trips<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.* 4.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.* 73.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.* Xlvii.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.* 87-119. “For culture is the liberation from one’s own caprices, and the acceptance of a universal task. It is a severe process, and therefore unpopular, but it is a necessary one if we are to have true freedom.” *Ibid.* 255.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.* 7. 139-162.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.* 13.

<sup>321</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 310. For more see: *The New Leviathan*: 308-317. Collingwood, in fact, goes so far as to assert that public education is one of the main, if not the main, factors of the disease of modernity. *The New Leviathan*. 311.

<sup>322</sup> Ruskin’s influence on Collingwood’s theory of art as a transcendental universal is evident when it is taken into consideration that Ruskin promulgated some sort of egalitarianism between craftsmen and artists, as the goal of both of whom was to create objects of beauty and ascribed the creation of beauty as an innate human need. This principle can be seen in Collingwood’s aesthetic writings as well. *History Man*. 51. Another very important feature of the Lakeland tradition which Ruskin propagated was medievalism – which as we have seen unified the human mind – and a democratic way of life. *History Man*.. 51

<sup>323</sup> *History Man*. 2.

<sup>324</sup> *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood*. 4.

<sup>325</sup> *An Autobiography*. 1.

<sup>326</sup> *History Man*. 20.

<sup>327</sup> Archeology as a popular past-time was introduced by the Victorian tradition against a growing mechanisation and industrialisation – in order to discover and propagate past values. *History Man*. 54. Another Lakeland

with his father, where he learnt to make archaeological sketches – which he later put to use in his archaeological work and last but not least, he wrote his very own detective novels. He was also introduced to fairy tales and the Icelandic sagas, about which his father G. W. Collingwood wrote two novels.<sup>328</sup> The influence of home education definitely originated with the fact that Ruskin was educated by his parents until he was seventeen years old.<sup>329</sup> His fascination with folklore grew when Collingwood, by then Fellow of Pembroke College, made the acquaintance and almost immediate friendship of the newly appointed fellow J. R. R. Tolkien, with whom he could share his enthusiasm for folklore.<sup>330</sup> As it becomes obvious, Collingwood's education was practise oriented<sup>331</sup> and many of its elements – such as his theory of art, the passion for fairytales, and his profession as an archaeologist hearken back to his early education. It was at a very young age that Collingwood learnt the necessary unification of the mind, which stayed with him for the rest of his short life. He was instructed in poetry, theatre and the crafts by his father.<sup>332</sup> Since his early education was practise-oriented, it is no wonder that Collingwood was so enthusiastic about Vico's verum-factum theory.<sup>333</sup> Collingwood's penchant for idealism is not surprising given the fact that Gershom Collingwood was taught at Oxford by the two greatest figures of British Idealism, F. H. Bradley and T. H. Green.<sup>334</sup> Furthermore, Charlotte Mason's opening of a special practice-oriented school, exclusively for girls, which not only taught general subjects but aimed at teaching these girls how impart the knowledge they gathered at the school to their own children, so that they would be able to educate the children without professional interference

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tradition was the Lakelanders' taking up landscape painting as a communal effort to admire the beauty of the land and express their communality. *History Man*. 57.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.* 5.

<sup>329</sup> *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood*. 17.

<sup>330</sup> *History Man*. 105.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.* 5.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.* 6.

<sup>333</sup> *The Idea of History*. 61.

<sup>334</sup> *History Man*. 70

or assistance, was remarkable.<sup>335</sup> This school, could not have avoided Collingwood's attention and was probably one of his more importance influences – apart from his own experience with his father – for his rebellion against state education in *The New Leviathan*. His suggestion of the non-specialist nature of the parents also bears witness to the fact that he desired a unity of mind, which any form of specialisation would have ruined. As he put it in *Speculum Mentis*, “one learns what one has in one to learn, not what one's teachers have it in them to teach.”<sup>336</sup> One of the aspects that struck Collingwood as the main problems of education was that systematised state education tended to “wean” children off from the lower types of experience such as art and religion<sup>337</sup> and since these are the most basic types, the children will not have been provided the mental development that these forms supply and the aspects of their mind which are correspondent with these forms will not have been superseded but merely omitted, thus going on to the higher forms in a way that would be practically applicable in the real life of the children as emerging adults will be rendered impossible. As the forms correspond to certain ages in the development of children,<sup>338</sup> denying them any of the modes of experience is fatal to the healthy life of the child as a future adult. Since art is tantamount to the imaginative faculty,<sup>339</sup> discouraging children to give up art as they become older is equal to lacerating consciousness from imagination, which –as art is normative – is the first faculty that contains thought in itself and thereby rendering the whole normative faculty, based on the imagination, powerless. On the one hand, this goes with Collingwood's unfortunate experience at Rugby, where it was the teachers themselves who discouraged students from studying more than prescribed in the curriculum;<sup>340</sup> on the other hand, it is a very clear indication that in Collingwoodian philosophy the dialectics of the mind is infinite,

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<sup>335</sup> *History Man*. 51.

<sup>336</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 12.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.* 59.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.* 50-51.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.* 61. “Art is the cutting edge of mind, the perpetual outreaching of thought into the unknown, the act in which thought eternally sets itself a fresh problem. [Art] is the foundation and beginning of all real life.” *Ibid.* 107.

<sup>340</sup> *An Autobiography*. 7-9.

therefore school fragments knowledge when subjects are divided, certain topics opened for discussion and learning and then closed and most importantly, theory is divorced from experience. Even though, Collingwood's bent for early Gentilian philosophy is something that cannot be denied, here he deviates somewhat from Gentile, who propagated that school reform was of capital importance, so that a synthesis could be effectuated between student and teacher and practice and theory, thus both the student and the teacher would learn from the other.<sup>341</sup> For Collingwood, school was not needed, indeed, it was more deleterious than useful.

Nevertheless, the implication of what Collingwood says is that the present generation – the one deciding on policy – is lost, in any case and that does not bode well for the future of civilisation. In *The New Leviathan*, Collingwood identifies the age of his society with that of the age of classical politics: "Bacon was repeating a commonplace of the time when he wrote that 'In the youth of a state, arms do flourish; in the middle age of a state, learning; and then both of them together for a time; in the declining age of a state, mechanical arts and merchandise.'"<sup>342</sup> Obviously, this also gravely relates to science in which mechanisation was as significant, if not more, than in art. Another distinction is also relevant. Since Collingwood was an anti-determinist, he obviously did not concede that his age was *de facto* necessarily that of an irreversible deterioration but he did agree with the point Bacon made to the extent that he found it necessary to incorporate it in *The New Leviathan*. Another relevance of the point Collingwood emphasises, and it is probably more significant than that of the mechanisation of art and science that this way of thinking was innate in the logic of the Fascists and the Nazis, who regarded their states superior owing to their newly united nature,

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<sup>341</sup> Giovanni Gentile. *The Reform of Education*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922.) 166-167. 241.

<sup>342</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 185.

whereas they saw the cradles of liberalism as something moribund and to be destroyed because they were “senile.”<sup>343</sup>

By 1938, when he wrote *The Principles of Art*, Collingwood’s despair regarding the state of art had grown to an intolerable level. The disregard of society for art has engendered an emotional wasteland, which Collingwood depicts in one of the most poignant passages of the work:

[The Waste Land] depicts a world where the wholesome flowing water of emotion, which alone fertilizes all human activity, has dried up. Passions that once ran so strongly as to threaten the defeat of prudence, the destruction of human individuality, the wreck of men's little ships, are shrunk to nothing. No one gives; no one will risk himself by sympathizing; no one has anything to control. We are imprisoned in ourselves, becalmed in a windless selfishness. The only emotion left us is fear: fear of emotion itself, fear of death by drowning in it, fear in a handful of dust.<sup>344</sup>

This passage contains the Ruskinian idea that art is not concerned with what people are eager to hear, its task is illuminating the truth from which people wish to escape.<sup>345</sup> According to Collingwood, the only way by which the respect and love people felt towards art could be re-established was by bringing the audience and the author in such a relationship, in which the audience can feel itself as co-writing what it is witnessing, thereby establishing a collaboration between the author and the audience on the one hand, and between the author and the actors.<sup>346</sup> In such a way, the audience can imagine for itself, i.e. re-enact,<sup>347</sup> the emotions the author had when writing or composing the given piece and thus, if what the audience is witnessing is really a piece of art, then it will give answers to questions it had, by

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<sup>343</sup> Ibid. 186.

<sup>344</sup> *The Principles of Art*. 335. Collingwood’s affinity with Eliot, apart from his agreement with what Eliot had to say in his art, was Eliot’s keen interest in anthropology. *History Man*. 223.

<sup>345</sup> *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood*. 30.

<sup>346</sup> *The Principles of Art*. 25. 321.

<sup>347</sup> Art can be re-enacted because by expressing it, the thought element and its accompanying emotional elements come to the surface and become part of consciousness. As we saw before, whatever is part of consciousness is to some extent thought. The function of language is to reveal thought and since art is a form of language it can be re-enacted. *The Principles of Art*. 273-275.

telling it its own emotions,<sup>348</sup> which is the proper function of art.<sup>349</sup> Obviously, this cannot be done in the case of the cinema or the radio; and the printed book is problematic, as well. Collingwood can only advise authors to write about subjects that the emotional well-being of people needs and thereby they will have established rapport between themselves and their readers.<sup>350</sup>

Magical art, which propels people to act and serves as inducement for further action is ever present in society, in spite of the belief of modern utilitarians who gainsay it. The negation of magic and superstition is one of the main symptoms of a corrupt consciousness. Since art is the primary form of consciousness, it affects all subsequent forms, therefore such a corruption in art itself imperils the whole system of consciousness.<sup>351</sup> Collingwood dejectedly notes that

ours is an age when people pride themselves on having abolished magic and pretend they have no superstition. But they have as many as ever. [...] This habit is neurotic. It is an attempt to overcome a superstitious dread by denying that there is any cause for it. If this neurosis ever achieves its ostensible object, the eradication of metaphysics from the European mind, the eradication of science and civilization will be accomplished at the same time.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> *The Principles of Art*. 335-336.

<sup>349</sup> In *Speculum Mentis* and his early work Collingwood did not attribute any kind of truth to art, saying that art was indifferent about the truth-value it had. The radical shift in *The Principles of Art* can be regarded as Collingwood's increasing alarm at the coming barbarism and people's indifference towards it.

<sup>350</sup> *The Principles of Art*. 331.

<sup>351</sup> *The Principles of Art*. 69-77.

<sup>352</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 46. It is worthwhile to add that the first philosopher who systematically called for the abolition of metaphysics was not a positivist, but Friedrich Nietzsche. Nevertheless, as Inglis suggests, it is entirely within the realm of possibility that Collingwood's disapproval of ontology and liquidating metaphysics by turning it into a historical discipline was not only the defence of metaphysics against logical positivism but the expression of some kind of comradeship with and sympathy for Nietzsche. *History Man*. 71.

### 2.3. The death of religion

“All religions are ways of living, and our religion is our way of living.”<sup>353</sup> Every person has religious needs and these needs are “inseparable from an active and practical life.”<sup>354</sup> While Collingwood would have agreed with Oakeshott’s assessment of the profound importance of religious experience, the fact was that he considered religion as a moribund form of experience that was slowly but steadily replaced by the dope the mechanised society provided, such as dance music, and the cinema. Collingwood did not regard the life of his society as a practical one, since he associated practical life with practical reason and practical reason with duty and a dope-induced society by necessity was a society in which caprice ruled at large and could no longer be weeded out. Therefore, Collingwood would have answered Oakeshott, that modern life was neither active, as people conceived of their life as “drudgery”, neither practical, since in order to avoid that drudgery which constituted their lives, they became addicted to the dope of modern civilisation by which they lost their practical reason.<sup>355</sup> More aggravating is that fact that – according to Oakeshott – religion played a crucial role in maintaining and honouring the value of the present, and bereft of religion, we would lose any belief that our current activities were worthy of being pursued, which argument is basically tantamount to Collingwood’s assertion that a civilisation perishes when it loses faith in its own values and sees no reason to propagate them any further; thus for Oakeshott religion is “synonymous with life itself at the fullest.”<sup>356</sup> This notion corresponds to the Vichian idea, which alleges that morality, which for Vico is tantamount to Christianity, is

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<sup>353</sup> *Experience and its Modes*. 292.

<sup>354</sup> Michael Oakeshott. “The Importance of the Historical Element in Christianity” in *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life*, ed by. Timothy Fuller. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993.) 71.

<sup>355</sup> “Art and the Machine.” 297..

<sup>356</sup> Michael Oakeshott. “Religion and the World.” in *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life*, ed by. Timothy Fuller. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993.) 34-35.



eternal.<sup>357</sup> However, Vico committed a mistake in positing an eternal morality, since if everything is in progress and development, historical relativism cannot be overlooked, therefore the concept of morality is something that undergoes a dialectical change, just like everything else. Apart from this logical blunder, or we may call it the lack of historicism, Vico identified morality with the fear of God's punishment,<sup>358</sup> therefore denying that man acted according to his duty because that was his only choice at the given moment, and thereby deprived man of his own freedom by denying him choice. Nevertheless, Vico laid down the foundation that was to be followed by the neo-idealists, namely that Christianity and a religious consciousness constitute the *sine qua non* of a functioning society and in a civilisation where this religious consciousness becomes obsolescent a regress happens and upon being obsolete, civilisation itself perishes.<sup>359</sup>

Collingwood, in the *Tales of Enchantment*, upon observing the behaviour of so-called "savages," wrote quite voluminously on totemism. Not saying out right, but reading in between the lines we can see the claim that the savage has survived in us, in Collingwood's noting that according to savage beliefs corn perishes but is resurrected later, which symbolises the resurrection of the totem,<sup>360</sup> that our prayer to God for our daily bread originates from this very totemism and the resurrection of Jesus Christ himself can be ascribed to primitive totemistic beliefs. What this signals is, that our very nature, the rational "savage" within us, is a rural man, whose totem is corn. This links us to the very countryside which we are destroying as will be seen in the chapter about the scientific immorality of the day. This link between science and religion really does signal the fact that the Collingwoodian system does

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<sup>357</sup> *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*. 80.

