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ABSTRACT

This paper traces the attempts by the philosopher Robin George Collingwood to answer the question: How does one change the course of modern thought? The description of Collingwood's work is structured around three of the philosopher's books that represent a unified attempt to solve the problem. The three books cover a span of over 10 years and, while varied in their stated objectives, when taken as a whole represent one purpose. Collingwood's philosophy developed from his attempt to unify philosophy and history. He believed that a break with the prevailing methodologies in metaphysics was essential because the realist school of philosophy had created a false analogy between history and the natural sciences. Collingwood conceived of thought as historical in nature. For him metaphysics was the historical science that could unify all thinking. He believed the realists' dismissal of the historical dimension of mind had led to an improper understanding of the relationship between man and nature. Collingwood was convinced that the way to change the negative development of man's rational powers was through a proper understanding of historical thinking. The first work discussed is "Speculum Mentis," published in 1923, and intended to map the boundaries of human knowledge. The next work described is "An Essay of Philosophical Method." The ideas laid out in this book find their foundation in "Speculum Mentis" and lead to later work in the third book, "An Essay on Metaphysics." (DK)

GETTING INSIDE OTHER PEOPLE'S HEADS

ROBIN GEORGE COLLINGWOOD ON THE UNITY OF THOUGHT

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INTRODUCTION

Collingwood's philosophy developed along the lines outlined in his autobiography. Here, and elsewhere in his published writings he attempted to unify philosophy and history. In Speculum Mentis and the two essays, Collingwood developed this theory. He believed that a break with the prevailing methodologies in metaphysics was essential because the realist school of philosophy had created a false analogy between history and the natural sciences. Collingwood conceived of thought as historical in nature. For him, metaphysics was the historical science which could unify all thinking.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the popular tendencies in philosophy were anti-metaphysical. This was because the Oxford realists cast all knowledge in the mode of the empirical sciences. They dismissed the historical dimension of mind, and Collingwood believed that this had led to an improper understanding of the relationship between man and nature. This error, he argued in his autobiography and elsewhere, would have serious political and moral implications if it were not corrected. The 'realists' believed that they could shape nature into whatever form they liked. Collingwood thought that this was not only incorrect, but also that it would have tragic consequences for democracies if it were not reversed. He feared that the realist influence would make men forget the lessons of the past. He pointed to the First World War and its subsequent peace treaty as examples of what man was likely to do with the mistaken conception of his power.[1] As for the future, he feared that technological expansion would increase those tendencies. Collingwood was convinced that the way to change the negative development of man's rational powers is through a proper understanding of historical thinking. History is not just a re-examination of the past. It is an on-going process without a definite beginning or end.

This process was instructive because it could teach man how to think. If democracy was to survive, an informed electorate was essential, and the proper analysis of historical thought could provide a sound basis for this. The study of the process 'of becoming' would enable men to understand their present, and that should be every historian's aim. The question that he wanted to pursue, therefore, was 'How does one change the course of modern thought?' It was Collingwood's attempts to answer that question that I shall trace in the following pages. I have chosen to structure my description around the three books which represent a unified attempt to solve the problem.

The three books cover a span of over ten years and vary in their stated objectives; yet when taken as a whole they are of one purpose. The first work is Speculum Mentis. It was published in 1923 and was intended as the title suggests, to map the boundaries of human knowledge. It was welcomed by the academic critics. It appeared to place Collingwood in the mainstream of philosophical debate, because he had used an Hegelian dialectical model for his dynamic principle. The overall reception, however, was not enthusiastic. Collingwood mentions in his correspondence to his friend de Ruggiero that the critical reception disappointed him.

Collingwood himself was not of one mind about Speculum Mentis. In the Autobiography he said,

> It is a bad book in many ways. The position laid down in it was incompletely thought out and unskillfully expressed....

Unfortunately, most readers do not read the footnote to that passage, which says:

> Since writing that sentence I have read Speculum Mentis for the first time since it was published, and find it much better than I remembered. It is a record, not so very obscure in expression, of a good deal of genuine thinking. If much of it now fails to satisfy me, that is because I have gone on thinking since I wrote it, and therefore much of it needs to be supplemented and qualified. There is not a great deal that needs to be retracted.[2]

Further light on Collingwood's attitude to Speculum Mentis can be shed by another published letter which explains how in the course of writing it he had made two important discoveries: that history was a process, and that it developed in a dynamic form.

