Two Quests for Unity

John Dewey, R. G. Collingwood, and the Persistence of Idealism

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Two Quests for Unity investigates the persistence of idealist philosophy in Anglo-America during the first half of the nineteenth century through a study of Robin George Collingwood (1889–1943) and John Dewey (1859–1952). By focusing on an English and an American philosopher, this study illustrates the importance of taking a transnational approach to philosophy in contrast to the methodological nationalism that dominates the field.

The study uncovers Dewey's and Collingwood's idealist background and shows that they shared certain characteristics of idealism and its "thought style" throughout their lives, even though Dewey later became a pragmatist. As such, this study also provides insight into the historical relation between idealism and pragmatism. Special attention is given to unity, experience, and praxis, which were central notions in Anglo-American idealist philosophy as well as for Dewey and Collingwood.

While Dewey and Collingwood came to reject and revise certain aspects of idealism, they nevertheless retained its conception of philosophy as a broad, synthetic, situated, and reconstructive form of humanistic cultural criticism committed to the common good. This ideal has unfortunately been lost, but a critical conversation with philosophers like Collingwood and Dewey may help us imagine what such a philosophy — adapted for the twenty-first century — might look like.

LUND UNIVERSITY

TWO QUESTS FOR UNITY

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University

Content

Abbreviations

Works by John Dewey

EW: *The Early Works of John Dewey, 1882–1898.* 5 vols. Charlottesville, VA: InteLex Corporation, 2003.

MW: *The Middle Works of John Dewey, 1899–1924.* 15 vols. Charlottesville, VA: InteLex Corporation, 2003.

LW: *The Later Works of John Dewey, 1925–1953.* 17 vols. Charlottesville, VA: InteLex Corporation, 2003.

Works by Robin George Collingwood

A: *An Autobiography* (1939)
EM: *An Essay on Metaphysics* (1940)
EPM: *An Essay on Philosophical Method* (1933)
IH: *The Idea of History* (1946)
IN: *The Idea of Nature* (1945)
NL: *The New Leviathan* (1942)
PA: *Principles of Art* (1938)
PH: *Principles of History* (1999)
RP: *Religion and Philosophy* (1916)
SM: *Speculum Mentis, or The Map of Knowledge* (1924)

1. Introduction

In the midst of World War II, the 82-year-old American philosopher John Dewey (1859–1952) claimed that the lesson philosophy must "learn from the war is at least the importance of facing the problem of getting some kind of unified view of human beings in which ideas and emotions, knowledge and desire, would cooperate with each other instead of either going entirely separate ways or being brought into harmony with each other only through some outside power."[1] The pursuit of unity and harmony and the need to overcome dichotomies such as emotion and idea and knowledge and desire were not new insights reached by Dewey during the war. These themes can be traced all the way back to his first philosophical publications in the early 1880s and were what led Dewey to pursue a career in philosophy in the first place, after the work of T. H. Huxley had given him a "sense of interdependence and interrelated unity" that was further deepened as he became acquainted with the philosophy of G. W. F. Hegel and the British idealists Thomas Hill Green and Edward Caird via his mentor, George Sylvester Morris (LW 5: 147–152).

In the address on the philosophical lessons of the war, Dewey quoted British philosopher and historian Robin George Collingwood's *An Autobiography* (1939), in which Collingwood (1889–1943) criticizes the professionalization and elitism in contemporary realist philosophy. The realists, says Collingwood, made "philosophy so scientific that no one whose life was not a life of pure research could appreciate it, and so abstruse that only a whole-time student, and a very clever man at that, could understand it"

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[1] "Lessons from the War—in Philosophy" (LW 14: 334). The address was delivered at Cooper Union in New York City on December 7, 1941.

(A: 51).[2] According to Collingwood, the realists had abandoned the purpose of the idealist school of T. H. Green, which emphasized the importance of a "common good" and gave its pupils "ideals to live for and principles to live by" (A: 48–49). Dewey would have agreed. Like Collingwood, he admired Green and insisted that philosophy must remain connected to ordinary life and should be put to practical and social use. Philosophy, says Dewey, must not deal merely with "the problems of philosophers," but "with the problems of men" (MW 10: 46).

This study argues that Collingwood and Dewey pursued similar philosophical projects, which I will refer to as "quests for unity." I claim that the similarities in their thought, which have merely been noticed previously, can be explained by their shared background in the Anglo-American idealist tradition that dominated the universities of Britain and the United States between roughly 1870 and 1900. Among the characteristics of Anglo-American idealism inherited by Dewey and Collingwood was an emphasis on bringing about unity of different modes of experience, such as aesthetics, religion, history, science, and philosophy. Like the idealists, they challenged dualisms such as mind and matter, theory and practice, faith and reason, individual and community. They also agreed politically with most Anglo-American idealists and followed the communitarian social liberalism of T. H. Green.

Idealism was, however, attacked in the early twentieth century, challenged by the rise of what eventually became known as "analytical philosophy," whose proponents made it their primary target of aggression. Metaphysics, religion, and aesthetics—which had been central to the idealists—were no longer regarded as belonging to this more serious and specialized notion of philosophy, which sought its primary inspiration in the natural sciences. Its German background also made idealism seem suspicious, and its critics claimed it had been infected by Prussian authoritarianism and militarism.

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2 Because of an interruption in the tape recording, we do not have access to the entirety of Dewey's comments on Collingwood's *Autobiography*. Dewey says that Collingwood's remarks about his realist colleagues in Oxford "are extreme and they're bitter, but sometimes some exaggerated statement of exaggerated emphasis brings a point home better" (LW 14: 334).

Nevertheless, important aspects of idealism continued to influence philosophy during the first half of the twentieth century, where this study's primary focus lays. Recent researchers have therefore resisted assigning an end date to idealism's reign and proposed that a more productive approach is to recognize that even though idealism had lost its place as the house philosophy of Britain and the United States by the early twentieth century, many idealist ideas, themes, and concepts lived on during what have been called idealism's "afterlife."[3]

In Dewey and Collingwood, we find examples of philosophers who continued to struggle with the question of which aspects of the idealist tradition should be kept, revised, or rejected. Whether "idealism" is a fitting label for their thought is not the question (in Dewey's case, it is not). The point is that certain aspects of their thought, such as the quest for unity and the emphasis on the practical and contextual nature of knowledge, can be best understood in relation to the idealist tradition. Their kind of idealism was a humanistic/historicist Hegelianism influenced by Anglo-American and, in Collingwood's case, Italian idealists.[4] Notions like the a priori and the absolute served little purpose in Collingwood's and Dewey's thought, and they believed the value of Christianity was to be

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3 On the notion of idealist afterlife, see William J. Mander, *British Idealism: A History* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), 526–556; and Admir Skodo, *The Afterlife of Idealism: The Impact of New Idealism on British Historical and Political Thought, 1945–1980* (New York: Macmillan, 2016).