<sup>358</sup> *The First New Science*. 45-46.

<sup>359</sup> *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*. 85-94.

<sup>360</sup> *Tales of Enchantment*. 252.

envisage a unity in which all elements correspond to all others and one cannot ruin any, without the destruction of the whole.

The mistake of the Enlightenment was the assumption that human life had always been irrational but that they would convert it to something rational by eradicating religion. First of all, some religious stance is inevitable for a healthy mind as construed by Collingwood's scale of forms, secondly, jumping from process 1 to process n is too big a leap that can only result in catastrophe. Process is slow and gradual and it cannot be forced, it happens of itself. The Enlightenment did not understand that science actually grew out of religion and without religion science would be impossible.<sup>361</sup> What is more without science, history and philosophy would be rendered impossible and therefore man would have one form, art, which is the characteristic activity of children and the savages. Thus, the Enlightenment philosophes in their eagerness to elevate mankind to a rational state, would have pushed him back down to that of a child or savage.<sup>362</sup> Thus, Collingwood's hostility against the Enlightenment can be easily construed as owing to its anti-religionism, which engendered a further fragmentation of the human consciousness.

As noted in *An Essay on Metaphysics*, science was born with the Greeks –especially Thales– who proposed a universal nature in the form of water. This, however, Collingwood notes would not have been possible, had not polytheism been replaced by monotheism. In the proposition “nature is one,” the proposition “God is one” is inherent.<sup>363</sup> Thereby, trying to eradicate religion, man unknowingly eradicates science as well.

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<sup>361</sup> *The Idea of History*. 87.

<sup>362</sup> *Tales of Enchantment*. 281-283.

<sup>363</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 209-212.

Collingwood regarded religion to be of the utmost value to civilization and especially liberalism and he expressed despair on various occasions upon what he regarded as the withering away of faith in Christianity, which he regarded as “the vital warmth”<sup>364</sup> which sustained liberal institutions. In the *New Leviathan* he went so far as to equate Christianity with a modern, liberal Europe,<sup>365</sup> in which he was full agreement with Croce. He first remarked the fading influence of religion in *Speculum Mentis*, in which he wrote “every street and every village in the country contains people who are hungering for [...] faith [...] and cannot find [it]. And those who have [it] are starving for mere bread, because no one will buy. The producers and the consumers of spiritual wealth are out of touch.”<sup>366</sup> Croce, too, identified the modern disease as a religious one in that religion used to be something innate in humanity, and now it was nothing more than “historical religion,”<sup>367</sup> that is its traditions, customs and values were still extant in society to some degree but they were about to wilt away. T. S. Eliot also agreed with Collingwood and Croce about the importance of Christianity in civilisation, however, according to him it was liberalism which ruined Christian values.<sup>368</sup>

The “utilitarian civilization” with its distrust in everything that did not contain an element of what it regarded to be useful had successfully purged civilization of its vital strength with its “distrust” of religion “as [a thing] not altogether respectable.”<sup>369</sup> With this purging of emotion

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<sup>364</sup> R. G. Collingwood. “Fascism and Nazism” in R. G. Collingwood. *Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. David Boucher. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.) 187.

<sup>365</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 194.

<sup>366</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 20.

<sup>367</sup> *Politics and Morals*. 137.

<sup>368</sup> T. S. Eliot. *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy*. (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1933.) 22.

<sup>369</sup> This anti-utilitarianism led to Collingwood’s exasperation at Freud’s claims in *Totem and Taboo* that the savage, whom Collingwood regarded as living a healthy mental life, was comparable to the compulsion neurotic. He mocks Freud for thinking that “savagery is [...] a mental disease to be cured by psychoanalysis.” It is important to note at this point that for Collingwood, the savage was not the antithesis of civilised man; civilised man remained a savage to some extent. “The grown man remains a child, and the civilized man remains a savage, so far as he preserves any of that fresh and adventurous outlook on life which maturity and civilisation may seem to kill.” *An Outline of a Philosophy of Art*. 16-17. The antithesis of civilization is not savagery but barbarism. R. G. Collingwood. *Tales of Enchantment in The Philosophy of Enchantment: Studies in Folktales*,

and faith, one does “a certain violence to one’s emotional nature.” The utilitarian society regards faith and all expressions of emotion as a “hostile force” within man, which needs to be annihilated and if it cannot be annihilated at least carefully kept in check.<sup>370</sup> People no longer have faith in Christianity and all of the institutions it has engendered, such as “free speech,” the freedom of thought, “free inquiry” and “free discussion.”<sup>371</sup> People still obey institutions and laws but no longer because they have an inherent faith in them but out of obedience, and obedience cannot sustain a civilisation for long, as it is prone to wither away.<sup>372</sup> The demise of the Christian faith has given way to two new kinds of barbarism, Fascism and Nazism, which are “the revolt against civilization.”<sup>373</sup> Collingwood terms Fascism and Nazism “silly,” however he concedes that they incite religious faith in the people supporting them,<sup>374</sup> whereas in liberal countries, the disrobing of the state of the faith imparted to it by Christianity has already started to show its symptoms, especially in the cradles of liberalism, namely the U.S.A., France and Great Britain.<sup>375</sup> However, Collingwood at this point had not entirely lost faith. He considered liberalism and all institutions as having been created by man and as such being able to be repaired by man.<sup>376</sup> Much like Collingwood,

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*Cultural Criticism, and Anthropology*, Eds. David Boucher, Wendy James, Philip Smallwood. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.) 156-169. It is noteworthy to add, that Collingwood underwent psychoanalytic treatment in 1937-1938 and his dislike for Freud originated with the treatment itself. *History Man*. 65. See Freud’s comparisons between the compulsion neurotic and the savage in Sigmund Freud. *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement Between the Mental Life of Savages and Neurotics*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2004.) 20. 31. 36.

<sup>370</sup> “The Utilitarian Civilization.” 198.

<sup>371</sup> “Fascism and Nazism.” 189.

<sup>372</sup> “Ibid.” 187. “The Prussian Philosophy.” 197. One of the most poignant passages in Collingwood refers to this fact: “When travellers are overcome by cold, it is said, they lie down quite happily and die. They put up no fight for life. If they struggled, they would keep warm; but they no longer want to struggle. The cold in themselves takes away the will to fight against the cold around them. This happens now and then to a civilization. [...] The civilization dies because the people to whom it belonged have lost faith in it.” “Fascism and Nazism.” 187.

<sup>373</sup> R. G. Collingwood. “Draft Preface to *The New Leviathan*” in R. G. Collingwood. *Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. David Boucher. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.) 224.

<sup>374</sup> “Fascism and Nazism.” 192.

<sup>375</sup> “Ibid.” 194.

<sup>376</sup> R. G. Collingwood. “The Present Need of a Philosophy.” in R. G. Collingwood. *Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. David Boucher. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.) 169.

Croce was of the same opinion regarding Christianity as one of the bases of a liberal society, to the extent that he could not imagine equality without Christian institutions.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> *Politics and Morals*. 27. *My Philosophy*. 36.

## 2.4. The immorality of science

Collingwood starts his essay “Man Goes Mad” by describing the collapse of nineteenth-century science and its belief in an infinite progress which brought man to the precipice of self-destruction. Collingwood continues that

over that brink millions of highly civilised men marched, in the course of a few years, to destruction; and now the whole civilised world trembles upon its edge, doubtful whether to continue the mass-suicide, to retrace its steps, or to find means of staying where it is.<sup>378</sup>

Science has endowed man with weapons of mass destruction which made the First World War possible and led to what Collingwood calls a “compulsion”<sup>379</sup> to go to war in order to test weaponry. Of course, it is not science alone that deserves to be blamed, but it contributed to a great deal to the “death” of civilisation<sup>380</sup> in endowing man with instruments that bestow on him unlimited power, yet failing to teach him how to use it wisely. Collingwood suggests that any further augmentation of science will only aid man in his “blind” and “mad” quest for war,<sup>381</sup> which is a “breakdown of policy,” where eristical methods are substituted for dialectical ones.<sup>382</sup> Bosanquet basically made the same claim upon saying that a militant nature was akin to a “disease” that was ravaging the state.<sup>383</sup> This disease ravages the people’s appreciation of “beauty, truth and kindness” and leads towards a wrong kind of patriotism,<sup>384</sup> i.e. nationalism, which is not patriotism because in patriotism we do not see other countries as enemies or as inferior to us. Bosanquet describes nationalism as “a source

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<sup>378</sup> “Man Goes Mad.” 305.

<sup>379</sup> “Ibid.” 307.

<sup>380</sup> “Ibid.” 305.

<sup>381</sup> “Ibid.” 316. Collingwood in asserting the destructive nature of war, where the property of both warring nations are destroyed, here for a change agrees with the Kantian doctrine. “The Principle of Progress.” 72. Emmanuel Kant. “Perpetual Peace” in *The Principles of Politics*. (Edinburgh: T& T Clark, 1891.) 80.

<sup>382</sup> *New Leviathan*.

<sup>383</sup> Bernard Bosanquet. “Preface” in Bernard Bosanquet. *Social and International Ideals*. (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1917.) v.

<sup>384</sup> “Ibid. vi-vii.” “The Teaching of Patriotism.” 1.

of brainless and often fraudulent clamour, or at best a dangerous fanaticism.”<sup>385</sup> For Bosanquet, patriotism is a dialectic process, which in developing becomes “stronger and wiser.”<sup>386</sup> However, as we know the patriotism of Germany and Italy did not become wise, it did not achieve a process on the dialectic scale, it underwent a regress. Therefore, as nationalism stands in relation to patriotism, it is at a lower level of the scale of forms and if it does not develop into patriotism, it becomes dangerous for the inhabitants of the country and those of other countries as well. Since as we have already mentioned that Fascists and Nazis did not achieve reason on the mental scale, we can pair nationalism with passion or desire, whereas, patriotism can be paired with reason and not capricious or utilitarian reason but duty.

Since we can, according to Collingwood’s mental map, identify desire with nationalism, we might add that Bosanquet himself urged man to become aware as to what and how to desire because the kind of patriotism a people espouses will determine whether they will live in a unity with the rest of mankind – supposedly, extending Hegel’s interior right to all humanity-, or whether the people who espouse the kind of patriotism will live torn asunder from the rest of mankind – i.e. espousing Hegel’s interior right and extending the exterior aspect of it to all of mankind who does not belong to the nation.<sup>387</sup> Of course, Bosanquet does not mention Hegel but we might without any difficulty whatsoever endow what he says with the Hegelian doctrine of right as the *Philosophy of Right* was one of the most influential books on political theory in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, Bosanquet does not make a mental difference between patriotism and nationalism, he considers both of them the product of desire, nationalism being a spurious product. Also, Bosanquet’s doctrine chimes in well with what Collingwood asserts in *The New Leviathan*. If we choose the first option and create a universal mankind, we are duty-bound to act with all people with humanity, whereas if the

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<sup>385</sup>“The Teaching of Patriotism.” 3.

<sup>386</sup> “Ibid.” 4.

<sup>387</sup> “Ibid.” 5.

second path is chosen, they rest of mankind, the foreigners remain parts of nature, which exists for our intelligent exploitation of them. As has been previously mentioned, educational reform was the order of the day in which Bosanquet himself partook. In his view, (positive) patriotism - as we can logically call nationalism as negative patriotism since it does not assert but rather denies elements of the philosophical concept it defines – denied that the man to whom positive patriotism was being thought should be a unity,<sup>388</sup> that is, his mind should not be fragmented at all. However, since we know that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the mind of man lay in shattered fragments, which were hard to piece together, the logical outcome of this was that positive patriotism was a futile fight which could not be won. Since patriotism was not capable of being thought and people were not able to be conditioned to look at other people from foreign countries as part of the human family and not nature, the Second World War was conditioned, not in the unfair peace treaty,<sup>389</sup> which definitely hastened it, but in the fragmentation of consciousness itself. Collingwood during the War worked for the Admiralty and he was involved in drawing up the peace treaty.<sup>390</sup> This much was foreshadowed in another essay in which Bosanquet asserts that learned minds were more prone to endorse negative liberty,<sup>391</sup> which as we have seen contains the Hegelian concept of interior right. Croce was in complete agreement with Bosanquet's implication that the doctrine of interior and exterior right engendered the two world wars.<sup>392</sup> Bosanquet, in another one of his essays promulgates the "world-state"<sup>393</sup> as envisioned by Kant but owing to the switch from classical politics he omitted the part about perpetual peace. Obviously, the piece was written before the

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<sup>388</sup> "Ibid." 10.

<sup>389</sup> *History Man*. 113.

<sup>390</sup> *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood*. 10.

<sup>391</sup> Bernard Bosanquet. "The Wisdom of Naaman's Servants" in Bernard Bosanquet. *Social and International Ideals*. (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1917.). 302.