Contemporary critics have by no means been of one mind about the value of Speculum Mentis. L.J. Goldstein claims that the conception of history given in Speculum Mentis is fundamentally different from that presented in The Idea of History.[3] Rubinoff, on the other hand, argues that Speculum Mentis is perhaps the most important book because it lays out all of Collingwood's subsequent schema.[4] A.J. Ayer argues that Speculum Mentis cannot be ignored, not because of what it accomplishes in its own right, but because it anticipated much of what was to come in Collingwood's writings.[5]

Speculum Mentis presents an outline of Collingwood's plans, but I disagree with Rubinoff to the extent that it does this.[6] The best reason I have for this is the next work, An Essay on Philosophical Method which both Knox and Collingwood considered to be his best book. Knox referred to it as, "a philosophical classic".[7] Collingwood said,

> It is my best book in matter; in style I may call it my only book, for it is the only one I ever had the time to finish as well as I knew how, instead of leaving it in a more or less rough state.[8]

Nonetheless, even this work leaves much more to be said if one wishes to find out how historical and philosophical thought collapse into one. In this paper, I want to argue that the ideas laid out in the essay on method find their foundation in Speculum Mentis, and that they lead to the later work in An Essay on Metaphysics.

The essay on method was written from November 1932 to June 1933. It represents many changes from his first approach to the problem. Whereas Speculum Mentis was an introduction to philosophy, the essay on method was, "...the philosophy itself (as) beginning to take shape."[9]

Collingwood said that the essay on method was written to call attention to a specific problem: the failure of prevailing philosophical methods. The current modes of philosophy were quite adequate for those 'realists' using them, but they were totally inadequate to a thinker like Collingwood who wanted to re-establish the need for metaphysics, the historical side of traditional philosophy. The method he describes in his book is a response to that objective, and provides an accompaniment to the argument presented in Speculum Mentis. In the first book, while the analysis of the problem had been original, the method had been an adaptation of the Hegelian model. In the analysis of 1933, the method itself became a creative expression of his aim to solve his task.

The third book that I will refer to in this paper is An Essay on Metaphysics. This work presents the reader with a whole picture of Collingwood's conception of philosophy and points to the writings that were to follow after 1935. I have, in another article (see the Use and Abuse of Primary Sources, 1992 Interchange) examined the unpublished writings to illustrate this point; and have made reference there to The Idea of History, the one work that is most often taken to be Collingwood's fullest statement on the philosophy of history. To understand Collingwood's thought is, I believe, to see the unity of purpose in all these writings.

SPECULUM MENTIS

There is a certain difficulty in providing an analysis of Collingwood's work, and this is because the theory and practice are always entangled. Such is the case in Speculum Mentis which sets out to reunite all forms of experience. During the analysis of what Collingwood calls 'a scale of forms' one discovers that the philosophical concept he is describing is identical to the one he is employing.

Speculum Mentis is a map of the mind. Collingwood used a methodology adopted from Hegel to attempt to describe how ideas progressed historically. The name that he gave to this development was 'a scale of forms'. It seems to dominate Speculum Mentis in its description of all of the forms of experience and it is essential to all of Collingwood's thought. Through an explanation of the nature of overlapping genera, Collingwood explains how philosophical concepts can be defined,

> The problem of defining a concept is not how to find a single phrase determining its genus and differentiation, but how to express its whole content.[10]

Philosophical judgments are explained in terms of one concept overlapping another, positive, negative, universal, particular, and singular. As well, philosophical judgments are made by combining deductive and inductive methods of reasoning. All these terms are connected in that they exhibit characteristics, which Collingwood would claim to be common to all rational philosophical thought from Socrates to the present. Therefore, the theory of the historical development of the idea of philosophy is verified through the study of the past. Different ideas can be distinguished, but they can not be fragmented without destroying and distorting the basic unity of thought.[11]

Collingwood wanted to demonstrate that all of man's thoughts were bound together by a common basis that was historical. He attempted to explain this concept philosophically for the first time in the pages of Speculum Mentis by describing how ideas progressed through various and more explicit expressions of thought. He hoped that such a project would demonstrate that historical thinking was essential.