4 I borrow the notion of humanistic/historicist Hegelianism from James Good, who argues that "Hegel's absolute spirit is not a reality that transcends the flux of history." This, says Good, is also Dewey's view which makes him a historicist in the sense of regarding experienced reality as temporal. The emphasis on the historical and social nature of reality provides the foundation for the humanist aspect of Hegelianism. Good argues that Hegel, like Herder, took the purpose of philosophy to be social and ethical improvement. Their philosophy had practical aims and was not merely a narrow theoretical and academic endeavor. This kind of *Popularphilosophie*, in contrast to Kant's *Schulphilosophie*, embraced the neo-humanist notion of *Bildung* as "individual and cultural renewal" that also can be found in Goethe, Humboldt, and a hermeneutician like Dilthey. I agree with Good that this is an appropriate interpretation of Dewey's Hegelianism but would add that it also applies to Collingwood. See James A. Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity: The "Permanent Hegelian Deposit" in the Philosophy of John Dewey* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), xix, xxvin3.

found in its values and ideals rather than in supernatural notions. They considered reality and human nature to be historical, and argued that all problems, ideals, and ideas must be understood in their proper context. Their philosophies were humanistic in the sense that they wanted them to serve the social, ethical, and practical "problems of men."

Despite these similarities, Dewey's only printed reference to Collingwood is that mentioned above. Since Collingwood was not one of the most widely known British philosophers of the era, it is not surprising that Dewey did not refer to him more often—few contemporary American philosophers did. What is more curious is the fact that there is only one reference to Dewey in Collingwood's writings.[5] Dewey was, after all, one of the most famous American philosophers during first half of the twentieth century. Britain's embrace of Dewey was comparatively slow, however, and his works were neither widely known nor well-received there during his lifetime.[6]

As we will see, Collingwood was very hostile toward pragmatism, the philosophical school with which Dewey is most closely associated. Collingwood's remarks on pragmatism, however, were ill-informed, and I claim that he in fact shared many views with Dewey's version of pragmatism in particular, which should lead us to reconsider the historical relation be-

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5 This includes the letters and manuscripts kept at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, which holds most archival material related to Collingwood. In a review of a collection from the department of philosophy at Columbia University, for which Dewey provided an essay on "The Motivation of Hobbes's Political Philosophy" (reprinted in MW 11), Collingwood writes that Dewey "contributes a sound and scholarly treatment of Hobbes's political theory in its historical setting, showing that the differentia of Hobbes was not his authoritarianism, but the fact that he placed sovereignty on a secular basis." R. G. Collingwood, Review of *Studies in the History of Ideas*, edited by the Department of Philosophy, Columbia University, 1918, *Oxford Magazine*, October 17, 1919, 16–17. I am grateful to James Connelly for turning my attention to this review.

6 This is based primarily on Dewey's educational theory and pedagogy (for which he is most famous), the attitude toward which changed in the 1960s as progressive educational ideals became more fashionable in Britain. See John Darling and John Nisbet, "Dewey in Britain", *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 19:1/2 (2000), 39–52. Dewey's philosophical works were, however, reviewed in the most important philosophical journals, so British philosophers were aware of him, even though he was neither widely read nor particularly influential.

tween idealism and pragmatism. A related point is that Anglo-American idealism was *one* philosophic tradition, and it provides an important context for understanding both Dewey's and Collingwood's thought. By choosing to focus this study on one American and one British thinker, I also aim to make a case for the importance of considering transatlantic connections in philosophy against the dominance of nationalist narratives.

The purpose of this study is not merely antiquarian; I believe that combining Deweyan pragmatism with the Collingwoodian philosophy of history could prove fruitful, and the prospects of this endeavor will be discussed in the concluding chapter, where I consider the contemporary value of Dewey's and Collingwood's quests for unity and their ideal of a socially-engaged humanistic practical philosophy, as well as the prospects of their attempts to bring about a rapprochement between philosophy and history, and theory and practice.

Intellectual History as Conversation, Argument, and Critique

To view the past as isolated from the present is to regard it as "dead," and hence of no contemporary use, says Collingwood (IH: 154). He urges us instead to think of historiography as a study of past processes "which in some sense is still living in the present" (A: 97). Although Dewey's philosophy of history was not nearly as elaborated as Collingwood's, he was essentially in agreement on this point,[7] as are some contemporary thinkers who have influenced this study's approach and method. For example, Dominick LaCapra proposes that we view intellectual history as a critical dialogue with texts of the past that are particularly "good to think with,"

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7 In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey claims that the "true starting point" of history is a problematic situation in the present, and furthermore states: "The segregation which kills the vitality of history is divorced from present modes and concerns of social life. The past just as past is no longer our affair. If it were wholly gone and done with, there would be only one reasonable attitude toward it. Let the dead bury their dead. But knowledge of the past is key to understanding the present. History deals with the past, but this past is the history of the present" (MW 9: 221–222).

and David Harlan suggests that we regard history as "a conversation with the dead about what we should value and how we should live."[8]

The conversational, or dialogic, approach to intellectual history embraces the contingency of history and urges us to engage with the past in ways that help us rethink contemporary problems in productive ways; this is close to what Eva Domanska and Joan Wallach Scott describe as the aim of critique. Domanska argues that historians ought to transform their object of interpretation and liberate the text's meaning, while Scott views critique as a matter of opening spaces for future possibilities and new ways of thinking, being, and acting in the world. Scott's distinction between treating historiography as a matter of either "opening" or, as the objectivist historian would, close history, echoes Collingwood's distinction between treating the past as dead or alive.[9] David Harlan has something similar in mind:

> The only way we, as historians, can fulfil our responsibility to the dead is by making sure their works do not get lost in the past—in other words, by raising them up from the graveyard of dead contexts and helping them take up new lives among the living. The best way to respect the dead is to help them speak to the living.[10]

This approach to intellectual history urges us to reinterpret and recontextualize historical texts to reassess their present-day value. This liberates us from what Peter E. Gordon calls "strong contextualism," the view that

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8 Dominick LaCapra, *History and its Limits: Human, Animal, Violence* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2009), 193. The dialogical aspect of intellectual history is mentioned in ibid., 6; and in idem., *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1983), 63–65; David Harlan, The Degradation of American History (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1997), xviii. Hayden White also promotes a conversational approach in contrast to one that is analytical, assertive, and judgmental; see White, "The Context in the Text," in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), 186.