<sup>392</sup> *My Philosophy*. 88

<sup>393</sup> Bernard Bosanquet. "The Function of the State in Promoting the Unity of Mankind" in Bernard Bosanquet. *Social and International Ideals*. (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1917.) 270.



catastrophic failure of the League of Nations<sup>394</sup> and as a whole it can be said of the collection of essays published under the title of *Social and International Ideals*, that the majority of which was included in it was nothing but lofty pipe-dreams of which Bosanquet himself must have been conscious, as it was practically common knowledge that a new world war was inevitable.

In fact, as opposed to what Collingwood maintains, the scientific advancements of the modern age only made it easier to choose eristical methods in the place of dialectical ones. “We have [...] directly through the work of science, lost at once our honour, or habit of acting rationally, and our nerve, or belief that we can so act.”<sup>395</sup> However, Collingwood renounced pacifism, which in this context must be read as the appeasement policy of Great Britain under the Prime Ministership of Neville Chamberlain who claimed that intervention in other people’s policies was insane since they constituted “quarrel[s] between [...] faraway countr[ies], between people of whom we know nothing”<sup>396</sup>, as

not to be anti-war, it is to be pro-war. [...] The ‘pacifist does nothing to decrease war. On the contrary, he promotes it to the utmost of his power by ensuring [...] that the war makers shall have their reward. [...] Not realising that modern war is a neurotic thing, an effect of terror where there is nothing to fear and of hunger where the stomach is already full, he proposes to deal with it by throwing away his arms so that war-makers shall not be afraid of him, and giving up what they would snatch [...] so that their hunger shall be appeased. *‘Pacifism is war-mongery complicated by defeatism.* The ‘pacifist is not interested in politics. He is interested only in his ‘clear conscience.’ Let the world be given over to the sword, his conscience is clear so long as he was not the first to draw it. That he forced others to draw it is nothing to him.”<sup>397</sup>

<sup>394</sup> Here, once again we can see Collingwood disagree with Kant, who thought that perpetual peace could not be attained but if nations entered into a league, they would be far less predisposed to engage in war. “Perpetual Peace.” 97. 100. 125.

<sup>395</sup> R. G. Collingwood. “Reality as History” in *The Principles of History and Other Writings in the Philosophy of History*, eds. William Dray and Jan van der Dussen. (Oxford: University Press, 1999) 175.

<sup>396</sup> *History Man*. 248.

<sup>397</sup> *New Leviathan*. 232.

Modern wars as we can see and as Collingwood described them are “neurotic” and are the products of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>398</sup> Collingwood does blame scientists for placing such destructive devices in human hands when they were aware that humans could not use them wisely. He goes on a diatribe against scientists who “lament over the folly” of people, instead of acting rationally and responsibly.<sup>399</sup> It is the task of the scientist to teach people how to use science wisely, and then when man has reached that knowledge and experience which makes him capable of acting thus, can he put such weapons at his disposal.<sup>400</sup> However, Collingwood does not divulge to his readers how the scientist should teach and handle such a grave part of practical reason as going to war and why the responsibility does not lie with the philosophic historian, who has not only mastered and united the acme of theoretical but practical reason, as well. Therefore, the scientist has contributed a great deal to the debacle of human morality - even if Collingwood fails to tell us how- human reason and unwillingly precipitated the annihilation of mankind.<sup>401</sup> Since “war is a state of mind,” which arises out of the fact that body politics cannot find a way to dialectically solve their problems, they do so eristically, i.e. in a way that turns “non-agreement into disagreement.”<sup>402</sup> That is, it is not science per se that is to blame, but the question arises out of necessity: if scientists are cognizant of the fact that the majority of mankind, or even a serious portion of it, has not yet reached the acme of theoretical reason, i.e. duty, and possibly have not even yet reached reason but are stuck with their passions and desires untamed, why do they endow mankind with mechanical means with which he can further aggrandise his passions and desires but which are not apposite for him to develop his own reason, since in the process he annihilates himself? This again, is a

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<sup>398</sup> Ibid. 242.

<sup>399</sup> “Ibid.” 176.

<sup>400</sup> “Ibid.” 175-176.

<sup>401</sup> “What the scientist fails to understand, when he finds himself an impotent spectator of movements he can neither control nor arrest, is that the folly and wickedness which he deplores, the Mephistopheles of this rake's progress, are of his own creating; it is he that raised the devil by inventing psychology and teaching man that he is neither virtuous nor rational but a mere bundle of instincts with nothing in himself either to respect or to obey.” “Reality as History.” 176.

<sup>402</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 229.

contradiction which Collingwood does not solve appropriately. Science grows out of religion. It is the middle form of theoretical reason; therefore the question why Collingwood deludes himself that the scientist has such moral duty as he prescribes to him must be an exaggeration, especially if one looks at his short presentation in “The Present Need of Philosophy,” in which he ascribes the overlooking of institutions to philosophy, not to science.<sup>403</sup> Collingwood’s not exactly rational impeachment of the scientist can once again be ascribed to a fragmentation which occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in which science- as had hitherto been known as natural philosophy – was torn from philosophy *in toto*, engendering two different academic disciplines by dint of which each the scientist and the philosopher was ignorant of the other field, which had been part of his research up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>404</sup> However, Collingwood’s description of a non-philosophically oriented scientist as a “a second-hand, imitative, journeyman scientist”<sup>405</sup> seems out of touch with reality, given the fact that Collingwood describes science as *de toto* abstract and philosophy as embodying the concrete universal, which means that within the universal opposites are to be found according to Croce,<sup>406</sup> and Collingwood adds that not only opposites but distincts as well, because the higher form of the scale of form – the dialectical emanation of truth - is different in kind and degree from the lower and such can be construed as both a distinct and an opposite.<sup>407</sup> “The universal concrete, with its synthesis of opposites, expresses life. [...]”<sup>408</sup> The concrete universal is no less, no more than Hegel’s dialectical triad, i.e. thesis, antithesis and their union in a synthesis. Opposition is “the true being of things,”<sup>409</sup> without which life does not come into existence. Collingwood cannot have accepted Hegel’s doctrine of the cunning of

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<sup>403</sup> “The Present Need of a Philosophy.” 168-169.

<sup>404</sup> *The Idea of Nature*. 3.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

<sup>406</sup> *What is Living and what is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*. 95-112.

<sup>407</sup> *An Essay on Philosophical Method*. 69-76.

<sup>408</sup> *What is Living and what is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*. 21.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.* 31.

reason, as Croce did,<sup>410</sup> since the cunning of reason does not admit of a regression in the dialectical triad, therefore had Collingwood accepted it, he would have had to concede that Nazism and Fascism were necessary forms of the spirit and without them no synthesis could have been achieved. For Collingwood, therefore, unlike for Croce and Hegel, history is not necessary “the world of the idea” as in a rational emanationistic triad, but sometimes the very negation of the idea. Collingwood’s advice that the gulf needed to be breached<sup>411</sup> might have been a germane one – at least it would have stopped the production of weapons of mass destruction – yet in our own age science is flourishing and has been absolutely torn from philosophy. What, in fact, Collingwood propagates is the subsumption of science under the domain of absolute mind,<sup>412</sup> in which science would be a slave to philosophy. While this suggestion certainly does have its advantages, in practice it is rather unfeasible. What must have incited Collingwood to take up the notion of natural science being a kind of history – apart from the observations and measurements taking place at certain historical times and as such being historical facts – is that the natural scientist has to operate according to Collingwood’s logic of question<sup>413</sup> and answer to get what he wants out of nature.<sup>414</sup> Natural science can only legitimately be called a science when propositional logic is abandoned and the logic of question and answer are utilised instead.<sup>415</sup> Here, we find another Ruskinian idea. Ruskin propagated the notion of the need of understanding the thoughts of historical agents in order to write a book of history which would have been different from what Collingwood would have termed scissors-and-paste history, and would be scientific, i.e. real history.<sup>416</sup> The first natural philosopher to have understood the necessity of such doctrine was Pythagoras who succeeded in solving problems the Ionians could not because he had recourse to the

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<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.* 64.

<sup>411</sup> *The Idea of Nature.* 3.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.* 5.

<sup>413</sup> The same theme can also be found in Croce. *My Philosophy.* 198.

<sup>414</sup> *The Idea of Nature.* 42.

<sup>415</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics.* 21-33.

<sup>416</sup> The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood. 25.

correct logic.<sup>417</sup> The formation of the logic of question and answer though nascent from *Philosophy and Religion* onwards,<sup>418</sup> endowed Collingwood's thought with a more conducive approach to the problems society and civilisation at large faced, and the problems which it highlighted might seem platitudes but are inevitable in any kind of normative thinking. What Collingwood basically asserted, but left unsaid, is that one can only fight against something which he understood by asking the right questions, getting the right answers which imparted to him new questions. Obviously, such logic was more germane when it came to Collingwood's fight with Nazism and Fascism but it would serve anybody working in any intellectual field well to remember this doctrine because there is no other way of avoiding the logical fallacy, which Collingwood states as "what most people take for knowing is only believing."<sup>419</sup>

This is Collingwood's negative doctrine of natural science. The only positive aspect of his description of science is the process which nature undergoes, that is nature, like mind is not *factum* but *fieri*, but with the marked difference that when a new form comes into being in nature by dint of evolution, the previous form is not superseded but dead, whereas in history and philosophy the previous forms – owing to the more accentuated quality of mind as being in a constant *fieri*<sup>420</sup> – remain but are negated, incorporated, superseded and pasted in the new form. Invoking Whitehead's famous dictum, which Collingwood so often used to history, he now uses it to the intellectual domain to which Whitehead had proposed it to have belonged: in nature – just like in philosophy and history – there is no *esse*, only *fieri*;<sup>421</sup> granted the two kinds of *fieri* are vastly different. However, such *fieri* as exists in nature might prove

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<sup>417</sup> *The Idea of Nature*. 52.

<sup>418</sup> See for example: R. G. Collingwood. *Religion and Philosophy*. (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1916.) 63.

<sup>419</sup> *The Idea of Nature*. 69.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.* 15.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.* 15.

calamitous to human life and society in the form of evolutionism and its maxim of the survival of the fittest, which might engender class wars, civil wars and wars between nations.<sup>422</sup>

The reason why science, even though logically, in spite of what Collingwood maintains is somewhat culpable for its products is because of its very own nature, which is first and foremost utilitarian and does not concern itself with duty – because it need not – and as a result it becomes abstract.<sup>423</sup> All science is abstraction, which is tantamount to means and ends being separated.<sup>424</sup> This why science itself is to be logically exonerated for something that is inherent in its own very nature; and ruling over which is the task of dutiful practical reason, that is philosophy. The problem becomes more salient when owing to the general mechanisation of the age, this abstraction of means and ends become applied to human beings, which according to Collingwood is characteristic of his own age.<sup>425</sup> Worse, this characteristic of the age manifests itself in trying to reduce everything to science, thereby rendering the whole world an abstract atomised entity, which of necessity is monadic. This is what is being done to history<sup>426</sup> and if history is atomised, tradition of necessity perishes. As each form succeeds the other on the scale of forms, begetting a new form upon the breakdown of its predecessor, history can only come into existence upon the complete breakdown of scientific abstraction. History – as canvassed in Collingwood’s early writings - is still abstract in that the object and subject; known and knower are not identical.<sup>427</sup> As Collingwood says, redolently of Gentilian doctrine, “mind is what it does,”<sup>428</sup> i.e. mind is pure act and act is always concrete and never abstract. As Gentile wrote, “the object, even when thought of as

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<sup>422</sup> *Politics and Morals*. 132.

<sup>423</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 166.

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.* 171-172.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.* 173.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.* 233.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.* 231-247.

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.* 241.

outside of the mind is always mental.”<sup>429</sup> Reality is no more and no less than thought<sup>430</sup> in that in philosophy which is reality itself, we cannot speak of object, subject, known and knower when we are engaging in high-level academic or philosophical thinking since these terms are tautologous. Gentile thought that reality was engendered by thought,<sup>431</sup> and Collingwood would have agreed with this statement, with the objective idealist modification that it is the way we think of a thing that it becomes reality for us. That is, if we want to understand something we have to regard it as present within our own subject,<sup>432</sup> that is understanding necessarily abolishes the distinction between known and knower and object and subject.

A fundamental condition [...] of understanding others is that our mind [...] should penetrate their mind. Without the agreement and unification of our mind with the other mind which it would enter into relation, it is impossible even to begin to notice or perceive anything which may come into another mind. [...] Every spiritual relation, every communication between our own inner reality and another's, is essential unity. This deep unity we feel every time we are able to say we understand our fellow-being. [...] To understand, much more to know, spiritual reality is to assimilate it with ourselves who know it. We may even say that a law of the knowledge of spiritual reality is that the object be resolved into the subject. Nothing has for us spiritual value save in so far as it comes to be resolved into ourselves who know it.<sup>433</sup>

What Gentile is saying here is basically tantamount to re-enactment and the rapprochement of history with philosophy, with the caveat that without having attained reason, we cannot enter into such spiritual union, i.e. we cannot ask the right questions in the right order and cannot give the right answers which would engender further questions to understand outside reality. What Gentile propagates and the theory of re-enactment itself is not so much related to history, as has been hitherto supposed by Collingwood scholars, but it regards making that

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<sup>429</sup> *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act*. 2.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.* 3.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.* 4.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.* 7.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.* 8. 10.

which is outside inside, thereby attaining unity by fully comprehending our world.<sup>434</sup> Such comprehension can be only achieved in a philosophical manner. What might be observed and deduced from this is that if re-enactment is so understood – and logically speaking it is the only way in which it can be understood – Collingwood slides from objective idealism into subjective idealism. For re-enactment to work, the empirical ego, which can only understand itself – which is tantamount to saying that it does not understand anything – has to give way to the transcendental ego. As Gentile put it, in our empirical ego known and knower cannot be reconciled.<sup>435</sup>

This is why originally philosophy is the highest form, because it is only in philosophy that they become completely identical. Since the aim of the mind and all forms of knowledge is self-knowledge,<sup>436</sup> anything that abstracts is of an inferior nature to something which stays in the concrete universal as philosophy does. The rapprochement between philosophy and history came about with the birth of the theory of re-enactment, which could breach the gulf between object and subject by identifying the empirical and the transcendental ego<sup>437</sup> - as does Gentile- in a dialectical manner, in which the transcendental ego incorporates, negates and supersedes the empirical one.