Each of Collingwood's works was intended to achieve a rapprochement between historical and philosophical thought, yet this aim was not achieved in one book alone. It was the achievement of the sum of all the works together, in much the same way that

thought, as described in Speculum Mentis, is the accumulated knowledge of all the thinking that has gone before.

Collingwood described the work as, "a system of philosophy."[12] It is both historical and philosophical, as it traces the development of ideas and describes the functions of the mind. As it is an attempt to make sense of the world, it can be considered speculative metaphysics. To chart the way in which various types of human expression are linked, and thus answer the philosopher's eternal question, 'What do the things that surround me mean?'

Collingwood want to establish two points: First, there is a commonality among the thoughts of men whether they are expressed in art, science, history or philosophy. Second, there is a way ideas can be made to be more productive to man's needs.

What are the various types of thinking that Collingwood has chosen to describe in his analysis of human thought? The list that he gives should not be seen as exclusive. The forms that Collingwood describes in Speculum Mentis are the ones that directly affect his project and they are described as an historical scale of forms.

Art is the first level of experience in the scale. Art is a primary form of experience in which the use of imagination plays a dominant role in the mind's perception of what is presented to it.[13] When I look at Seurat's Walk on The Grand Jatte, what my mind perceives is what I bring to that picture, for example, my memories of a similar walk, or perhaps nostalgia for the orderliness of the scene, and so on. The list of possible experiences is limited only by my imagination. While the actual aesthetic form of the piece of art, that is its dimensions, etc., are concrete and coherent, the work comes to life in our imagination, not on the canvas.[14] Here Collingwood is showing his teeth to the 'realists' whom he somewhat extremely conceives to oppose any 'subjective' factor in aesthetics. The

Greeks and the Romans over emphasized the aesthetic form he explains, and this is the philosophical error inherent in art. It is the belief, "...in the separateness and independence of imagination."[15] For the ancients, art expresses only what is felt. However, the supposition, "I suppose that I feel x", coupled with the feelings gathered from imagination do not equal true claims about the nature of one's mind; that is what Collingwood is after. What art expresses is not clear, it is abstract, "...when you know that you mean something, and cannot tell what...you have achieved Art."[16]

Historically, Religion is the leading mode of thought that succeeds art. Both art and religion, "...are the experiences of one who is still learning language and has not yet fully learned it."[17] Intellectually however, religion is a step above art. It asserts an explicit statement of, "...the distinction between reality and unreality, truth and falsehood."[18] Religion, because it deals with thought instead of imagination, is an explicit statement of thought.[19] Historically, the task of religion was the establishment of a universal church, worshipping the one universal God. Religious truths are not based upon subjective evaluations, but upon explicit statements about the nature of the universe, and man's relationship with God.[20] But the meaning that religion gives to man is only metaphorical. This is the limitation in religious thought.[21]

Science emerges as the third form of experience. The change from religion to science was accompanied by specific historical events, such as the seventeenth century wars of religion.

At the end of the middle ages, science, like art and religion, was locked into a rigid structure enforced by the institutional church. Scientific thought was locked into "...the dogma of a priori method."[22]

In what we know today as classical physics, this form was replaced by observation and experiment during the Renaissance.[23] The Renaissance scientists tried to make explicit the, "...empirical study of fact which in Greek thought was always implicit: always present but never recognized."[24] The search for knowledge now became less structured with the new method of inductive reasoning.[25] However, the new science still retained a powerful deductive element, because it presupposed from the very beginning that nature's laws were uniform. The tension between these two was one factor in science's development in the scale of forms. The rejection of unselfconscious a priori thought in favour of observation and experiment implied that the concrete concept had succeeded over an abstract one. As Collingwood believed man's essence was to think rationally and historically, the rejection of abstraction was a step forward.