9 Eva Domanska, "Historiographical Criticism: A Manifesto," 199, 203, and Joan Wallach Scott, "History-Writing as Critique," 23, 25. Both published in *Manifestos for History*, ed. Keith Jenkins, Sue Morgan, and Alun Munslow (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007).

10 Harlan, *The Degradation of American History*, xxxii–xxxiii.

historical knowledge is a self-sufficient goal that can be reached by providing past texts with the correct context.[11] It is my conviction that no correct context exists in the sense that it is "out there" waiting to be discovered. There are no privileged contexts, and no interpretation can possibly account for all aspects of a text or provide a final determination of a text's meaning. That said, situating texts is a necessary part of the intellectual historian's labor, but there are an infinite number of ways in which this can be accomplished.[12]

This is not meant as a defense of relativism; I rather propose we think of historiographical explanation and philosophical judgement as compatible modes of interpretation. While recovering *intended* meaning is a fundamental part of intellectual history, as Adrian Blau has argued, so is interpretation of *extended* meaning.[13] The latter involves the evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in conceptual use and argumentation, as well as bringing to light the presuppositions, logical implications and inconsistencies of a text or a proposition. An author might not have intended the logical implications of what he or she wrote, but by grasping the text's extended meaning, we reach a deeper understanding of the text and the author. Sometimes we understand others better than they understand themselves.

A related issue concerns the epistemic status of intellectual history. Here I follow Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen's suggestion to regard reasoning and arguing for theses to be the task of historiography. Kuukkanen's approach

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11 Peter Gordon, "Contextualism and Criticism in the History of Ideas," in *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*, eds. Darrin M. McMahon and Samuel Moyn (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2014), 33. Gordon also warns that the notion of "proper" historical contexts leads to the view that ideas are isolated in these contexts, thereby isolating ideas in the past. In Collingwood's vocabulary, such contextualization treats the past as dead rather than as a living process connected to the present and the future.

12 This, I think, is the lesson from poststructuralist approaches to the past. See Edward Baring, "Intellectual History and Poststructuralism," in *A Companion to Intellectual History*, eds. Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (Oxford: John Wiley and Sons, 2016); and Ethan Kleinberg, "Haunting History," in *Haunting History: For a Deconstructive Approach to the Past* (Stanford, California: Stanford Univ. Press, 2017).

13 Adrian Blau, "Extended Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory* 58:3 (2019), 342–359.

rejects postmodern narrativism because of its neglect of epistemic criteria of evaluation on behalf of aesthetic and moral criteria. It also rejects representationalism and realism, for historiography is not a matter of "mirroring" past reality, since no referential relation between historiography and past reality could possibly exist.[14] Rather than making *re*presentations that aim to correspond with past reality, historiography should be practiced as a matter of *presenting* theses and arguments. Unlike the formal arguments found in philosophy, however, the historian's arguments are informal, often more complex, and can (but must not) be put forward in narrative form.[15]

Kuukkanen's argumentative approach to historiography rejects the notion of truth as correspondence for a pragmatic epistemology in which the notion of truth is superfluous: we do not ask whether an argument is true, but if it is valid or sound, and what its evidence, premises and conclusions are.[16] Kuukkanen therefore urges us not to evaluate historical research based upon the degree to which a historical presentation corresponds to past reality, but from an epistemic, rhetorical and discursive dimension— that is, the study's coherence, scope, exemplification, originality, and comprehensiveness; how well it is argued; and based on the intervention it makes in previous research of relevance to the study.[17] Rather than attempt to identify and fill "research gaps," historiography should make arguments or defend theses that are made as interventions into the existing field of research, with the aim of helping us view certain aspects of the past in new, interesting and more productive ways. This argumentative approach to historiography therefore goes together with the conversational and critical approach, and provides it with a more rigorous epistemic basis.

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14 Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 63.

15 Ibid., 10.

16 Ibid., 131. Here Kuukkanen follows Dewey's *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* in replacing "truth" with "warranted assertions"; that is, the state at the end of inquiry when the initial state of doubt has been removed.

17 Ibid., 156–158.

Aim, Approach, and Delimitations

This study argues that John Dewey and R. G. Collingwood shared a practical conception of socially engaged philosophy committed to the liberal notion of the common good in contrast to the narrowness and increasing professionalization and specialization of analytical philosophy. They also shared the idealist ideal of unity of experience, and thought of philosophy as a broad cultural program that includes aesthetics, religion, ethics, and history. In their view, these fields were interdependent and necessary parts of a full human life. The continued relevance and neglect of this *thought style* and philosophical ideal motivates the present study, which investigates the thought of Dewey and Collingwood in relation to the philosophical tradition of idealism.

Inevitably, there are comparative aspects to this study, which focuses on Dewey's and Collingwood's philosophies, not their activities or biographies. I have attempted to find a balance between a textual and a contextual approach, and to emphasize their relation to Anglo-American idealism, since their relation to German and, in Collingwood's case, Italian idealism, is already rather well-researched. Furthermore, the Anglo-American focus lets me challenge the tendency to consider British and American idealism as two separate phenomena, and provides the study with a necessary limitation.[18]

The choice to interpret the overarching aims of Dewey's and Collingwood's thought as *quests for unity* has been made as an attempt to illuminate their shared idealist background and place Collingwood and Dewey in a common and somewhat different context than that in which they are usually situated by historians. I will argue that both philosophers shared a lifelong concern with *unity of experience*, *unity of opposites*, *unity in diversity*, and *social unity*. These notions of unity can all be found in the An-

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18 A further limitation is that the influence of Plato and Aristotle on idealism, Collingwood, and Dewey will not be accounted for, since I believe the central arguments can be made without refence to this background, which, admittedly, was important. Dewey and Collingwood were extremely productive writers and to maintain the focus on their texts, such limitations are necessary. As far as contextualization goes, the focus will be Anglo-America between roughly 1870 and 1945.

glo-American idealist tradition. This tradition also informs Dewey's and Collingwood's notion of philosophical *praxis* and their social liberalism. By identifying the characteristics of the Anglo-American idealist tradition and tracing them in Collingwood's and Dewey's thought, we get an insight into the afterlife of this tradition; that it, how idealist notions lived on in new forms after idealism lost its place as the dominant philosophy in Britain and the United States in the early twentieth century. This, in turn, challenges the idea that idealism was extinguished in the interwar era.