Furthermore, science bestows on man a great amount of leisure time that he or she does not know what to do with.<sup>438</sup> He might - as Croce suggests became the norm after the First World

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<sup>434</sup> This is fortified by the Gentilian doctrine of our transcendental ego becoming one with Dante's ego upon really understanding the *Divina Comedia*. *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act*. 12. Perhaps, the only aspect of this doctrine which Collingwood modified was that he added that within our transcendental ego, the activities of other egos are re-enacted in a way that is "encapsulated," that is, we know that we are really us and not them. This is, of course, imperative for the normative element in re-enactment since one of the aspects of re-enactment is judging whether the person whose thought is being re-enacted thought rightly or falsely. *An Autobiography*. 98-100. 113-114.

<sup>435</sup> *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act*. 13-14.

<sup>436</sup> *Speculum Mentis*.. 249-250.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid*. 285.

<sup>438</sup> *Tales of Enchantment*. 213.



War- indulge himself in literature that praised the violence of the war for its own sake.<sup>439</sup> The result is that in his otioseness, he becomes irrational and goes to war for the sake of war. If man's consciousness was not corrupt the rise of mechanisation would not be such a tremendous problem, however, people with their infatuation with utility falsely imagine that they purchase the latest electrical devices for their very usefulness, when in fact, their emotions regarding the mechanical device is very much akin to the magic of the savage and his instrument,<sup>440</sup> with the difference that the savage knows that his reverence for his tool is magical, whereas modern man does not. The savage upon realising what benefits the tools bestow on him, relishes them all the more, whereas modern man looks at the mechanical device as a sort of totem but discards it as soon as something more modern comes along. Thus, the savage's magic is far more rational than that of modern man in whom Collingwood observes the rise of consumer society.<sup>441</sup>

The positivist tendency of Collingwood's day was to endeavour to reduce philosophy and history to science but this implies that the three are the same. In addition, nature works according to laws. This implies man's incapability to change the institutions of the present – if man works according to natural laws as the positivists would have it - thereby avert the impending catastrophe by changing the institutions that have historically come about.<sup>442</sup> Positivism does not only deny man's free will but basically actively ushers in barbarism – knowingly or unknowingly by its natural teleologism. What is more, positivism tried to reinterpret the New Testament according to its own laws,<sup>443</sup> therefore it would have blended

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<sup>439</sup> *Politics and Morals*. 130

<sup>440</sup> *Tales of Enchantment*. 214.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.* 216-218.

<sup>442</sup> "The Present Need of a Philosophy." 169.

<sup>443</sup> R. G. Collingwood. "Inaugural: A Rough Note" in *The Principles of History and Other Writings in the Philosophy of History*, eds. William Dray and Jan van der Dussen. (Oxford: University Press, 1999) 160.

religion – its birthmother- with itself – and the superseding forms, therefore leaving nothing but science, but science has caused more problems than advantages.

Oakeshott summarises the problem of modernity related to science quite succinctly.

We have too long been accustomed to the notions that science is a guide to life, that science is the only true guide to life, and that the world of practical experience (and particularly moral and religious ideas) must submit themselves to the criticism of scientific thought, for any other view not to appear false or reactionary or both. But there is little in the history of folly which one may compare with the infatuation which the modern mind has conceived for 'science.'<sup>444</sup>

This historical folly claimed millions of lives in the First World War and was to claim countless millions and the destruction of Europe in the Second.<sup>445</sup>

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<sup>444</sup> *Experience and its Modes*. 312.

<sup>445</sup> Oakeshott –as is his wont – suddenly seems to forget all about the First World War and the millions of lives lost there when he claims two pages later that the scientific and the practical modes of experience are completely separate forms and can never be mingled. *Experience and its Modes*. 314. For Oakeshott's later condemnation of science, see his "Scientific Politics," committed to paper in 1949, in which he claims: "the ever renewed failure of scientific reason to solve [the] social problems of our age." "Scientific Politics." 99.

## 2.5. The breakdown of historical continuity

Collingwood's definition of history departs largely from the theory of history we espouse as history proper today. He was an expounder of the general theory of British idealism, i.e. that tradition has to be preserved because it represents the value of the community, however, he differs from the idealists who propagated that traditions could perish permanently if they did not promulgate the interest of the society in which the institutions of the traditions were preserved. Therefore, Collingwood's continuity theory is far more representative of the Italian philosophers than of British idealism.<sup>446</sup> Furthermore, its origin may lie in Hegel's philosophy, according to which "every historical period carries within it the seeds of the next."<sup>447</sup> Therefore, tradition must be continuous and as such capable of being revived. Croce asserted that "history is the record of the creations of the human spirit in every field, theoretical as well as practical."<sup>448</sup> History is "perpetual progress, the very definition of the spirit which perpetually develops itself."<sup>449</sup> As Gentile put it, "history is the development of the human mind."<sup>450</sup> This phrase already incorporates in it the fact that history as seen by idealism is a process and a development. For the sake of brevity, we will accept Croce's thesis that philosophy is the methodology of history.<sup>451</sup> All thoughts are engendered in a historical concept, thus everything is reducible to history, since everything happens owing to the mind, the thought of which brings about action.<sup>452</sup> Croce actually succeeded in bringing about a full rapprochement between all terms of the dialectical series, especially between philosophy and history and practice and theory by demonstrating that one could not exist

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<sup>446</sup> *British Idealism and Political Theory*. 129-130.

<sup>447</sup> *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood*. 60.

<sup>448</sup> *My Philosophy*. 168.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.* 192.

<sup>450</sup> *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act*. 48.

<sup>451</sup> *Theory and History of Historiography*. 151.

<sup>452</sup> *The Idea of Nature*. 176-177. *My Philosophy*. 13.

without the other. As an example, he cites, that if all struggle in life ended, the dialectic of the mind would end, since there would be no need for theoretical reason to consider what to do by practical reason.<sup>453</sup>

In fact, Collingwood denied the existence of such a science as history proper. For the neo-idealist philosophers history was nothing more or less than the development of the human mind, to which tenet Collingwood adds that “history is the science of the individual [i.e. the concrete universal, not the particular]; the individual is the unique; the unique is the only one of its kind, the possible which is also necessary.”<sup>454</sup>

Collingwood notes in all his major treatises the advance history as a science had made in the past hundred years,<sup>455</sup> however, he is also eager to underscore that man’s historical consciousness has become fractured. English society used to be an agrarian society, in which people made their living from their work on the soil.<sup>456</sup> By conceiving rural life as “picturesque”<sup>457</sup> and vacationing there, “he is already the one blot on the landscape” and thereby ruining it.<sup>458</sup> The vacationer, according to Collingwood, notices that he in some sense destroys the beauty of the countryside and its unity by intruding upon it and that is why he so jealously protects it from other intruders; however, one cannot blame people for wanting to get away from city-life which has become intolerable.<sup>459</sup> By erecting factories, railway lines,

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<sup>453</sup> *My Philosophy*. 68-69.

<sup>454</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 221.

<sup>455</sup> “Outlines of a Philosophy of History” in *The Idea of History with Lectures 1926-1928*, ed. Jan van der Dussen. (Oxford: University Press, 1994.) 434. “Reality as History.” 170.

<sup>456</sup> “Man Goes Mad.” 327.

<sup>457</sup> *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art*. 62.

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.* 62-63.

<sup>459</sup> It is imperative that most well-off vacationers spent their holiday in the Lake District; therefore Collingwood was perfectly aware of their insidious influence on the natives and on the nature of the land. On the one hand, vacationers were impressed by the beauty of the Lake District; on the other, they were drawn to it because of its democratic tradition. Furthermore, the cultural life of the Lakeland – with its fishermen and tradition of the crafts – provided an intellectual milieu as well, such as the Cumberland and Westmoreland Archaeological and Antiquarian Society, of which Gershom was the president. Collingwood was also a member of the Society and was its president until his early death. *History Man*. 49-50.

hotels and shops in the countryside<sup>460</sup> man has “killed the agricultural civilisation of [his] father.”<sup>461</sup> There has to be a balance between the industrial and the agricultural if tradition is not to be breached according to T. S. Eliot.<sup>462</sup> De Ruggiero also laments the downfall of agricultural life, though he sees the main problem in the fact that at one time the landowner could be proud of his labour, but now with the industrialisation of the countryside, he is more prone than not to sell his land so that he can acquire money and leave for the city.<sup>463</sup> In any case, the breach of tradition did not avoid the observation of de Ruggiero. Collingwood’s attraction to the countryside was even more remarkable, given the fact that he grew up in the Lakeland.<sup>464</sup> The attraction and protection Collingwood felt towards the country was strengthened by the fact that his father’s most successful novel, *Thorstein the Mere*, was an Icelandic saga, taking place in the Lake District.<sup>465</sup> The very fact that Gershom could write a relatively accurate saga concerning Icelandic men and women in the Lakeland signifies the fact that there was much archaeological heritage to be found, which could be destroyed by the industrialisation of the countryside, hence, its tradition going back to the Nordic settlements would forever remain lost.<sup>466</sup> Collingwood, much like Ruskin and G. W. Collingwood found the tradition of England in the Lakeland area<sup>467</sup> and this adds another point of poignancy to the intrusion into it by city-dwellers. For Collingwood, the ruin of agrarian society and the unintelligent exploitation of the countryside was even more dolorous given the fact that he was the follower of the obsolescent “British tradition of political continuity,”<sup>468</sup> which

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<sup>460</sup> *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art*. 65.

<sup>461</sup> “Man Goes Mad.” 330.

<sup>462</sup> *After Strange Gods*. 22.

<sup>463</sup> *The History of European Liberalism*. 419.

<sup>464</sup> *History Man* 70..

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.* 147.

<sup>466</sup> As Inglis points out, the interest in folklore originated with the onset of the Victorian era, therefore there was nothing spectacular about Collingwood’s interest in it. What was rather striking was the fact that he managed to link this to his theory of re-enactment and vindicate his theory by the means of fairytales. *History Man*. 20. Collingwood’s disapproval of the vacationers is a survival of Ruskin’s teaching, which Ruskin might have imparted to him when he was but a young boy, or Gershom’s inveighing – following Ruskin – taught him of the peril of the intruders. *History Man*. 50. *The Formative Years of R. G Collingwood*. 16.

<sup>467</sup> *History Man*.. 49.

<sup>468</sup> *Ibid.* 104.

included and in fact, was based on the agrarian culture of the British Isles. The North also represented for Collingwood the tradition in which British folklore lived on the strongest;<sup>469</sup> therefore he felt it as his duty to protect the Lakeland.

Collingwood notes that the history of the British Isles goes back to the Bronze Age,<sup>470</sup> therefore, we are speaking of thousands years of tradition, however, with the repeal of the Corn Laws and the educational laws<sup>471</sup> this continuity and tradition was severed. Owing to the Corn Laws, the agrarian proletariat came in large numbers of the city, whereas because of education, the peasants – the holders of British folk art – were forced to relinquish their way of life, the art which nourished them and kept them sane in an insane world and now it is only living in the mind of the eldest among them.<sup>472</sup> Since England is a rustic country, its original culture is a rustic one, which has basically been extinguished by utilitarianism and modernism. Thus, English civilization is dying. The decline of agriculture is a monstrosity because it breaches a tradition that has been continuous for thousands of years and safeguarded people against irrationalism.

Civilization, in the Collingwoodian sense, includes the “intelligent exploitation”<sup>473</sup> of the world of nature, i.e. providing for the needs of men by turning scientific methods to produce what is sufficient for the livelihood of the people.<sup>474</sup> Such knowledge of nature is based on observation and is handed down through generations.

If a community has attained any degree, high or low, of civilisation relatively to the natural world, it is by acquiring and conserving an

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<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.* 204.

<sup>470</sup> *Tales of Enchantment.* 257.

<sup>471</sup> *Ibid.* 282..

<sup>472</sup> “Man Goes Mad”. 332.

<sup>473</sup> *The New Leviathan.* 297.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid.* 291.

incredible amount of this sort of natural science. Partly, no doubt, by improving on it; but in this kind of science improving on what is handed down to us is far less important than conserving it; a fact which is well to remember.<sup>475</sup>

The type of practical knowledge that the peasantry possesses can only be acquired and by logical extension maintained in a community,<sup>476</sup> thus, with the loss of agriculture and knowledge<sup>477</sup> thereof, the community from which society issued will be rendered corrupt. Since it is from the community that society is born, if the scale of forms is rendered moribund at the stage of the community, the following points on the scale will of necessity wither away imperceptibly. This is what Collingwood means when he notes that people who live in moribund societies are not conscious of the fact that their society is dead or dying.<sup>478</sup> This is a point which T. S. Eliot also accentuates.<sup>479</sup> Thus, if the agricultural origin of the British Isles is breached, this will lead to the reversal of civilisation into its opposite, namely barbarism. Since it is the agricultural community that is the preserver of the knowledge that allows Britain to be a society and not a non-social community, the flocking of the peasantry to the industrial cities<sup>480</sup> and the very act of mechanisation, as well, have inauspicious implications and forebode the death of English society.