Despite the powerful surge of science in the ensuing centuries, made possible by the assumption of generally uniform natural law, Collingwood points out that the degree of abstractness which postulated natural laws require means that when scientists 'think' they must strip away the particular to get at the universal. But the world is not abstract, it is made up of particulars.[26]

Collingwood places the transition from scientific to historical experience into a historical context, with specific reference to Descartes,

> All science, said Descartes, rests upon the one indubitable certainty that I think and that therefore I exist. Now the thought and existence of which Descartes spoke were not abstractions - anything thinking or anything somehow getting itself thought about - ...Descartes meant what he said, and what he said was the concrete historical fact, the fact of my actual present awareness, was the root of science....Science presupposes history and can never go behind history: That is the discovery of which Descartes' formula is the deepest and most fruitful expression.[27]

Descartes' discovery of the importance of fact might have, but did not lead to science's triumph over abstractness because his comments on history were not regarded as being as important as those on the "Cogito" and natural science. It is highly significant that one of the greatest minds of the seventeenth century had such an insight, even though later scientists thinking misunderstood its significance, and retained an abstract character.

Nineteenth century historians quite naturally fell under the spell of scientific thinking. Men like Mommsen and Ranke laid enormous emphasis on the scientific determination of past facts. Applying the strictest critical standards they attempted to establish a 'true' account of what actually occurred. While this has been traditionally regarded, and can still be regarded, as a major step forward, it still leaves history in an unsatisfactory condition. The past tends to be perceived as *only* a pile of atoms, the concrete events studied. At the same time, the positivist historian retains a neutral posture towards his study, which actually serves to sever the past from the present.[28]

Beginning in ancient times, historical thought underwent its own development. It started from personal memories, and, "the collector of legends and tales..."[29] At this immature stage of development, the criterion of truth was implicit. It was only after philosophy that the question, "Does it fit in with everything I know about the world of facts, the nature of the case...and so forth?" became explicit.[30] Mature history, however, deals with fact.

> The whole past and present universe is the field of history....[31]
>
> For the maturity of historical thought is the explicit consciousness of the truth that what matters is not an historian's sources, but the use he makes of them..... these devices of self-reliant and self-conscious historical thought form what is called historical method.[32]

In the nineteenth century, historical thought expressed human experience, or the unity of the individual and the particular. The product of this enterprise was a totality which is, "...universal in that it is what it is throughout; and every part of it is as individual as itself."[33] This is the discovery of freedom.[34] The universal is now contained within the particular and means and ends are amalgamated.

The problem in nineteenth century historiography was that one could not comprehend the whole but is forced to gather the instances of the past.[35] These are "the atoms" of the past, as Collingwood calls them.[36] History becomes an infinite whole, a whole representing individual facts, and because of this,

> History is the knowledge of an infinite whole whose parts, repeating the plan of the whole in their structure, are only known by reference to their context. But since this context is always incomplete, we can never know a single part as it actually is.[37]

Historical facts, however, are not independent. They depend for their existence upon the perceiver. This allows the historian to, "...apprehend the atomic facts of history one by one, and thus build up ever-increasing structures of fact which have nothing to fear from any unrevealed fact that may lurk in the surrounding darkness."[38] The result of this type of historical research is a rejection of universal history and a search for a particular one. This would solve the problem of historical knowledge.[39]

But another problem exists for history if one accepts the nineteenth century theory of historiography. That problem is that we have no access to the past because we cannot observe directly what happened. One cannot be certain that x did occur.[40] According to Collingwood's account, we are left with historical relativism because it is the only other explanation he considers possible here. This he rejects because it undercuts the search for truth.[41]

> This history is the norm and the *reductio ad absurdum* of all knowledge considered as knowledge of an objective reality independent of the knowing mind. Here for the first time we place before ourselves an object which satisfies the mind; an object individual, concrete, infinite, no arbitrary abstraction or unreal fiction, but reality itself in its completeness. This object is what we have tried and failed to find in art, in religion, and in science. In history we have found it; and we have found it to be an illusion.[42]