While Dewey is generally, and for good reason, regarded as a pragmatist, I aim to show that many of the insights he learned from idealism in his youth survived in his mature thought. In comparison, Collingwood was dismissive of pragmatism, but I will show that this was due to misunderstandings, and he shared many ideas with (Deweyan) pragmatism. Consequently, this study also aims to problematize the historical relation between idealism and pragmatism.

Previous Research

This study intervenes in three intersecting areas of research: transatlantic history, the history of Anglo-American idealism and, to lesser extent, the history of liberalism. It does so by juxtaposing R. G. Collingwood and John Dewey, and will therefore also contribute to research about them. By framing the study as transatlantic, I relate it to a field of transnational history focusing on the geographical area around the Atlantic Ocean, mainly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The purpose of such research is to investigate exchanges and connections between, primarily, Europe and North America, which is part of a larger historiographical trend involving comparative, transcultural, global, and world history.[19] While social and political thought have been central in transatlantic stud-

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19 For an overview, see David Armitage, "The International Turn in Intellectual History," in *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*, 232–252. See also, Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

ies,[20] philosophy has remained peripheral. In fact, most studies of American and British idealism tend to suffer from *methodological nationalism*, the tendency to treat the nation as the natural unit of research.[21] James Secord noted that this has been a particular problem in much historical writing on Britain and the United States during the period of my concern:

> As a result of the widening of the Atlantic in the nineteenth century, we have two sophisticated bodies of secondary literature on two closely connected national cultures—but little cross-citation between those who study them. In part, this is because of general issues of exceptionalism in the writing of American history; in part, it is because of British parochialism.[22]

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20 Examples include: Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1998); James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1920* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986); Marc Stears, *Progressives, Pluralists, and the Problems of the State: Ideologies of Reform in the United States and Britain, 1909–1926* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002). All of these studies mention Dewey, but none mention Collingwood. Both Stears and Kloppenberg touch upon idealism—Stears only in relation to the concept of freedom—but it is not a central focus in either study.

21 No critic of methodological nationalism is opposed to studies of individual nations; the point is that it should not be taken for granted that nations are the "natural" or most relevant unit of research. Many events, processes, experiences, problems, concepts, and ideas cross national boundaries. Hence, geographical limitations are not self-evident, but require motivation. See Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick-Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences," *Global Networks* 2:4 (2002), 301–334

22 This comment concerns the history of science but is, I think, even more valid for the history of philosophy. James A. Secord, "Knowledge in Transit," *Isis* 95:4 (2004), 669.

Most book-length studies of anglophone idealism tend to neglect transatlantic connections.[23] In an early historical study, J. H. Muirhead claimed that idealism in Britain and the United States "to a large extent" were independent from each other.[24] In contrast, there are studies with transatlantic ambitions, but these are often insufficient. Alan Milne recognizes (too modestly) that the parallel between idealism in England and the United States "is perhaps not without some interest," but makes nothing of this observation.[25] Nor do either of the two anthologies—*Anglo-American Idealism, 1865–1927* and *Anglo-American Idealism: Thinkers and Ideas*—discuss the connections, exchanges, similarities, and differences between British and American idealism. Both collections consist of essays on British idealists with merely one exception: Josiah Royce, America's best-known idealist.[26] Accordingly, there seems to be a need for studies that investigate the possible relationships between British and American idealism, rather than taking their independence for granted.

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23 Valuable studies on British idealism include David Boucher and Andrew Vincent, *British Idealism and Political Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2000); idem., *British Idealism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum, 2011); Sandra M. Den Otter, *British Idealism and Social Explanation: A Study in Late Victorian Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); W. J. Mander, *British Idealism*; Peter P. Nicholson, *The Political Philosophy of the British Idealists: Selected Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990); Andrew Vincent and Raymond Plant, *Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship: The Life and Thought of British Idealists* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984). Not all these studies suffer from methodological nationalism; some justify why they limit the study to British idealism and reflect upon the implications of doing so. Book-length studies on American idealism are rare; for brief introductions, see: Bruce Kuklick, "The Consensus on Idealism, 1870–1900," in *A History of Philosophy in America, 1720–2000* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001); Douglas Anderson, "Idealism in American Thought," in *The Blackwell Guide to American Philosophy*, ed. Armen T. Marsoobian and John Ryder (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 22–34.

24 John Henry Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy: Studies in the History of Idealism in England and America* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1931), 315. Of course, I aim to prove Muirhead wrong.

25 Alan Milne, *The Social Philosophy of English Idealism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1962), 13.

26 W. J. Mander, however, mentions the importance of the American *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* and names a few examples of American (and Canadian) idealists; see Mander, "Introduction," in *Anglo-American Idealism, 1865–1927* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000), 11–12; and James Connelly and Stamatoula Panagakou, eds. *Anglo-American Idealism: Thinkers and Ideas* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010).

While the history of idealism tends to suffer from methodological nationalism (with a few exceptions),[27] the history of liberalism and political thought generally does better. This is curious, since the Anglo-American idealists were largely liberals, and many of them contributed to political and social philosophy. In this field, the growing research on "new liberalism" has attempted to broaden the definition of the term from designating British social liberalism associated with primarily the British Liberal government between 1906 and 1914, the economist John A. Hobson, and the sociologist Leonard T. Hobhouse, to a more inclusive notion that includes British idealists from T. H. Green onward, but also non-British liberals, notably John Dewey.[28] I have not, however, seen the term applied to Collingwood's political thought, although parallels have been made between him and Hobhouse and Green.[29]

While my contribution will be more directed toward the history of idealism than liberalism, I claim that there are important overlaps and that aspects such as the idealists' notion of liberty, their social view of human nature, and their notion of the common good and social unity influenced even non-idealist liberals.

Using Dewey and Collingwood as my primary examples will allow me to investigate the relation between British and American idealism and between idealism and liberalism, but also to problematize the historical

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27 A good example is William Sweet's account of how British idealism "migrated" to Canada, South Africa, Australia, India, and East Asia, "British Idealism and its 'Empire'," *Collingwood and British Idealism Studies* 17:1 (2011), 7–36.

28 See the essays collected in Maria Dimova-Cookson and W. J. Mander, eds., *T. H. Green: Ethics, Metaphysics, and Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006); and Avital Simhony and David Weinstein, eds., *The New Liberalism: Reconciling Liberty and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001).