From this, it is only a step forward in the reversal of the civilising process of equating foreigners as parts of the world of nature, i.e. denying their humanity, and exploiting them as our needs see fit.<sup>481</sup> This is not said explicitly in *The New Leviathan*, nevertheless the text is pregnant with the implication of this. For example, the German tradition of herd-worship would definitely answer the question relating to the humanity of foreigners in the negative,

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<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.* 301.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.* 303.

<sup>477</sup> "We are the beneficiaries of an ancestral, prehistoric civility which we take too much for granted." *Ibid.* 303.

<sup>478</sup> *Principles of Art.* 96.

<sup>479</sup> *After Strange Gods.* 18.

<sup>480</sup> *Tales of Enchantment.* 280.

<sup>481</sup> *The New Leviathan.* 294-295.

therefore wherever statolatry or herd-worship is the order of the day, civilisation has been rendered infecund as human nature is treated *qua nature*, i.e. as an animal to be slaughtered or corn to be harvested. The keyword in the text, however, is “intelligent.” Treating other human beings as a part of nature is tantamount to sadism and the “sadist has no civilisation.”<sup>482</sup> Any society which involves sadism is not a social community but “a barbarism.”<sup>483</sup> Barbarism, by its very nature, is a conscious effort, as one who fights against something necessarily has to know what he fights against, therefore the “barbarist” is in one sense more versed in the civilisation he is intent on destroying than the man who innately, though unconsciously, is trying to defend it.<sup>484</sup> Sadism and barbarism are synonyms in as much as they both share in “fanaticism” and one cannot exist without the other.<sup>485</sup> The conception of foreigners as part of nature as opposed to mankind was common. British idealism found the internal right theory repulsive and endorsed the view that morality needed to be expanded to foreign nations as well.<sup>486</sup>

Since history is dependent upon continuity, and this continuity has been severed,<sup>487</sup> the historical consciousness is in grave danger in spite of the fact that history as a science has undergone impressive aggrandisement. Philosophical history is the perfect science because in it known and knower become one. It cannot be established in the other forms because there is an element of abstractness in all of them. Tradition can be broken, which means broken knowledge, but it cannot die. Tradition can be revived with re-enactment and that is the main importance of re-enactment.<sup>488</sup> It can re-establish traditions and put a stoppage to the madness

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<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.* 297-298.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.* 298.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.* 346

<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.* 357.

<sup>486</sup> *British Liberalism and Political Theory.* 144.

<sup>487</sup> “Man Goes Mad.” 328-329.

<sup>488</sup> Or as Oakeshott would say – for a moment giving up his logical inconsistency – in agreement with Collingwood: “History cannot be “the course of events” independent of our experience of it, because there is nothing independent of our experience – neither event, nor fact, neither past nor future. What is independent of



that modern man has succumbed to. As de Ruggiero said “unity implies a unifying force,” i.e. re-enactment by which the present can comprehend and subdue the past. Without such comprehension and subduing, the nation and human life remain fragmented<sup>489</sup> and a fragmented life is the denial of life. Gentile, before de Ruggiero and Collingwood, articulated the same doctrine, the doctrine of re-enactment by saying

Between the personages of history and ourselves there must be a common language, a common mentality, an identity of problems, of interests, of thought. This means that it must pertain to one and the same world with ourselves, to one and the same process of reality. History, therefore, is not already realised when we set out on our historical research, it is our own life in act. [...] History is history only in so far as it is the thought of the historian.<sup>490</sup>

As Gentile adeptly points out, such unity between minds past and present can be conceivable, owing to the universal already being immanent in the particular.<sup>491</sup> This Hegelian emanationism gives rise to the concrete universal, which is the subject matter of history and

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experience is certainly not fact; there are no facts which are not ideas. [...] The historian’s business is not to discover, to recapture, or even to interpret; it is to create and construct. Interpretation and discovery imply something independent of experience, and there is nothing independent of experience.” *Experience and its Modes*. 93. Sadly, Oakeshott could not leave his subjective idealism behind, nor did he seem to grasp or utilise the distinction between *factum* and *fieri* which is so important for history, but for the most part, he echoes Collingwood’s own notions. However, hardly more than ten pages later, he goes on to refute the historical doctrine of the Italian neo-idealist school to which Collingwood more or less belonged by claiming that the past the historian is in search of is a dead and not a living past and as such cannot be of importance in the guiding of our present life. In fact, he goes so far as to embrace a Rankean view of history, which was widely ridiculed in idealist circles. *Experience and its Modes*. 106. A few pages later, he goes on to contradict himself even more by saying that historical facts are always present facts as such because their being past or future facts would be non-sensical, yet he utters the slightly disquieting and not quite logical sentence that “The historical past is always present; and yet historical experience is always in the form of the past.” *Experience and its Modes* 111. He delivers de *coup de grace* to the theory of historical idealism by asserting that “The world of history has no data to offer of which practical experience can make use.” *Experience and its Modes*. 158. The acme of the absurdities that Oakeshott heaps upon one another is saying that thought is for practise, which assertion is characteristic of pragmatism. *Experience and its Modes*. 318. Thereby, in Oakeshott’s point of view, the Italian neo-idealists and Collingwood expounded not an idealist(ic) philosophy, but a pragmatistic one. One must mention, though, that Oakeshott opposed to reigning utilitarianism and thereby might have falsely equated practise and thought. In the conclusion to *Experience and its Modes*, he wrote: “In these days, [...] practical usefulness appears to be the only criterion recognised[...] A philosophy of life is a meaningless contradiction.” *Experience and its Modes*. 354. This last quote might absolve Oakeshott from talking nonsense and put him in the context of the utilitarian age he lived in. However, from all of the foregoing within this footnote, one can only gather that Oakeshott was particularly confused upon writing the historical section of his book and did not care enough to make it coherent and correct its many contradictions.

<sup>489</sup> *The History of European Liberalism*. 408.

<sup>490</sup> *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act*. 50.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.* 73-90.

which guarantees that history incorporates every act of reason and every form of experience that we have enumerated at the beginning of this paper, i.e. from art to philosophy. Thus, does philosophy become liquidated by history. History is simply our transcendental ego at work, having surpassed our empirical ego. This does not mean that philosophy ceases to exist. It means that every act of reason becomes one with the individual. “The only conceivable individual is mind itself, that which individualises. [...] All is in us: we are all.”<sup>492</sup>

Or as Croce puts it, “thought analyses the unity of the real into its opposing aspects, without losing sight of the unity, and thus it weaves its web and performs its miracle of reproducing the harmony of things in its own harmony.”<sup>493</sup> That is, our mind individualises and categorises, not because there are several and different transcendental universals, there are not, in art, philosophy is already immanent,<sup>494</sup> the degree of reason in them is different, but ultimately they are one. Our mind individualises so that we comprehend our world in a better way.<sup>495</sup>

While Collingwood was most certainly influenced by Gentile to a degree which is often neglected by Collingwood scholars, there is one very big gap between the two philosophers. Collingwood as such denied the existence of time, or as he said thought dwelt outside of time,<sup>496</sup> whereas Gentile could achieve his re-enactment doctrine by the Hegelian spatialisation of time,<sup>497</sup> i.e. by endowing time with three dimensions, therefore every element

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<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.* 108. 125.

<sup>493</sup> *My Philosophy.* 219.

<sup>494</sup> In fact, in *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act*, the summary of Collingwood’s later *Speculum Mentis* and the description of the order of the sciences and the reason for their breakdown is already present. See: *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act.* 213-246.

<sup>495</sup> It is noteworthy to mention that Gentile regarded philosophy and history as one and the same thing. *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act.* 208-215. “History coincides with philosophy.” *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act.* 218.

<sup>496</sup> *The Idea of History.* 287.

<sup>497</sup> *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act* 118-129.

of past and present were compresent,<sup>498</sup> ready for the thinker who has achieved a transcendental ego to re-enact every action that has ever transpired. Obviously, the spatialisation of time is the denial of time itself in its own way.

Gentile asserted much the same doctrine as Collingwood later did, upon observing that the whole spiritual activity of generations which passed on from the past to the present is what constitutes our civilisation, and that these products of the human spirit are within us, we even unconsciously re-enact them. Civilisation means traditions and tradition means history, which is the result of the dialectical development of the human spirit.<sup>499</sup> Should tradition die, civilisation would follow since it would mean the death of the development of our mind. Since we know that our mind cannot be a *factum*, but must be *in fieri*, stagnation would signify its irrevocable decease. “Reality is not static but living, not fixed but changing.”<sup>500</sup> This is the reason why Gentile firmly affirms that error and evil are permanent in that they can be mitigated, lessened but they can never be demolished.<sup>501</sup> Their disappearance would of necessity put an end to the dialectical process, i. e. tradition and civilisation, since the dialectical process comes into being to overcome error and evil and once they have been overcome, there is no reason for the emanative process to continue, hence stagnation sets in and this denies thought as act, since in act there is always necessarily a process. Therefore, as the concept of liberty has been tackled at some length, we might allude to Croce’s *History as the Story of Liberty*, only nominal liberty can be destroyed, real liberty cannot. In fact, the destruction of nominal liberty is a *sine qua non* of the resurrection of real liberty because so long as the people are not cognizant of what they have lost, they will not fight for liberty,

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<sup>498</sup> *What is Dead and what is Alive of the Philosophy of Hegel*. 186.

<sup>499</sup> *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act*. 203.

<sup>500</sup> *My Philosophy*. 12.

<sup>501</sup> *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act*. 246.

therefore, Croce asserts the need for the Vichian cyclicity of history, which is cyclical and linear at the same time.<sup>502</sup>

The yearning of the Romantics for the Middle Ages was in fact a yearning to re-establish a broken tradition. The fault in this was that they romanticised it, therefore, it was not the proper tradition that was re-enlivened but a different one but no harm was done by that. Because human consciousness is not *factum*, but always in *fieri*, traditions grow, change, but never die entirely. However, in *The New Leviathan*, Collingwood renders Romanticism basically tantamount to “herd-worship,”<sup>503</sup> and in the *Tales of Enchantment*, he insinuates that the anthropological theories of Max Müller and the Grimms by dint of this worship and the very desire to understand and retrieve a tradition lead to the Nazism of the present day.<sup>504</sup> Therefore, Romanticism always involves some element of herd-worship, since it idealises and rationalises and owing to this feature, fails to understand its object; hence precluding the synthesis of the subject and the object. Croce was of the opinion that Romanticism was tantamount to a “disease”, which engendered Nazism and, which represented

the pretentious disintegration [of the mind], called irrationalism, whose first chronic symptoms appeared in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century under the name of romanticism.

Romanticism, in fact, in any definable sense, leaving aside the colloquial and literary uses of the word, is sheer irrationalism. It is a particular form of irrationalism owing its birth and features to a conflict in minds which have lost and yet will not abandon the transcendental religion handed down to them<sup>505</sup>

<sup>502</sup> *History as the Story of Liberty*. 60.

<sup>503</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 271. Collingwood notes that herd-worship and state-worship were different notions because Germany “lacks the notion of a state.” *The New Leviathan*. 276. We might ascribe this quite plausible fact as the root of the more perilous nature of Nazism as compared to Fascism. Since the official ideologue of Fascism was a philosopher, at least, the notion of the state remained intact. Therefore, Gentile talked of Statocracy or state-worship and not of the common, ancestral bond of the Italian people. *What is Fascism*. 48.

<sup>504</sup> *Tales of Enchantment*. 133-140. 178. 284-285

<sup>505</sup> *My Philosophy*. 32.

Characteristic of Collingwood's day, herd-worship as such was ascribed to the Germans at large, who have always wallowed in the natural state of herd-worship, which embodied the "German hatred of freedom" and apotheosized "the great German god, the omnipotent herd."<sup>506</sup> What Collingwood aims at is that up to a point herd-worship is natural in the life of a society but as reason supplants the irrational elements, it needs to become obsolete. However, in the Germany of Collingwood's day the conception of it was not only not obsolete, but not obsolescent either. Therefore, Germany remained at a point historically and societally, where rational people could not thrive and historical or philosophical truth could not be arrived at. The tradition might have become unbreached and unbroken but it never progressed, process became external to it and as Collingwood's penchant for quoting Whitehead's famous dictum, "there is no nature at an instant,"<sup>507</sup> we can say that neither does history. Therefore, what Collingwood unconsciously but rightly implies is that if there is to be a tradition it has to be broken – or in other words superseded - sooner or later, because historical process demands it. However, since thought is outside time,<sup>508</sup> or as Hegel and Croce would have it, spirit is "sub specie aeterni",<sup>509</sup> that is as we have seen, it is outside time, it can be regained at any moment, so theoretically we cannot speak of the death of a tradition. What can be logically taken away from this by an extensive and intensive reading of the Collingwoodian *oeuvre* is that without conscious and intelligent effort, the scale of forms can be rendered stagnant, i.e. no process of tradition develops. Tradition by necessity of a synthesis of overcoming the difference between the subject and object in a dialectical synthesis involves the criticism of tradition. In a community which herd-worship reigns, no such criticism can be extant, therefore there is only a thesis but no antithesis is involved in the process of augmenting the tradition. All traditions are acquisitions and as such they have to

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<sup>506</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 279.

<sup>507</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 267.

<sup>508</sup> According to Croce, every spiritual act exists outside time. *Theory and History of Historiography*. 11.

<sup>509</sup> *What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*. 93

involve a process, which logical fact is explicitly denied by any kind of herd-worship. Therefore, one of the most difficult tasks in overcoming the inherent venom of modernity is finding a way in which tradition can be preserved without it regressing into something so uncritical and ruled by untamed emotions as herd-worship, since if herd-worship is to remain, there is no escaping from the malady of modernity.