The acquisition of knowledge, seen in this light, is illusionary because as soon as the mind understands the presuppositions of one form, the contradiction inherent in that form separates the mind at once from acquiring the knowledge it believed it had attained. The process of the scale of forms has been one which, alienated the mind from its object.[43] In art, the work was enjoyed in its wholeness.[44] In religion, a mystical union is imperfectly achieved.[45] In science, a priori thought tries to capture thought but fails because it cannot. The entirety of human experience is united in this process, "...only to find itself separated from the mind by a gulf which no thought can transverse."[46] History, therefore, has failed, and because of this, we know that we must have a form of experience that has the following characteristics:

> It must be an object not merely of imagination, like the work of art, but of thought; but, like the work of art, it must be concrete and individual. It must be, like the object of religion, absolute and eternal; but unlike this again, it must be a real object and not the imaginative or metaphorical presentation of an object. It must be conceived, like the object of science; but it must not be an abstraction. And like the object of history it must be fact, an absolute concrete individual; but it must be accessible to the knowing mind.[47]

The options are that either the infinite whole of fact is always present in some form, or it can never be known at all. Collingwood rejects the latter possibility and suggests a rewording of the question.[48] Instead of searching for the 'object' of knowledge, perhaps we have made the process abstract, for what is to be known is nothing but mind itself.[49] Thought would, from this time on, be determined through the act of knowing.[50] "The

world of fact which is explicitly studied in history is, therefore, implicitly nothing but the knowing mind as such."[51] This is the transition from history to philosophy.

Philosophy is the fifth form of experience. The transition from history to philosophy is an assertion of concrete reality, a denial of abstractness and generality. In philosophical thought, the search for the object of mind is abandoned because Collingwood argues that it has become clear that mind is at once the synthesis of all concepts. The nature of all thought is, in reality, philosophy.[52] Because these qualities are shared by both forms of experience, the change is much more subtle than any of the previous transitions in the scale of forms. In history, it became impossible to know or realize the object, historical knowledge, but in philosophy that error is corrected because an object, as an abstract assertion of reality, does not exist. What is known, therefore, is mind.[53]

The success of Speculum Mentis lies in its theoretical basis. The concepts introduced in this work were fully articulated in the later writings on the philosophy of history. Some of these concepts are: (1) The theory of forms that describe the various expressions of ideas. In 1933 when Collingwood published his essay on method he gave the reader a fuller account of that theory, and he went on to apply it in the Essay on Metaphysics in 1935. (2) The dynamic principle that is the centre of Collingwood's conception of change is not clear in Speculum Mentis. He appears to know in what direction he is headed but does not have the conceptual tools to get there. In the essay on method, these points have been thought out and they are presented clearly to the reader. In the metaphysical essay, the conception of change is applied to an historical example and the reader has an opportunity to witness the theory and practice at work. (3) Collingwood's description of 'philosophy' given in Speculum Mentis hints that philosophy holds a special status in his schema because it occupies the uppermost position in his description of types of ideas used by man to express

his knowledge. In An Essay on Philosophical Method, 'philosophy has become the most explicit form of man's expression and it is used by Collingwood to describe thought itself. (4) In Speculum Mentis, Collingwood used what he called a 'Hegelian analysis' to explain the process of change. He may have meant by this that he presupposed there was one principle around which change revolved, much as Hegel had presupposed the idea of 'Spirit'. By the 1930's Collingwood had rejected this idea. He came to the realization that there was a process of development. The early writings do not, therefore, contain references to a theory of presuppositions. An examination of the theory of presuppositions presented in the two essays reveals that the genesis of the concept is given in Speculum Mentis.

THE ESSAY ON PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD

In An Essay on Philosophical Method, Collingwood describes the transition from historical to philosophical thought. In philosophy, "The specific classes of a philosophical genus do not exclude one another. They overlap one another."[54] He argues that this has been recognized since Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics.[55] .Philosophical distinctions are distinctions without differences, "...or, alternatively, that where two philosophical concepts are distinguished Aristotle's formulae may hold good, that the two are the same thing but their being is different."[56] This implies that philosophical classification can not give a definition and then go and find cases to fit it. All philosophical classifications, because the classes overlap, can only be temporary and provisional because a philosophy of this sort does not accept any static classification.[57] In Collingwood's Notebook on Metaphysics, section S 6-22 he wrote about the overlapping of classes, "... the philosophical concept has this peculiarity: that it will not obey the rules of formal classification. This is exemplified

and demonstrated in detail. This marks off the philosophical concept from those of mathematics and empirical science." Therefore, philosophical thought can never be a unit in the sense used by the exact sciences. It will always be a provisional unity because, "Thinking philosophically...means constantly revising one's starting point in the light of one's conclusions and never allowing oneself to be controlled by any cast-iron rule whatever."[58] This statement is significant because it refers to his objective of uniting the forms of thought so that men could think independently and live freely.