29 David Boucher "Collingwood and European Liberalism," in *R. G. Collingwood: An Autobiography and Other Writings with Essays on Collingwood's Life and Work*, eds. David Boucher and Theresa Smith (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2013), 380.

relation between pragmatism and idealism.[30] The similarities between Dewey's and Collingwood's thought not only went unnoticed by them, but have not been sufficiently studied, even though it has been suggested that Dewey or other pragmatists could have been potential allies to Collingwood.[31] Comparisons have been rejected, however, on the grounds that Collingwood was not "directly engaged" with pragmatism, and because no one has yet managed to "establish that Collingwood's thought contains a defining and overriding concern with pragmatic … concerns."[32] It has also been said that pragmatists "would eschew" the moral philosophy of the British idealists because it "is broadly teleological, and reflects a theory of self-realisation and a common good."[33] I will show that this is false when it comes to Dewey's moral philosophy, which was very much in debt to the ethics of British idealists.

I agree with Louis Mink that Collingwood's understanding of pragmatism was "superficial" and "that Collingwood combatted as fiercely as Dewey any radical or categorical distinction between thinking and acting, between the theoretical and the practical." He "shares with pragmatists the conception of knowing as an active process of inquiry rather than as the discovery and possession of a body of truths, and also a distaste for formal

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30 The importance of the relation between Deweyan pragmatism and Hegelian idealism have been stressed by, for example, Richard Bernstein and Richard Rorty. Bernstein argues that Hegel was largely ignored in America in the 1950s and 1960s because of the dominance of analytical philosophy. But he and Rorty were among those who, under the influence of Hegel, sought to "broaden philosophical discourse – to show how philosophy could still deal with the range of human culture and experience instead of focusing exclusively on a narrow set of technical issues." While this endeavor has succeeded to an extent, I do think we have every reason to continue insisting on the importance of this philosophical ideal. See Richard J. Bernstein, "Hegel and Pragmatism," *The Pragmatic Turn* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 89–105, quotation from p. 96.

31 This is suggested by, for example, Fred Inglis, *History Man: The Life of R. G. Collingwood* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2009), 122.

32 Gary K. Browning, *Rethinking R. G. Collingwood: Philosophy, Politics and the Unity of Theory and Practice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 10.

33 William Sweet, "Introduction: Idealism, Ethics, and Social and Political Thought," in *The Moral, Social and Political Philosophy of the British Idealists*, ed. Sweet (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2009), 23.

logic."[34] But while Mink points to important parallels between Collingwood and pragmatism, he never analyzes the similarities in any depth, which has sometimes been done with reference to Dewey's and Collingwood's aesthetics,[35] and, by Stein Helgeby, in relation to their views on logic and practice.[36] Nevertheless, no thorough study of Collingwood's relation to pragmatism has been carried out. I believe that the value of comparing Collingwood's philosophy to pragmatism is not merely historical, but may open the possibility of combining (Collingwoodian) idealism and (Deweyan) pragmatism in the present.[37]

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Mink's study was the first reading of Collingwood similar to my interpretation. He argues that Collingwood's later books must be understood in

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34 Louis O. Mink, *Mind, History, and Dialectic: The Philosophy of R G. Collingwood* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1969), 8.

35 Collingwood and Dewey share a concern with expression, imagination, language and the communicative, emotional, and experiential aspects of art, and the relation of art to everyday life. As such, they are often discussed together in companions to aesthetics. For valuable discussions on their aesthetics, see R. Keith Sawyer "Improvisation and the Creative Process: Dewey, Collingwood, and the Aesthetics of Spontaneity," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 58:2 (2000), 149–161; Timothy M. Costelloe, *The British Aesthetic Tradition: From Shaftesbury to Wittgenstein* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2013), 273–289, ProQuest Ebook Central. In contrast, Marie-Louise Raters suspects that Dewey was Collingwood's "main opponent" even though Collingwood never mentions Dewey's aesthetics. This seems unlikely and from what I understand based on the idea that Dewey equates art with craft, which he does not (LW 10: 75), although he is admittedly rather vague on this point. See Raters, "Art, Feeling and Truth: The Central Problem of the Aesthetics of Anglo-Saxon Idealism," in *Anglo-American Idealism: Thinkers and Ideas*, 343n28.

36 Stein Helgeby, *Action as History: The Historical Thought of R. G. Collingwood* (Exeter, UK: Imprint Academic, 2004), 75, 88–99. I fully agree with Helgeby that both Dewey and Collingwood aimed to develop a logic suited for a "world of process". Ibid., 78.

37 Hence, I agree with Angela Requate that a pragmatist reading of Collingwood is fully possible. See Requate, "Was R. G. Collingwood an Undercover Pragmatist?" *Diálogos* 66 (1995), 93–116. It has also been suggested that Collingwood's approach to historical inquiry has similarities to C. S. Peirce's pragmatic notion of "abduction," see Jan van der Dussen, "Collingwood's Claim that History is a Science," *Collingwood and British Idealism Studies* 13:2 (2007), 5–30.

relation to the systematic philosophy of *Speculum Mentis* and, by doing so, challenges the notion of discontinuity in Collingwood's thought that was established in T. M. Knox's preface to *The Idea of History* and eventually became known as "the radical conversion hypothesis."[38] Knox's interpretation is nowadays discarded, and most Collingwood scholars agree that there is a continuity in Collingwood's philosophy (which is not to say that there are not differences between his works, or that his vocabulary does not change over time).[39]

Many previously unpublished documents have been made available since the time of Mink's study and the research on Collingwood has flourished during the last three decades or so.[40] Collingwood's relation to the

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38 Knox claimed that *Religion and Philosophy* (1916) and Speculum Mentis (1924) were works of "juvenilia" that should be separated, on the one hand, from the mature works—*Essay of Philosophical Method, The Idea of Nature and The Idea of History*—and, on the other hand, from the later works—*The New Leviathan, An Autobiography and Essay of Metaphysics*—in which Collingwood, according to Knox, made an unfortunate turn to historicism and skepticism. Thomas Malcolm Knox, "Editor's Preface," in R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1946), xxi.

39 Lionel Rubinoff gave name to the "radical conversion hypothesis," which he also rejected, as have, for example, James Connelly, and Jan van der Dussen. The latter used Collingwood's unpublished manuscripts, which were made available at the Bodleian Library in Oxford in 1979, to show that the timeline of Knox's "radical conversion hypothesis" is false. See: Jan van der Dussen, *History as a Science: The Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), 4–5; Idem., "Collingwood's Unpublished Manuscripts," *History and Theory* 18:3 (October 1979), 287–315; Lionel Rubinoff, *Collingwood and the Reform of Metaphysics: A Study in the Philosophy of Mind* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1970), 23; James Connelly, *Metaphysics, Method and Politics: The Political Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood* (Thorverton: Imprint Academic, 2003). The exception is Robert M. Burns, who has made the strongest case for discontinuity in Collingwood's thought. See Burns, "Collingwood, Bradley, and Historical Knowledge," *History and Theory* 45 (May 2006), 178–203. This is a topic I will return to in Chapters 2 and 5.