Herd-worship latently leads to barbarism. German barbarism came into existence because of it, and because the unification of Germany and the Prussian philosophy that reigned under Bismarck.<sup>510</sup> German barbarism – much like Italian Fascism<sup>511</sup> – promulgated the notion of “thinking with [one’s] blood,”<sup>512</sup> i.e. in a logical sense, not thinking at all. Bosanquet appropriates to Sorel and philosophical pessimism the same view and claims that Sorel believes that man is inherently heinous and the augmentation of the nature of man towards human perfection can be only rendered possible with bloodshed, which Sorel equates with the “sublime” and the heroic.<sup>513</sup> In a word, Sorel in spite of being French, and as such originating from one of the cradles of liberalism, was one of the ideologues of the worship of the herd, which at best reached desire but Sorel’s own homeland and its innate liberalism, i.e. its reasonableness, ought to have made him less prone to expound such repugnant doctrines, which hurt repudiated the existence of reason itself.

Vico was of essential importance for Collingwood since unlike Hegel, he admitted regresses in history, in fact he thought them necessary. While Collingwood did not agree with their necessity, he did certainly believe in the possibility of regress on a scale of forms. Croce,

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<sup>510</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 378.

<sup>511</sup> As we saw previously, Gentile always alluded to the need of Italy’s participation in the First World War to unite the Italian nation through and in its blood. The blood symbolism becomes salient in Gentile’s Fascistic writings, such as the good Italian must obey the doctrines of the Fascist as a form of gratitude for Italy’s dead in the war.

<sup>512</sup> *The New Leviathan*. 377.

<sup>513</sup> Bernard Bosanquet. “Reflections on Violence” in Bernard Bosanquet. *Social and International Ideals*. (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1917.) 183-184.

however, was in absolute agreement with the Vichian philosophy of history which includes some cyclicity and regress. In fact, Croce went so far as to equate this process with liberalism. In his *Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*, he actually asserted that Vichian thought promulgated the values of Christianity,<sup>514</sup> and as we have seen, modern philosophers who laboured under a dialectic method propagated the tantamountness of Christianity and liberalism. For Croce, as for Collingwood and any philosopher who strived to attain a rapprochement between philosophy and history, Vico's verum-factum principle, the principle that asserted that man can only be cognizant of that which he has created, was of primary importance.<sup>515</sup> However, where these philosophers made a blunder was appropriating this principle to Vico. In medieval thought, the maker's knowledge principle asserted exactly the same tenets as Vico's verum-factum, Vico – whether he was aware of the principle or not – just gave it a more illustrious name.<sup>516</sup> The Vichian principle – I call it Vichian because the maker's knowledge tradition is more abstruse in that it is ignored because it is studied less – provided, as Croce, admitted a continuity of tradition, and we can say that the principle of re-enactment originated with Vico, more than with Hegel; however the fusion of the thought of these two philosophers put the principle on a solid footing. “Thinking it he re-creates his own creations, traverses over again the paths he has already traversed, reconstructs the whole ideally.”<sup>517</sup> This is tantamount to the Collingwoodian notion of the ideality of the past,<sup>518</sup> and to some extent the denial or the spatialisation of time.<sup>519</sup>

The verum-factum principle makes it possible for the historian to restore any tradition that has been forgotten or breached, thereby Vichianism is of a major aid in providing historical

<sup>514</sup> *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*. 4.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.* 276.

<sup>516</sup> See: Antonio Pérez-Ramos. “Bacon's Forms and the Maker's Knowledge Tradition” in *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon*, ed. Markku Peltonen. (Cambridge: University Press, 2006.) 99-120.

<sup>517</sup> *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*. 29.

<sup>518</sup> *The Idea of History*. 364-365.

<sup>519</sup> The spatialisation and denial of time are not the same, however, for our present purposes, it suffices to treat them as tantamount to each other.

continuity. Since history is the creation of mankind, the known and the knower, i.e. the subject and the object, are of necessity one, thus providing “indissoluble connexion of the subject and object of knowledge,”<sup>520</sup> therefore Vico can be regarded as an objective idealist or at least the forerunner of objective idealism.

Croce’s chief problem with the communistic “panacea”<sup>521</sup> – apart from its abstractions – is the implicit denial of further progress, thereby the end of dialecticism, the end of tradition, thereby the end of civilisation. The abstractions of communism<sup>522</sup> not only break the dialectical process with their eschatology, but the abstraction of classes<sup>523</sup> signifies a lack of action, since only individuals can act. Therefore, historical individualism is a *sine qua non* for the philosophy of liberalism.

The idea of progress cannot replace that of cycles, of ebb and flow, of alternations of civilisation and decadence or barbarism, from which man constantly progresses to higher levels. All this must be welcomed, put in its proper place and made use of. How could liberty disown this law of oscillation, if its own essence demands that life must be a conflict, that the conflict must be perpetual, and that the annihilation of good is as impossible as the annihilation of evil. Hegel had perverted the historical dialectic of liberty into a theological or metaphysical theory which led up to a perfect state, and had failed to see that, though liberty cannot die, it must always struggle to live; and consequently he had opposed and despised the liberal movements which were being initiated in Europe at his day. [...] This being so, liberty, far from excluding revolutions, necessarily contains them, since it is itself a perpetual revolution, constantly altering, in greater or less degree, the framework of rights and constitutional arrangements in force.<sup>524</sup>

<sup>520</sup> *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*. 23.

<sup>521</sup> *My Philosophy*. 70.

<sup>522</sup> Collingwood, while not a communist, supported its major tenets and his second wife, Kathleen Edwardes, was a member of the Labour Party. *History Man*. 271.

<sup>523</sup> *My Philosophy*. 83.

<sup>524</sup> *My Philosophy*. 103-104.



History has become monographic and thus positivistic, which bores the ordinary person and in it specialist writes for specialist.<sup>525</sup> Thus, ordinary people are not given the highest form of rationality and in that positivism greatly added to the present crisis. Positivistic history is atomised, breaks continuity, process, the scale of forms, tradition, and unity and only allows the principle of contingency, thereby reducing history to human madness. What is worse positivistic history in the guise of historical materialism re-introduced teleology and final causation into history, and not in the acceptable way under which man acts to achieve something in which case final causation would be valid, but historical materialism ultimately posits a pre-organised plan, which no matter what, will come about.<sup>526</sup> The same can be asserted about psychological historiography, as well.<sup>527</sup> This problem can be envisaged in Labriola's case, according to whom history and society are data. Datum here largely corresponds to *factum*, that is, it denies the idealistic notion of history being in *feri*.<sup>528</sup> Teleologists can assert history as *factum*, because the outcome is already pre-determined, therefore the process itself is rendered irrelevant. The fact that this exasperated Croce is understandable, however, his biggest problem with historical materialism and its notion of final causation was that positivists and historical materialists tended to be socialists, which he viewed just as perilous as Nazism or Fascism.<sup>529</sup> Another problem with the positivistic view of history, the origin of which Croce assigns to the *Capital*, is that it is mere abstraction, therefore it does not aid people in acting rightly in the present, which should be the duty and *raison d'être* of history,<sup>530</sup> as Collingwood asserts and Croce canvasses in his *Theory and History of Historiography*, "it is evident that only an interest in the life of the present can move one to investigate past fact. Therefore this past fact does not answer to a past interest,

<sup>525</sup> *Principles of History*. 35. *Outlines of a Philosophy of History*. 452-453. 459-461. Also see the quoted passage from *Speculum Mentis*.

<sup>526</sup> Benedetto Croce. *Historical Materialism and the Economics of Karl Marx*. (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1915.) 4-6.

<sup>527</sup> *History as the Story of Liberty*. 213-214.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.* 9.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.* 11-12.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

but to a present interest, in so far as it is unified with an interest of the present life.”<sup>531</sup> This presentness of history makes it certain according to Croce, or even mathematically positive for Collingwood.<sup>532</sup> Of course, such allegations are beyond preposterous, however, when the unity of the spirit is being discussed, these claims serve the purpose of the unity of thought and the capability of broken tradition to be revived, hence averting the impending catastrophe. This capability of history originates in the fact that it always answers a present need. Antiquity was rediscovered in the Renaissance and the Middle Ages in the age of Romanticism, because they answered certain questions the answer to which were inevitable to contemporary life. This is what Collingwood means when he mentions the “dark ages”. Dark ages do not exist, they are dark ages because the historians thought cannot re-enact them; dark ages remain an object to his subject, a known to his knower.<sup>533</sup> That is to say, all history can be revived when it answers present needs and if a history of a certain age does not answer the present needs of the historian in which it guides him as to how to act in life, it remains dead and not “contemporary history”.<sup>534</sup> However, a new generation might always find what the previous generation thought of as dead and not present history and thus it can be revived in their thoughts to guide the man their actions in regards their current problems. This revival of history is a *sine qua non* of present action because history originates in the spirit, which as we have seen, dwells outside time and history is itself – under the right conduction of its methodology – possesses judgements, by which judgements it aids the present subject to act in a dutiful way. It is a concomitant of this view that history itself is never final and its dialecticism should never come to an end, since with every answer the historian gives new

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<sup>531</sup> *Theory and History of Historiography*. 12. Collingwood – due to being an archaeologist certainly does have an advantage over Croce – who insists that without documents, history cannot be made. Croce, here, presumably uses documents in the ordinary sense, i.e. written documents and testimonies, whereas for Collingwood non-written documents, such as coins, inscriptions and other archaeological objects constituted documents, as well. In fact, to some extent, Collingwood preferred those to ordinary documents since they were not “ready-made” and thus, excluded the possibility of “scissors-and-paste” history writing by compelling the historian to ask questions and answer them, that is to rise to the top of the intellectual scale. *The Idea of History*. 258-259.

<sup>532</sup> *The Idea of History*. 262.

<sup>533</sup> *The Idea of History*. 328-329. *Theory and History of Historiography*. 24-25.

<sup>534</sup> *History as the Story of Liberty*. 18. *Theory and History of Historiography*. 31. *The Idea of History*. 153.

questions arise. Also, for every generation history has to be rewritten, there is no such thing as an eternal historical thought, because every generation is in the quest of finding the answers to its own imperative questions, as a result which the former answers previous historians have provided might not be sufficient or satisfactory for a new course of action. Thought living outside time and history living outside time unifies history and philosophy in the “eternal present” of the spirit.<sup>535</sup> Since everything beneath history and philosophy in the scale of forms embodies something which incorporates imagination, determination, philosophy and history become the same discipline by incorporating only thought, and given the unity of the spirit two distinct kinds of supreme thoughts are impossible, therefore philosophy and history must of necessity be the very same discipline looked at from a different point of view.<sup>536</sup> Positivism depicts a mechanistic universe,<sup>537</sup> i.e., a universe in which reason does not rule and in which reason cannot even come into being, seeing that mechanism itself is not normative, and all reason has to be normative for it be reason. Furthermore, mechanism itself with its teleology bereaves the subject of choice, which once again points towards a denial of criteriologicalism.

Historical science and culture in all its detailed elaboration exists for the purpose of *maintaining and developing* the active and civilized life of human society. The practical requirements which underlie every historical judgment give to all history the character of "contemporary history" because, however remote in time events there recounted may seem to be, the history in reality refers to present needs and present situations wherein those events vibrate. Man is a microcosm, not in the natural sense, but in the historical sense, a compendium of universal history.<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>535</sup> *Theory and History of Historiography*. 61.

<sup>536</sup> Croce, here, makes a grave philosophical blunder by asserting – along with Collingwood – the imperative nature of the birth of Christianity for a linear historical thought and thinking of history as progress, by asserting before the emergence of Christianity, historical cyclicism always returned to the exact same “starting point,” which is only true for the thought of the Stoics, as every other school who believed in historical cycles, believed that the new cycle would start at a more developed point than the previous one. It was only a characteristic of Stoicism to assert that the historical cycle would return to the beginning of time and the same Socrates, Aristotle or Plato would live exactly in the same way, think the same thought as the previous one did in the antecedent cycle. *Theory and History of Historiography*. 205-206.

<sup>537</sup> *Historical Materialism and the Economics of Karl Marx*. 163.

<sup>538</sup> *History as the Story of Liberty*. 18. Italics mine.

## 2.6. The threat to philosophy from pseudo-sciences

Philosophy is the queen of theoretical reason because in it the mind is privy to a perfect self-knowledge,<sup>539</sup> i.e. the human being supersedes his own empirical ego and becomes transcendental,<sup>540</sup> thereby in Gentilian terms mind becomes itself in *fieri*<sup>541</sup> as opposed to being *factum* or as Collingwood asserts, “The life of absolute knowledge [philosophy] is thus the conscious self-creation of the mind, no mere discovery of what it is, but the making of itself what it is.”<sup>542</sup> The modern disease, especially Fascism and Nazism originates in the fact that people are not aware of themselves as minds in the act of creating themselves but look at the world and other people as already created facts.

Whatever the mind does [...] it cannot escape that self creating which is moral responsibility. (sic!) But in error it creates in itself a nature which it conceals from itself: [...] error and evil are the mind knowing not what it does, creating itself in one shape while it thinks of itself in another.<sup>543</sup>

The absolute mind is “extra-temporal,”<sup>544</sup> that is why re-enactment is possible, because my empirical mind by becoming transcendental can conceive the mind of others, including the thoughts of people long since dead. What Collingwood means by the maxim that “all history is the history of thought,”<sup>545</sup> or as Bosanquet said “the spirit of humanity speak[ing] to your

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<sup>539</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 295.