Collingwood refers back to Plato to give historical background to the scale of forms and justification for his use of it. It is not the particular scale of forms, that Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Leibniz or Kant used, that Collingwood finds important, but rather, "...the evident conviction, pervading all his work that this is the type of structure which philosophical concepts possess." They all attempted to specify knowledge into a scale of development.[59]

The scale of forms also exists in the exact sciences. In a non-philosophical scale,

> ...the variable is something extraneous to the generic essence: Thus the essence of water, that which is common to its solid, liquid, and gaseous forms, is represented by the formula H20, and heat does not appear in this formula either explicitly or by implication.[60]

No matter what the temperature and generic essence of water is unchanged, and each form can be called 'water'. Therefore, there is a difference between a scale of forms in philosophical thought and one in the exact sciences, and this difference can be formulated into a rule of philosophical method,

> ...since philosophical specification is into opposites and non-philosophical into distinctions, any distinctions found in a philosophical subject matter must be either banished from it as alien to the sphere of philosophy or else interpreted so as to appear cases of opposition.[61]

The scale of forms of development has been largely ignored as a corner stone in Collingwood's thinking. Many interpretations such as Dray, Gardiner, Mink, Rex Martin, and Van der Dussen focus mainly on the doctrine of re-enactment as the most important concept. While this is important, I think that it rests upon Collingwood's conception of a scale of forms. This concept seems to me to be the philosophical basis of Collingwood's new philosophy as found in the two essays.

The philosophical scale of forms is in part a description of the way in which thinking developed in western society. It provides a description of the way in which thought can begin as a primitive expression and evolve into a mature form. In the scale of forms, Collingwood takes the abstraction of mind and places it in an historical context. He blends, for the first time successfully, theory and practice, and thereby unites historical and philosophical thought. I am not sure that he ever realized how great a triumph this was.

Collingwood uses an historical approach to describe the scale of forms because it is essential for him to uncover the mistaken conceptions of the development of thought. The awareness of past errors does not insure they will not be committed, it simply means that they can be corrected once the correct scale is used. Collingwood's insistence that he was living in the philosophical age meant that the time was ripe to apply philosophical insights to all the previous forms. This process would correct their errors and unite them into one common expression. The idea of overlapping classes within the scale provides the stepping stones for one form of thought to change into the next. These developments, which are in part theoretical, take place in the practical world of historical events. This unit of theory and practice is the foundation of all Collingwood's theoretical reasoning.

AN ESSAY ON PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD

In An Essay on Philosophical Method, the scale of forms was described as unlike any in the exact sciences because it differences in degree and kind. If there were no distinction in degree, it would follow, "...that all pleasures were equally pleasant, all good things or good acts equally good...and so forth."[62] This implies that a philosophical scale of forms already bears some realization of its essence, so each member in the scale is good (or bad) in itself but bad (or worse) in relation to the next form above. From any point on the scale, "...we are at a minimum point in it; and conversely, however far down we go, there is always the possibility of going lower without reaching absolute zero."[63] This makes clear Collingwood's notion of the overlapping of classes. Using as an example good and bad, each term as it succeeds its neighbour in degree or goodness, but beats it, "...on its own ground."[64] Each term, therefore, is a summary of all that has gone before, and this linking quality explains the overlapping of classes.[65] This conception was integral to his system because Collingwood needed to account for the movement of ideas in history. Overlapping classes of thought account for the way that thinking develops and still retains the essence of the original concept.