40 Collingwood's lost manuscript of *The Principles of History* was found in 1995 and published four years later. On its significance, see David Boucher, "The Significance of R. G. Collingwood's 'Principles of History'," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58:2 (April 1997), 309–330. For the latest research on Collingwood, see the journal *Collingwood and British Idealism Studies* (hereafter *CBIS*). See also the lengthy and helpful introductions to the new editions of Collingwood's work, which also include previously unpublished texts. For an overview of research on Collingwood, see James Connelly, Peter Johnson, and Stephen D. Leach, *R. G. Collingwood: A Research Companion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

idealism of Kant, Hegel, and the Italian neo-idealists Benedetto Croce, Giovanni Gentile, and Guido De Ruggiero has been well-covered in recent studies, and will therefore not be my primary concern.[41] Instead, I will emphasize the thematic continuity between Collingwood, Dewey, and Anglo-American idealism, which is a less investigated subject.[42]

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The research on Dewey is immense but most studies are philosophical rather than historical, and the best works in the latter category are biographical.[43] These are, however, informative, since Dewey's biographers have always struggled with his relation to idealism. George Dykhuizen, Steven Rockefeller and Robert Westbrook agree that idealism was a dominant influence on the young John Dewey and that this influence faded in the 1890s. Rockefeller claims that "after 1892 [Dewey's] enthusiasm for neo-Hegelian idealism clearly begins to wane," while Dykhuizen sees

41 Collingwood's Italian connection has been covered in James Connelly, Tariq Modood, and David Boucher, eds., *Philosophy, History and Civilization: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on R. G. Collingwood* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995); and Rik Peters, *History as Thought and Action: The Philosophies of Croce, Gentile, De Ruggiero and Collingwood* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2013). Giuseppina D'Oro has made the most thorough Kantian reading of Collingwood, and Gary K. Browning the most thorough investigation of Collingwood's continuous attempt to "rethink" Hegel. Neither of them discusses Collingwood's relation of Italian or British idealists other than in passing. See D'Oro, *Collingwood and the Metaphysics of Experience* (London: Routledge, 2002); and Browning, *Rethinking R. G. Collingwood*, 15. Collingwood himself regarded Hegel's philosophy as a continuation and development of Kant's: "Hegel's work is based upon Kant, in the sense that many of Kant's truths are Hegel's truths too; but Kant also makes errors which Hegel corrects" (RP: 48). D'Oro's and Browning's interpretations are therefore not opposed but emphasize different aspects of Collingwood's thought.

42 Although I think both David Boucher and James Connelly does justice to the influence British idealists have had on Collingwood. See Connelly, *Metaphysics, Method and Politics*; and Boucher, *The Social and Political Thought of R. G. Collingwood* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989).

43 An invaluable help for getting an overview of the field is Barbara Levine, ed. "Works About John Dewey, 1886–2016," Center for Dewey Studies, Southern Illinois University, last modified December 15, 2016, https://deweycenter.siu.edu/_common/documents/works-about-dewey-2016.pdf.

"Some Stages of Logical Thought" (1900) as Dewey's first public break with Hegel, and the co-edited *Studies in Logical Theory* (1903) as the beginning of his instrumentalism/pragmatism.[44] Westbrook is more nuanced since he recognizes the difficulty in assigning a definite end date to Dewey's idealism and notes that Dewey regarded himself to be slowly "drifting away" rather than making a clean break with idealism, and that his criticism was directed at Kant and neo-Kantianism rather than Hegel. Nevertheless, Westbrook claims that "Dewey was weaning himself from neo-Hegelianism" already by the time he began working in Chicago in 1894, and by "1905, when he left Chicago for Columbia, Dewey had abandoned idealism and joined James as a leader of the pragmatists."[45]

While I agree that it is more appropriate to label Dewey a pragmatist rather than an idealist after the turn of the century, I believe the tendency has been to downplay how formative idealism was for his pragmatism. While post-Deweyan pragmatists like Richard Bernstein and Richard Rorty tends to stress this relation, it has been best accounted for by James Good.[46] Good, like Rockefeller and I, also see "unity" as a central Deweyan concern.[47] However, Rockefeller emphasizes religiosity rather than idealism, and while Richard Gale correctly emphasizes Hegel's influence on

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44 George Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1973), 83; Steven C. Rockefeller, *John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991), 172.

45 Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991), 60–61.

46 Like Good, Rorty thinks of Hegel as a historicist and believes he shared many pragmatist ideas, such as regarding philosophy as a form of cultural criticism. Rorty does, however, think that "Hegel could never bring himself to asset the primacy of the practical over the theoretical," which is a defining characteristic of pragmatism. Dewey, as we shall see, was of another opinion. Richard Rorty, *Achieving our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1998), 27. See also, idem., "Dewey Between Hegel and Darwin," *Philosophical Papers Vol. 3. Truth and Progress* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998); and idem., "Introduction: Pragmatism and Philosophy," *Consequences of Pragmatism: Essays*: 1972–1980 (Brighton: Harvester P., 1982), xiii–xlvii.

47 Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity*; Richard M. Gale, *John Dewey's Quest for Unity: The Journey of a Promethean Mystic* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2010). The centrality of unity in Dewey's thought, especially in his early life, is also emphasized by Rockefeller, "A Quest for Unity," in *John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism*.

Dewey, his portrayal of Dewey's quest for unity as "mystical" is less enlightening than Good's more historical study, which is the finest example of a Hegelian reading of Dewey.

Good not only relates Dewey to Hegel, but to the under-researched American Hegelian tradition, and especially the St. Louis Hegelians William Torrey Harris and Thomas Davidson. He convincingly argues that Hegelianism had a lasting impact on Dewey's philosophy throughout his life, and shows that the aim of Dewey's philosophy must be understood in relation to the neo-humanistic concept of *Bildung*, and that Dewey's reading of Hegel was a humanistic/historicist reading he shared with other American Hegelians. I mainly agree with Good, although I think it is unfortunate that his study ends in 1916 and therefore falls short of giving us a full picture of idealism's influence on Dewey. I also think Good downplays the relation between Dewey's Hegelianism and his social and political thought, which is surprising, since Good also stresses the importance of the idea of practice Dewey found in Hegel and the fact that his reading of Hegel was liberal. If we take the liberal and practical aspects into account, I think our reading of Dewey's Hegelianism comes much closer to British idealism.