<sup>540</sup> “The absolute mind, then, unites the differences of my mind and other people’s.” *Speculum Mentis*. 299.

<sup>541</sup> “What mind ought to be it can be, and indeed only knows that it ought to be this in so far as it is already being this.” *The Idea of Nature*. 126.

<sup>542</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 296.

<sup>543</sup> *Ibid.* 296.

<sup>544</sup> *The Idea of Nature*. 126. “When I say that a thing is outside itself in time, I mean that the realisation of its concept or idea is spread out over time.” *The Idea of Nature*. 126.

<sup>545</sup> *The Idea of History*. 210.

spirit,”<sup>546</sup> which is the basis of re-enactment is the doctrine of the absolute or transcendental mind, which cognises of every other mind as transcendental.<sup>547</sup>

As time passed, Collingwood became increasingly perplexed by psychology and its claims of being the legitimate thought of science.<sup>548</sup> Collingwood did appreciate psychology for what it was, the science of feeling,<sup>549</sup> but he was exasperated by the fact that certain psychologists considered logic (the philosophy of theoretical reason) and ethics (the philosophy of practical reason) as outdated and in need of being replaced by psychology.<sup>550</sup> Psychology, as it was invented in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was the science of the psyche, i.e. of feeling. Saying that the subject matter of a science which originally deals with the irrational elements in the human mind is the *de facto* science of thinking is a contradiction in terms. In *An Essay on Metaphysics*, he launched an acerbic attack against psychology, claiming that psychology did not possess criteriological elements,<sup>551</sup> and since thinking can be done either well or ill, and the mind constantly makes judgements about its thinking, trying to assess whether its intellectual process is correct,<sup>552</sup> psychology cannot be the science of thoughts.<sup>553</sup> The normative element itself only enters the picture when reasoning is present. Since it is obvious somebody cannot feel falsely or not correctly, saying that psychology is the science of thought is beyond preposterous. Psychology itself is an empirical science which belongs with

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<sup>546</sup> Bernard Bosanquet. “Atomism in History” in Bernard Bosanquet. *Social and International Ideals*. (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1917.) 22.

<sup>547</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 301. The basis of *The Idea of History* was already present within *Speculum Mentis*, when Collingwood asserted that “in the absolute process of thought the past lives in the present.” *Speculum Mentis*. 301.

<sup>548</sup> In *The Principles of Art*, Collingwood noted that psychology did not only overstep its proper boundaries in regards logic but art as well. Psychology and its “stimulus-and-reaction theory” makes art a craft and suppresses art as a transcendental universal. *The Principles of Art*. 30.

<sup>549</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 114. In “Goodness, Caprice, and Utility” Collingwood notes that psychologists are indispensable members of society because they aid people in their mental and moral regeneration by utilising psychological laws. “Goodness, Caprice, and Utility.” 81-82. However, in the later *The Principles of Art*, he expresses doubt whether so-called psychological laws are not in fact physical and physiological laws. *The Principles of Art*. 182.

<sup>550</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 108.

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.* 109.

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.* 107-109.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.* 110.

physiology and under the category of the natural science of man.<sup>554</sup> Psychology as empirical was characteristic of the idealistic view-point of philosophers whose thinking was akin to that of Collingwood's.<sup>555</sup> In being empirical, psychology only takes into consideration the empirical ego –which is basically a bundle of sub-thinking activities, and completely omits the thinking element within spiritual life. If psychology really aspired to be the science of thought, it would have to understand and have access to the transcendental ego, which means that psychology would have to have recourse to the re-enactive process itself. Since it does most definitely not do that, because it cannot, it remains a superficial science, which properly speaking cannot be called a science. As has been mentioned numerous times, Gentile put it, a mind does not exist – it is not a *factum*, it becomes – it is always in *fieri*.<sup>556</sup> That is, a mind itself is the very incarnation of the first Hegelian triad of thesis, antithesis and synthesis in non-being, being and becoming. Psychology does not understand that it cannot look at something that spiritually becomes as though it was an empirical *factum*, therefore it has to be dismissed. Collingwood identifies so-called “red-herrings,” i.e. signs that prove that psychology is in fact nothing more than a pseudo-science.<sup>557</sup> Collingwood claims that psychologists plagiarize freely, arrive at solutions that have been known for thousand of years,<sup>558</sup> and what is more, arrive at these solutions by having recourse to other than psychological methods, and make claims that contradicts themselves at every turn by assigning contradictory effects to the same cause.<sup>559</sup> According to Collingwood, the main tenet of psychology as the so-called science of thinking is that there is no distinction between truth and “falsehood,” therefore science as such cannot signify anything, it is a word bereft of

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<sup>554</sup> *Ibid.* 111.

<sup>555</sup> See: *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act*. 23.

<sup>556</sup> *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act*. 40.

<sup>557</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 123.

<sup>558</sup> *Ibid.* 129.

<sup>559</sup> *Ibid.* 126.

any meaning whatsoever.<sup>560</sup> Collingwood, writing at the outbreak of the Second World War, notes sadly that psychology is “a kind of epidemic withering of belief in the importance of truth and in the obligation to think and act in a systematic and methodological way.”<sup>561</sup> That is, psychology as a science is the effect of the “irrationalist movement”<sup>562</sup> Collingwood was fighting against.<sup>563</sup>

What Collingwood actually identified as the most logical form of consciousness was his philosophical history,<sup>564</sup> which he based on his special understanding of metaphysics as a science of “absolute presuppositions.”<sup>565</sup> Absolute presuppositions are logical elements that govern our reasoning and on which we base our so-called “relative presuppositions.”<sup>566</sup> Absolute presuppositions, unlike relative presuppositions, are not answers to questions but are the very elements which make formal thinking possible.<sup>567</sup> Absolute presuppositions are utilised in every form of thinking, including low-grade non-scientific thinking as well,<sup>568</sup> and the task of metaphysics is to untangle the “constellation” of absolute presuppositions. People are not normally aware of their absolute presuppositions and they cannot be willingly

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<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.* 120.

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.* 135. L.S. Hearnshaw is right in pointing out the “inveterate bias” Collingwood developed towards psychology and in remarking that somebody of Collingwood’s academic standing and influence should have made an attempt at being more impartial. He says: “I must say that I have rarely come across in the writings of a man of Prof. Collingwood’s standing so much sophistry, misconception, and prejudice concentrated in no more than ten pages.” L. S. Hearnshaw. “A Reply to Professor Collingwood’s Attack on Psychology” in *Mind*, New Series, 51:202. (Oxford: University Press, 1942.) 160-169.

<sup>562</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics.* 83

<sup>563</sup> Cf: “This abstraction of thought from its own truth or falsity is the characteristic mark of the psychology of knowledge; a similar abstraction marks the psychology of conduct and so forth. Because psychology ignores the distinction between truth and falsehood, it gives us laws of thought which apply indifferently for both. [...] Thinking [...] is not even recognised by psychology to exist.” *Speculum Mentis.* 274-275. The criticism that emerged in *An Essay on Metaphysics* was already present in Collingwood’s early philosophy.

<sup>564</sup> I do not refer to the identity of history and philosophy as the philosophy of history because according to neo-idealistic doctrines such philosophies were “hybrids of abstract philosophy and distorted historiography.” *History as the Story of Liberty.* 300.

<sup>565</sup> Here, interestingly Collingwood’s philosophy collides with that expounded by Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus.* *History Man.* 259.

<sup>566</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics.* 29-33.

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.* 31-33

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.* 34.

changed.<sup>569</sup> The metaphysician's task is only to detect them.<sup>570</sup> Each science contains at least a constellation of absolute presuppositions upon which it builds. These presuppositions are akin to the Kuhnian "paradigms,"<sup>571</sup> they need to be in Leibnitian language "consupponible," otherwise the constellation does not endure.<sup>572</sup> The consupponibility of absolute presuppositions as such links the whole of Collingwood's philosophy with unity, since if one of the factors changed, the whole world would change and the problems to solutions towards which our questions are directed, would be different problems, hence our questions and the order of our questions would have to be logical according to the new set of presuppositions and their own consupponibility.<sup>573</sup> The most basic presupposition Collingwood cites is the unity of nature without which natural scientific thinking would be rendered impossible.<sup>574</sup>

Once the metaphysician has detected the absolute presuppositions of his time (or if he is a historian of the period he is tackling), he needs to build on relative presuppositions. Unlike absolute presuppositions, relative presuppositions are answers to questions and they are subjected to the criteriological aspect formal logic, i.e. they can be true or false.<sup>575</sup> This is Collingwood's famous logic of question and answer, which he began working out in his early years<sup>576</sup> and which reached its acme during his crusade against logical positivism as a form of irrationalism, during which Collingwood renounced ordinary propositional logic.<sup>577</sup> The gist of Collingwood's logic is that all our assertions and actions are answers to certain questions or situations with which we are faced. Unless, we find out what the question was that a person

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<sup>569</sup> *Ibid.* 66.

<sup>570</sup> *Ibid.* 64-65.

<sup>571</sup> *History Man.* 318.

<sup>572</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics.* 66.

<sup>573</sup> Consupponibility as a *sine queue non* of unity was a commonplace in philosophy. In idealistic philosophy, consupponibility went hand in hand with process and the unification of opposites and distincts. See for example Bosanquet's "Is Compensation Necessary to Optimism?" 45. 48-50.

<sup>574</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics.* 211.

<sup>575</sup> *Ibid.* 29-31.

<sup>576</sup> Cf: *Speculum Mentis.* 77.

<sup>577</sup> *History Man.* 192.



tried to solve, we cannot veridically assert whether he succeeded or not. The re-enactive doctrine itself hinges upon the logic of question and answer, which ordinary propositional logic cannot solve.<sup>578</sup> The logical positivists were in favour of propositional logic and as the arch-logical positivist of Britain, A. J. Ayer asserted that metaphysics is “senseless” and its propositions are “neither true nor false.”<sup>579</sup> Since the logic of question and answer is built on absolute presuppositions, which are neither true nor false, because they concern the very basis of how a mind operates and according to the basic tenets which it acts and as such they necessarily lack the normative element, Collingwood saved the face of metaphysics by re-interpreting what metaphysics was and what the subjects were that came under its authority. Therefore, Collingwood in an ironic twist managed to turn the accusation of the logical positivists regarding metaphysics in the favour of it. Another accusation often repeated by the logical positivists against metaphysics was that it asserted that which was not empirically observable or tautologous.<sup>580</sup> That basically meant ontology, the science of pure being. Collingwood asserted that metaphysics could sustain its scientific nature if it omitted ontology as something which did not belong to its terrain – one would wager it belonged more to theology than to metaphysics.<sup>581</sup> When T. M. Knox, Collingwood’s literary executor and student attacked Collingwood for his historicism in liquidating metaphysics and philosophy and putting it under the historical category, he failed to observe that in reality what Collingwood did in the liquidation was the preservation of metaphysics as a legitimate area of knowledge,<sup>582</sup> which needed to be defended against the assault of the logical positivists. The biggest offense that logical positivism perpetrated, however, was not its – from a Collingwoodian sense – preposterous propositional logic but the disruption of unity and thereby its attack on dialecticism. This can be plainly observed in Ayer’s rather ludicrous

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<sup>578</sup> *An Autobiography*. 29-43.

<sup>579</sup> A. J. Ayer. *Language, Truth and Logic*. (London: Penguin Books, 1990.) 9.

<sup>580</sup> Ayer. 13. One should add that a tautology is philosophically meaningless and absurd.

<sup>581</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 17-21.

<sup>582</sup> *Inglis*. 307.

interpretation of Descartes's Cogito, according to which Ayer meant that "there is a thought now" but which did not in fact presuppose that there has been a thought before or there would be a thought after.<sup>583</sup> Therefore, logical positivism took the instant as its basis and as we have already seen, this was not only false historically and philosophically, but more importantly from a positivistic point of view natural scientifically as well, since modern natural science arrived at the conclusion that "there is no nature at an instant."<sup>584</sup> Therefore, nature is a process and since according to every other philosophical school -in Collingwood's case objective idealism - process and continuity is a *sine qua non* if the world is to be capable of being understood. This becomes obvious upon Ayer's assertion that existence is tantamount to sensations,<sup>585</sup> while we know from the Collingwoodian mental scale that sensations do not contain the kind of thought by which experience could be analysed, therefore according to Ayer, existence as such remains outside the realm of what can be truly known, and if existence cannot be known, nothing can be known as we can only know that which exists. Logical positivism, therefore, denies not only metaphysics, but knowledge as such and entangles itself in such a web from which it cannot escape, thereby reducing itself to absurdity.

Another problem arising from logical positivism that had to be tackled by Collingwood is the logical positivistic notion that "philosophy is wholly critical."<sup>586</sup> This at face value seems correspondent to Collingwood's observation about truth and falsehood, however, it is crucial to remember that positivism only took natural science, tautologies and every other empirical fact as critical, whereas for Collingwood the word "critical" did not mean "observable," "tautologous", "corresponding to natural laws" but criteriological, that is logically true or

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<sup>583</sup> *Language, Truth and Logic*. 31.

<sup>584</sup> To quote Ayer, "experience must be subjected to scientific laws." *Language, Truth and Logic*. 32.

<sup>585</sup> *Language, Truth and Logic*. 36.