A non-philosophical scale of forms is rejected by Collingwood because when it is applied to philosophy the, "...doctrines of classification and division...are neither simply true nor simply false."[66]

When all distinctions are stripped away there is only one problem in all of philosophy, not in ethics, and one in logic, "...for the characteristics that mark off each of these from the rest are examples of distinction, and, therefore extraneous to philosophy; and nothing is left except a single pair of opposites, the mere abstract idea of opposite terms..."[67] In a philosophical scale of forms, the elements of distinction and opposition

coalesce into one. In non-philosophical thought these can be separated.[68] For example, Collingwood takes the case of the relationship between good and bad once again to explain this. "To call a man bad is not merely to say that he does fewer good acts, or acts less good in their degree or kind, than another whom we call good; it is to say that he does acts positively bad."[69] What is bad in this case is not only distinct from what is good, it is also opposed to it.

As a consequence of this argument, Collingwood rejects Plato's scale of forms.[70] He argued that Plato had used the most extreme cases of each concept, thus distorting the relationship.[71]

Coming at the end of Speculum Mentis this argument is important. It demonstrates that Collingwood has worked through the concepts of a scale of forms that preceded him, and that he had built upon that analysis to devise his own.

In An Essay on Philosophical Method, Collingwood further described how the forms of thought developed. He argued that the concepts within each are distinct but not separable from each other, and that every form develops internally within the overall process. Collingwood argued that there was an appropriate method for each of the forms which incorporated all the positive characteristics of the previous others.[72] In such a dynamic process there can be no final expression. As each form succeeds the next , the essence of thought becomes more and more explicit and man comes to know himself in better and clearer ways. This is the dynamic nature of the scale of development that is described in this the first of Collingwood's essays.

In the essay on method, Collingwood describes a philosophical system that is acceptable to him. He explains that any philosophical system should possess four characteristics. They are: finality, completeness, objectivity and uniformity of method. One

wonders if it is possible for Collingwood to claim finality since, "there is no finality in human knowledge."[73] He argues that what is possible within his plan is, "...to describe knowledge as an aggregate of separable items: an inventory to which additions are made without altering what was there before."[74] In philosophy, this is also the case because at each stage in the development of a philosophical concept it is necessary (because of the nature of philosophical thought) to summarize all the past failures and accomplishments.[75] "And each summary can only be done once, and is therefore final: The problem which it must solve is finally solved.[76] Philosophy is a process whose consistent ideas cannot be studied in isolation. The constituent ideas are joined in two ways: through the continued analysis of the problem of thought, and through the overlapping nature of the classes which are developmental in the scale of forms.

In the history of philosophical thought, each philosopher stands in relation to the past, present, and future in the same way.

> ...the events contained in it lead each to the next so far, that is, as each philosopher has learned his philosophy through studying the work of his predecessors. For in that case each is trying to do what his predecessor did - to philosophize; but to do it better by doing it differently; assimilating whatever seems true, rejecting whatever seems false, and thus producing a new philosophy which is at the same time an improved version of the old.[77]

The history of philosophical thought is in part the attempt to work through the scale of forms of thought. It also strives to forge ahead. The union of philosophical and historical thought involves raising historical thought to the level of philosophical thought and is exemplified in history for, "all the philosophers of the past are telescoped in the present, and constitute a scale of forms, never beginning and never ending, which are different both in degree and kind, distinct from each other and opposed to each other."[78]

CONCLUSION

Although the concept of a scale of forms appears to dominate the explanation of this philosophical method, it should not be singled out as the only important element. This would be unCollingwoodian, for the method described in these pages consists of many articulated factors, none of which is more important than the next in the overall makeup.

Philosophical method possesses such a scale also; so, too, do the individual concepts that make up 'philosophy'. The scale of forms is a description of a process, and this process is dependent upon other factors which are just as dynamic and important. Perhaps the most obvious of these concepts is the assumption that classes, concepts and methods overlap. The link between history and philosophy can be seen in two ways: first, because philosophy is a more developed form in the scale of forms, it is a more accurate expression of what history aims at than mere history. In The Idea of History, Collingwood calls this scientific history. Second, there is a chronological component to all rational thought in Collingwood's arguments. It is not enough, it appears, to establish an internal consistency; all arguments must also have a practical application because theory and practice are combined within the concept of mind so that man can be free. "To have free will implies being conscious of freedom."[79]

In both Speculum Mentis and An Essay on Philosophical Method this was demonstrated by direct, if general, references to historical areas which gave expression to the fullest development of a genus in the scale of forms. The very essence of thought is a process of 'making more clear' of 'coming to know better'. Because each step in the process is the fullest assertion of all the former, the linking effect of the scale of forms allows for a form of thought to make explicit what was implicit in all the rest.