This brings me to the most important point: throughout his study, Good argues that Dewey's Hegelianism was American *in contrast* to British neo-Hegelianism.[48] This is a distinction does not hold and would not have made sense to Dewey himself. In fact, Dewey engaged much more with texts of the British idealists, but was also influenced by the American idealists, many of which he knew personally. American and British idealism developed side by side and shared many characteristics, and should therefore be regarded as one common tradition.

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48 According to Good, American Hegelianism is humanistic/historicist in contrast to British neo-Hegelianism, which is metaphysical/theological. While this distinction is useful, it does not make sense applied to American and British idealists collectively. I agree that Dewey's Hegeliansim was humanistic/historicist, but so was Collingwood's. Furthermore, I agree that Dewey emphasized this aspect of idealism more than, say T. H. Green and F. H. Bradley, but he also emphasized it more than Americans like G. S. Morris and Josiah Royce. Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity*, xxii.

British idealism's influence on Dewey has been better accounted for by John Shook and Alan Ryan. Although Shook, like Good, neglects the moral, political, and social aspects of Dewey's though in relation to idealism. Shook's most important observation regards the continuity between Dewey's idealism and pragmatism. The practical emphasis was always with Dewey, and he never abandoned the view that objects of knowledge are "created by the process of knowing". We should therefore not overstate the influence of William James and C. S. Peirce, nor underestimate the influence of idealism on Dewey's philosophy.[49]

In contrast to Shook, Alan Ryan focuses on Dewey as a social and political thinker. He described him as "a midwestern T. H. Green" and emphasizes Dewey's relation to the British idealist "turn-of-the-century philosophers who wrote in the same Hegelian tradition." Similar to my approach, Ryan writes that the "transatlantic likenesses undermined the cliché that Dewey was a quintessentially 'American' thinker."[50] While I agree with this claim, I find Ryan's biography unsatisfactory, as he over-emphasizes the influence of T. H. Green to the extent that he neglects the criticism Dewey actually directed toward some aspects of Green's philosophy. Nor does Ryan take the influence of any other British idealist besides Green upon Dewey into account, which I think is necessary if one seeks to emphasize "transatlantic likenesses."

Chapter Outline

The first analytical chapter (Chapter 2) shows how idealism came to be the dominant philosophical tradition in Britain and the United States in the late nineteenth century. In doing so, it introduces the most important figures, texts, groups, and environments in idealism's Anglo-American de-

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49 John R. Shook, *Dewey's Empirical Theory of Knowledge* (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 2000), 5, 11, 20. Shook argues that Dewey's notion of experience was absolute, not in the transcendental sense, but in the sense that it was the basis of his philosophy, which therefore is a kind of empiricism. Although Dewey's notion of experience was much broader than the traditional empiricist view of experience as sensory data. Ibid., 21, 121–124.

50 Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism* (New York: Norton, 1995), 12.

velopment. While much of the information covered is familiar, I will challenge the tendency toward methodological nationalism in historiographies of philosophy by treating nineteenth-century idealism in Britain and the United States as a transatlantic tradition. I claim that this tradition dominated Anglo-American philosophy between roughly 1870 and 1900 and had a lasting impact during the following decades, and that its afterlife can be detected in Collingwood's and Dewey's philosophies. Reading them in the context of the idealist tradition explains the similarities in their thought and, by extension, helps us understand the historical similarities and connections between idealism and pragmatism.

Chapter 2 also traces the influence of idealism on Dewey and Collingwood throughout their lives and considers which aspects of it they accepted, rejected, or revised. The chronological presentations of Dewey and Collingwood will not dispute the common understanding that Hegel was the most important idealist influence on both philosophers, nor that Collingwood's idealism was substantially influenced by the contemporary Italian idealists Croce, De Ruggiero, and Gentile. Nor will it be denied that Dewey is more appropriately classified as a pragmatist beginning around 1900. The purpose is rather to show that the Anglo-American idealist tradition also needs to be considered for a fuller understanding of Dewey and Collingwood. I will argue that there were five aspects common to Anglo-American idealists that Collingwood and Dewey shared, even as they became more reluctant to identify as idealists. These five characteristics make up what we might call the idealist thought style. First, most Anglo-American idealists were social liberals. Following T. H. Green, they regarded individual self-realization as intertwined with working for the common good. Second, in contrast to positivists and realists, idealists regarded metaphysics and religion as central philosophical issues. Even though Dewey and Collingwood came to navigate from these aspects towards a humanistic/historicist idealism, they always embraced a Hegelian process metaphysics of becoming and stressed the social value of Christianity. Third, the Anglo-American idealists often emphasized *praxis* and wanted philosophy to provide guidelines for action and to inform areas such as education, politics, and ethics. Idealism was a cultural, social, and existential rather than a technical and narrowly academic philosophy.

Fourth, *experience* was a key notion for the idealists, but they changed its meaning from sensory data to something more inclusive and rejected the dualism between the experiencing subject and the experienced object. Fifth, the idealists were obsessed with *unity*. According to them, everything in the universe is interconnected in one sense or another. They were anti-dualistic and synthetical thinkers and thought of the world in terms of process. The idealists believed that all forms of experience—ethics, science, history, philosophy, religion, aesthetics, and so on—were interconnected but threatened by fragmentation and specialization.

After having dominated Anglo-American thought for about three decades, idealism was being challenged by the turn of the century, and after World War I, it was in steady decline. Establishing why idealism was challenged and by whom is the purpose of the third chapter. This chapter also aims to show what problems, questions and challenges Collingwood's and Dewey's *quests for unity* were meant to solve. I argue that while the new realistic and increasingly scientific ideal of analytic philosophy was an important factor behind idealism's decline, we must also situate the crisis of idealism in relation to a much broader *crisis imaginary* that swept through Europe and the United States during the first half of the twentieth century. In the face of rapid social change, the decline of Victorian values, and World War I, the philosophical ideals of the nineteenth century seemed outdated. The war was accompanied by an anti-German sentiment that caused many intellectuals to reject all German philosophy, past and present. Hegel was among those accused of German militarism and authoritarianism, or "Prussianism." Therefore, idealism and liberalism had to part ways, and social liberals like Dewey and Collingwood had to distance their political thought from idealist philosophy, which had been an important factor in motivating the turn toward an anti-individualistic and more social liberalism in the first place. Because of its association with Prussianism, identifying as an idealist became an unwise philosophical strategy, especially for a liberal.