<sup>586</sup> *Ibid.* 33.

false as in a true or false answer to the question that the philosopher or the metaphysician has asked. Since the absurdity of Ayer's propositions have been described here, it would be a waste of space to go on criticising the doctrines that make up the rest of the book, which are based on what we have claimed to be absolutely non-sensical. One further remark can be made here regarding Collingwood's position towards the book. He opines that it is so absurd that it ushers in "the suicide of positivistic metaphysics."<sup>587</sup>

Needless to repeat, re-enactment concerns us only in so far as tradition can be revived by it. However, for it to be revived the right questions have to be asked in the right order.<sup>588</sup> Unless, this is done civilisation is doomed to succumb to barbarianism because it is actually in Collingwood's philosophical history that the rapprochement of theory and practice and history and philosophy can be brought about.<sup>589</sup> As Collingwood asserted "all thought is for the sake of action. We try to understand ourselves and our world in order that we may learn to live."<sup>590</sup> With the usual propositional thinking, the highest faculty of theoretical reason or knowledge and the highest form of practical reason or volition – duty – cannot be brought together. In the logic of question and answer the person asking the question has to answer the question rightly because he can and in that situation only that is the correct answer. However, propositional logic accepts answers, often including different causes and effects, for the same question,

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<sup>587</sup> *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood*. 120.

<sup>588</sup> Collingwood calls this questioning activity Baconian, owing to Bacon's famous dictum regarding the torturing of nature until she yields the answers the seeker is in quest for. The praise Collingwood heaps on Bacon is slightly outré owing to the reason that the Baconian method itself consisted in gathering as much material as possible without asking any kind of questions. Collingwood was probably taken in by the Baconian fable of Proteus in *De Sapientia Veterum* but the process Bacon actually propagated in the *Parasceve* did not even resemble what Collingwood falsely terms Baconian. Furthermore, in the 20th century Bacon would have been either a materialist or a positivist, therefore it is flabbergasting why Collingwood chose to pronounce the "Baconian" element of his logic. Francis Bacon. *Parasceve ad Historiam Naturalem et Experimentalem* in *The New Organon*. Eds. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverstone. (Cambridge: University Press, 2000.) 222-238. Francis Bacon. *De Sapientia Veterum* in *De Sapientia Veterum in Bacon's Essays and Wisdom of the Ancients*. (Cambridge, Mass: University Press, 1884.) 360-363.

<sup>589</sup> The hint of the need of a rapprochement between philosophy and history and an engendering of a science that was both at once was already present in Bosanquet, among the British idealists. "Atomism in History." 28.

<sup>590</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 15.

whereas Collingwood maintains that two propositions can only be deemed right or wrong if they are answers to the very same question.<sup>591</sup> Therefore, if we are to understand our world, we need to ask the right questions about it and we need to give the right answers to those questions out of which newer questions will issue which tell us how to act.<sup>592</sup> This means that the ordinary person needs to be a philosopher to the extent that he innately understands this need of dialectical thinking and acting. What Collingwood, in fact, proposes is that philosophy – just like any other form of human experience – is a transcendental universal, which is an endogenous activity of the well-formed and sufficiently developed human mind. Actually, he implies that a human mind cannot be well-developed if it does not partake in philosophy. Such a failure would mean that somewhere in the dialectics of the mind, the progress or emanation of reason has been thwarted and thereby the person could not achieve the necessary level of theoretical reason at which he can act according to practical reason. What is pivotal here is that Collingwood gainsays the notion that philosophy is for the specialist and the ordinary person does not need to it or it is not germane for him to participate in philosophising. Since philosophy is a transcendental universal, the average human being needs to be capable of this form of practice. Here, Collingwood widely diverges from Oakeshott, who pronounced that philosophy had no bearing on practice and was for the specialist to emerge in,<sup>593</sup> in fact divorcing practical life as an “arrest in experience”<sup>594</sup> from philosophy, which is the uppermost mode of experience, the only one which does not contain any arrest and in which the whole is innate. Oakeshott claims that practical experience is not coherent<sup>595</sup> and as such it can have no bearing on the only coherent mode- philosophy. In Collingwoodian terms, however, this was a very perilous separation of practical and

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<sup>591</sup> *An Autobiography*. 31-32.

<sup>592</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

<sup>593</sup> *Experience and its Modes*. 1-3

<sup>594</sup> The acme of the scale of forms – which is never the acme for long – and an arrest in experience are similar in that at that given moment when they appear to have their coherence and fullness, nothing seems to exist outside them. See: The whole book of *Experience and its Modes*.

<sup>595</sup> *Ibid.* 4.

theoretical reason and in the Collingwoodian *oeuvre* philosophy as a theoretical form corresponds to duty as a practical form – uniting themselves in a synthesis. As for Collingwood, the highest form of practical reason – duty- and the highest form of theoretical reason – philosophical history are tantamount – so practical experience and moral obligation are tantamount to one another.<sup>596</sup> This does not make much sense, since obligation / duty should be introduced at the highest phase of the theoretical/ practical world, and practical experience is a relative low form. Oakeshott was right so far as in the world obligation/ duty had to come into existence but his lack of dialectic thinking hindered him in putting it to where it would logically belong. However, Oakeshott comes dangerously close to the Collingwoodian concept of duty – which is not surprising since *Experience and its Modes* was written against *Speculum Mentis*<sup>597</sup> - in asserting that “reality is not whatever I happen to think; it is what I am obliged to think,”<sup>598</sup> and Collingwood regarded all other forms but philosophy as “philosophical errors”<sup>599</sup> but he also considered them necessary errors and parts of the unity which philosophy embodies. Collingwood would possibly have agreed with Oakeshott that philosophical history was the uppermost form of experience – however Oakeshott differentiated between history and philosophy as well – but he would have boisterously lamented Oakeshott’s notion of philosophy being an activity for the specialist. It is precisely philosophy’s pure – unarrested – nature that renders it pivotal for every man of reason to partake in it to repel the coming barbarism. Collingwood contemptuously referred to views redolent of Oakeshott’s philosophical elitism<sup>600</sup> as “academic trade-unionism”<sup>601</sup> or as he went on to say, “there is no such thing in philosophy as amateur or professional.”<sup>602</sup> As

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<sup>596</sup> *Ibid.* 58

<sup>597</sup> Johnston writes that *Experience and its Modes* is the only major philosophical work that was inspired by *Speculum Mentis* and was to some extent an attack of it . *The Formative Years of R. G. Collingwood.* 69.

<sup>598</sup> *Experience and its Modes.* 59

<sup>599</sup> *Speculum Mentis.* 150.

<sup>600</sup> *Experience and its Modes* 3.

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid.* 256.

<sup>602</sup> *Ibid.* 261. Collingwood can easily be conjectured to have thought that by the divorce of practical life and philosophy, Oakeshott had rendered the latter barren.

one of his Oxford teachers, the great propagator of English realism, Cook Wilson wrote of Collingwood that “he is [...] judicious, avoiding the rhetoric and verbiage which too often takes the place of thinking in [metaphysics].”<sup>603</sup> It has been established that philosophy and practise go hand in hand. But Collingwood bemoans the fact that there is no demand for philosophy anymore.<sup>604</sup> A world which is not inclined to take part in the highest form of theoretical reason and thereby fails to reach the acme of practical reason is an insane world. That is, as we have seen in *Speculum Mentis*, philosophy is an innate activity of the mind, it is not exclusively for specialists to pursue.

If civilisation was to survive Collingwood estimated his metaphysical system, which in effect, only propagated that thinking should be systematic, rational and normative, had to be adopted, or to be more precise man had to understand what reason itself embodied and act according to it. As we could see in the foregoing quite a great number of the people making up civilisation did not reach the acme of the logical scale, therefore their reasoning ability was severely underdeveloped, which made them either perpetrators of nefarious crimes, accomplices or idle puppets. Collingwood never doubted that every person was capable of mounting the top of the scale, but for that to happen a rational society was necessary. In lieu of that, mankind was beyond hope. Both positivism and its offshoot, psychology were based on the negation of normative thinking, thereby as Collingwood asserted, they negated their being as sciences. As in other aspects, Collingwood’s thought was more of a synthetisation of previous thought than completely original thought, and in much he had to say about psychology, he echoed Bosanquet, who had chastised Durkheim for propagating psychology as a humanistic science,

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<sup>603</sup> *History Man*. 80.

<sup>604</sup> *Speculum Mentis*. 15-16.

whereas it was on par with other positivistic sciences, and as such its inclusion in the humanistic branch of science would kill art, history and philosophy.<sup>605</sup>

Collingwood wrote that the world was plagued by “an epidemic disease: a kind of epidemic withering of belief in the importance of truth and the obligation to think and act in a systematic and methodological way.”<sup>606</sup> Fascism and Nazism were not the main problems; they were the offshoots of the irrationalist tendency in modernity. If such a tendency had not presented itself, Fascism and Nazism would not have been born either. The very necessity of forming a map of thought and knowledge was the result of the Renaissance fragmentation of the mind and the failure of subsequent generations to reunite the mind under the augmented sciences. If only such a map could have been written and people’s behaviour adjusted to it accordingly, civilisation would be saved.

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<sup>605</sup> “Atomism in History” 30-33.

<sup>606</sup> *An Essay on Metaphysics*. 135.

## Conclusion

As we have seen in the foregoing, Collingwood's writings are replete with despair and pessimism towards the future of mankind. He elaborated some of his major tenets in order to bring mankind back from the precipice of war and to fight the emerging barbarism. In order to do that, however, man needed to act rationally, while realising that rational action was only possible if he was mentally healthy. In order to do so, however, in the disease laden modern age, the rational make up of the human mind and the sciences have to be represented on a scale of forms for man to see how he is supposed to think and what he can achieve by thinking rationally and what he can bereave himself of by not doing so. Of course, the scale of forms would have been a valid and perfectly right approach to delineate how the human mind worked, as it had been utilised long before Collingwood, but Collingwood was definitely of the opinion, just like his fellow Italian idealists, that the scale which man needed to ascend needed to be spelled out for humanity if they were to have any notion as to how to climb it. Without describing the different scales of form in minute detail, modern man could have no understanding of these scales as he has lost touch with reality owing to the defragmentation of the mind, which resulted in such horrors as utilitarianism, mechanisation, realism, positivism and above all the three extant dictatorial forms of Collingwood's day. If these scales were followed, the de-fragmentation of the mind would be achieved, and man would be whole again just like he was in the Middle Ages, but owing to the extraordinary development of the different sciences, the unity and wholeness in man would be of a superior kind than the unity of the Middle Ages. These are the main tenets of all of Collingwood's works, especially the later ones, such as *The New Leviathan*, *An Autobiography*, *An Essay on Metaphysics* and *The Principles of Art*. Of course, in spite of people's attraction to *The Idea of History*, in spite of the fact that the doctrine of re-enactment is present in Croce, Gentile and de Ruggiero, as well, is understandable since Collingwood utilises a much less technical and philosophical



language than the three above-mentioned Italian philosophers, not to mention that a serious amount of the works of these three philosophers is not extant in an English translation. However, it is incomprehensible when critics base their opinion and criticism of Collingwood solely on his doctrine of re-enactment. Collingwood was a philosopher of the first rank. Philosophers are by nature system-builders. I am not saying that one has to read every piece a philosopher wrote to have the right to criticise his doctrines, but at least the critic has to be cognizant with the majority of the said philosopher's writings and know the major tenets he propagated. This is definitely not the case when it comes to most of the criticism that is levelled against Collingwood. The majority of critics pretend that Collingwood's only book, or at least the only one worth reading and discussing, is *The Idea of History*, maybe even *An Autobiography*, but the rest of Collingwood's writings has been consigned to oblivion. Collingwood scholars on the other hand, are so preoccupied with details of Collingwood's historical and aesthetic doctrines that they fail to see how and why these doctrines came to be. They fail to notice that Collingwood borrowed greatly from both British and Italian philosophers and while he most certainly added a lot of his own, he was just as much of a synthesiser as a very original philosopher. In other word, scholars, whether amiable or inimical towards Collingwood, posit the wrong questions. They are far too preoccupied with the "what" as opposed to the "why." Or, to put it into Collingwoodian nomenclature, they do not realise that as Collingwood scholars they ought to seek the answers Collingwood tried to answer. They seem to be ignorant of not only the answers but the questions Collingwood implicitly posited, and devoted his life to answering. It is of no importance whether his special theories are feasible in any discipline or whether he was more of a Kantian or a Hegelian, whether he really was an idealist or not. Only the questions and their answers are of any importance and the modern age –as being even more lamentably mechanised and barbarous

than that of Collingwood's – cannot afford to disregard these questions and the answers given to them.

As we have seen, the scale of human knowledge, to some extent, corresponds to the scale of human consciousness. Therefore, to attain knowledge of certain disciplines, man has to have reached imagination by which thought is engendered. In denying his emotions, man has corrupted and discarded art, and thereby rendered all the subsequent and higher forms of knowledge replete with immorality, pseudo-scientificness, and discontinuity. Man not only outraged his knowledge, he outraged his consciousness, which rendered any morality, rationality, and dutiful action in society at large obsolete.

This poignant fact, and not historical re-enactment, or the collaboration theory of aesthetic knowledge is the real gist of Collingwood's voluminous *oeuvre*. It is especially dolorous, since the dope-seeking owing to the drudgery of life has increased to an intolerable level to any intelligent person. Mechanisation has begot a consumer society in which people are always looking for dope and art has been demolished, or at least demoted to mere amusement, which do not bestow any kind of knowledge or integrity on the observer or the listener. Collingwood, in spite of fearing barbarism as coming from the dictatorships of his time, was right to assert that these dictatorships could not have lived long or even come into being with a serious mental corruption of man. It is accurate to say, I think, that it is our age that represents the true barbarism and the real breakdown of human consciousness to which Collingwood's era was merely a prelude. The present age would fare better if it took Collingwood's advice to heart and try to reverse what has been done to the human mind, if such mental corruption is reversible at all.

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