In Speculum Mentis, Collingwood argued that the sense of the unity of thought comes only after one reaches the form of philosophy. It then becomes possible to make complete sense of the past.

FOOTNOTES

1. R.G. Collingwood, Address to the Belgian Students' Union Conference at Fladbury, May 10, 1919.

2. R.G. Collingwood, An Autobiography, p. 56.

3. L.J. Goldstein, "Collingwood on Historical Knowing," History and Theory 9 (1970), p. 10.

4. See L. Rubinoff's Collingwood and the Reform of Metaphysics: A Study in the Philosophy of Mind, Toronto, 1970.

5. A.J. Ayer, Philosophy in the Twentieth Century, Random House, 1982, p. 192-193.

6. See Rubinoff again.

7. Editors Preface to The Idea of History, p. xx.

8. An Autobiography, p. 188.

9. An Essay on Philosophical Method, p. 8.

10. An Essay on Philosophical Method, p. 221-222.

11. Ibid, p. 222-224.

12. Letter to Ruggiero, 1932.

13. "The question what philosophy is, cannot be separated from the question what philosophy ought to be." EPM, p. 4.

14. SM., p. 67.

15. SM., p. 88.

16. SM., p. 89.

17. SM., p. 115.

18. SM., p. 112.

19. SM., p. 152.

20. SM., p. 139.

21. SM., p. 129.

22. SM., p. 176.

23. SM., p. 177.

24. SM., p. 178.

25. SM., p. 178-179.

26. SM., p. 180.

27. SM., p. 202 - Meaning here an analysis in which the major forms of the concrete definition are analyzed to see if they give what they promised.

28. IH., p. 132.

29. SM., p. 212.

30. SM., p. 214.

31. SM., p. 217.

32. SM., p. 217.

33. SM., p. 221.

34. SM., p. 222.

35. SM., p. 234.

36. SM., p. 232.

37. SM., p. 231.

38. SM., p. 232.

39. SM., p. 232.

40. SM., p. 238.

41. SM., p. 237.

42. SM., p. 238.

43. SM., p. 238.

44. SM., p. 238.

45. SM., p. 238.

46. SM., p. 238.

47. SM., p. 239.

48. SM., p. 247.

49. SM., p. 243.

50. SM., p. 244.

51. SM., p. 245.

52. SM., p. 246-8.

53. SM., p. 248.

54. EPM., p. 31.

55. EPM., p. 50.

56. EPM., p. 50.

57. EPM., p. 51.

58. EPM., p. 52.

59. EPM., p. 58-59.

60. EPM., p. 59-60.

61. EPM., p. 65.

62. EPM., p. 80.

63. EPM., p. 84.

64. EPM., p. 87.

65. EPM., p. 87-90.

66. EPM., p. 92.

67. EPM., p. 66 - "It amounts to this: that philosophy has taken power to jettison all distinctions as merely empirical, and is free to simplify itself at discretion by regulating them to a non-philosophical sphere, labelled as history...or what not."

68. EPM., p. 76.

69. EPM., p. 75.

70. EPM., p. 65.

71. EPM., p. 65.

72. EPM., p. 190 - "Philosophy as a whole, in its form as a system, now appears as a scale of philosophies, each differing form the rest not only in kind, as dealing with a certain specific form of the one universal philosophical subject-matter by means of an appropriate and therefore specifically distinct method, but also in degree, as more or less adequately embodying the idea of genuinely philosophical method applied to genuinely philosophical subject-matter."

73. EPM., p. 177.

74. EPM., p. 179-180.

75. EPM., p. 180.

76. EPM., p. 193.

77. EPM., p. 194-195.

78. EPM., p. 195.

79. The New Leviathan. Manuscript of a printed work (Oxford, 1942). At 40.97 is written: "1-2 Jan. 1941". section 37.11.