Nevertheless, idealism had an important and lasting impact on many intellectuals in the interwar era, and idealist themes, concepts, and ideas continued to influence thinkers who sometimes did not regard themselves as idealists. Studying idealism's continued influence using the cases of

Dewey and Collingwood is the purpose of the fourth and fifth chapters, which are more analytical and less contextual than Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 4 revolves around the concept of "unity" (and its partner concepts). Like "crisis," unity was a common and contested concept that gained special importance during the interwar era. We will see that "unity," "synthesis," "holism," "harmony," "the Whole," and similar notions became prevalent in a variety of different scientific fields, but also among proponents of different political ideologies. While it is undisputed that unity was an important theme for Dewey, Collingwood and idealism in general, the main contribution of Chapter 4 is to provide a typology of four kinds of unity common among idealists: *unity of experience*, *unity of diversity*, *unity of opposites*, and *social unity*. While these types of unity mean slightly different things for different idealists, and not all idealists may embrace all four types, I will argue that they were central to the idealist thought style. After having provided a general overview of the four types of unity in Anglo-American idealism, I turn in more detail to how they appear and function in Collingwood's and Dewey's thought. I claim that these notions of unity help us understand Collingwood's and Dewey's relations to idealism and the overarching aims of their thought.

The last analytical chapter, Chapter 5, scrutinizes the relation between idealism and pragmatism through a comparison of Dewey's and Collingwood's conceptions of philosophy. Here I expand on the notion of idealism as a practical philosophy and compare it to pragmatism, which, of course, also holds praxis and action to be central philosophical categories. Despite this similarity, Collingwood was very hostile toward pragmatism, which I claim was due to misunderstandings. By comparing Dewey's and Collingwood's views on the relation between theory and practice, I will show that a pragmatist reading of Collingwood is fully possible.

While it may not be a surprise that they agree on the centrality of practice in philosophy, Dewey and Collingwood might appear to have conflicting views on philosophy's relation to the natural science and the humanities. I will challenge this impression by discussing their thought in relation to naturalism and historicism. While their views on naturalism differ, this difference, I claim, is one of degree rather than kind. As for history, I will show that Dewey had a higher regard for history than has

usually been thought. While he did not elaborate his philosophy of history nearly as much as Collingwood, I will show that they agree to a surprising extent. The main difference, as in regard to historicism and naturalism, was that Dewey thought pragmatism provided a method appropriate for all kinds of research, while Collingwood emphasized the differences between the methods of natural science and history. Nevertheless, we have reason to regard both as humanistic and historicist philosophers with a background in Hegelian philosophy.

What unites Collingwood's and Dewey's views on inquiry is that they emphasize context and method. Human nature is regarded as continuous with nature and shaped by historical, social, and cultural circumstances. Therefore, inquiry must always be contextual and processual, and it should always aim to have practical significance. In contrast to the analytical realists, Dewey and Collingwood rejected the correspondence theory of truth, atomism, and the dualistic view of value and truth, theory and practice, and the knowing subject and known object. Their philosophies were a continuation of a historical and humanistic version of idealism that emphasized the process of inquiry and learning (*Bildung*) and regarded philosophy as a form of reconstructive cultural criticism. This is an ideal that I believe still has value and could inform our approach to history, philosophy, and the humanities.

2. Dewey, Collingwood, and Anglo-American Idealism

Idealism became the dominant philosophy in Britain and the United States during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, as an increasing number of intellectuals sought inspiration from Immanuel Kant's (1724–1804) critical philosophy and post-Kantian romantics and idealists. German idealism gave British and American thinkers tools to combat the dominant philosophical tendencies in mid-nineteenth-century Anglo-America: materialism and positivism; utilitarianism and individualism; dualism and skepticism; Scottish intuitionism and common-sense philosophy; social Darwinism and reductive naturalism; and the empiricism of John Locke (1632–1704) and David Hume (1711–1776).

Idealism provided Anglo-American thinkers with a defense for metaphysics and religion in the face of the "Victorian crisis of faith" that occurred in both Britain and the United States and was sparked by historical Bible criticism and the modern natural sciences. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, idealism was also used to reform progressive social thought by turning it from individualism toward communitarianism. Idealism was being challenged by the turn of the century, however, mainly by what later became known under the umbrella term "analytical philosophy." After World War I, idealism was in steady decline on both sides of the Atlantic; William Mander captures it well: "In 1860 there were scarcely any idealists, by 1900 the majority of philosophers so designated themselves, but thirty years later they were rare again."[51]

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51 This is a description of British conditions but can be applied to the United States as well. Mander, *British Idealism*, 5.

Like any philosophical tradition, Anglo-American idealism left room for individual variations and conflicting views, and generalizations will be necessary in order to produce a comprehensible presentation. To qualify the remarks above, idealists were not against empirical observation, but rejected the tendency among empiricists to reduce experience to sensory data. As for the empiricists, experience was a key concept for the idealists, but the latter redefined it to mean something active rather than passive. Knowledge of the world was not an uncomplicated affair, for the human mind played a constructive role in how reality was perceived, and experience was typically viewed as the interaction between subject and object. Reality and the experiencing human mind were integrated, not separate.[52] Furthermore, the rejection of social Darwinism and reductive naturalism was, of course, not an issue before the 1860s, and while German idealists, notably Hegel (1770–1831), may be accused of misunderstanding and neglecting natural science, the Anglo-American idealists generally accepted Darwinism, and many thought the notion of evolution was compatible with Hegel's historical, social, and processual view of reality and human nature.

I view Anglo-American idealism as a *tradition*, following Mark Bevir's definition of tradition as an analytical tool that provides a middle way between methodological individualism and strong structuralism. Traditions are not acquired "through pure experience or pure reason," but inherited through socialization, or via parents, teachers, or participation in certain groups or societies.[53] While the notion of tradition provides us with the necessary background for making sense of an individual, it does not deprive individuals of agency to revise or abandon a tradition: "Indeed, because people usually want to improve their heritage by making it more coherent, more accurate, and more relevant to contemporary issues, they often do respond selectively to it. They accept some parts of it, modify

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52 Martin Jay describes the differences between the empiricist and idealist views of experience well; see Jay, "Experience and Epistemology: The Contest between Empiricism and Idealism," in *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

53 Mark Bevir, *The Logic of the History of Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 263.

others, and reject others."[54] A tradition is neither static nor deterministic and should be regarded as an unavoidable "starting point, not as a final destination."[55]

The Anglo-American idealists did not see themselves as disciples of Hegel and Kant and did not regard their idealism as a "copy" of the German "original," but rather used Kant, Hegel, and others to attack the dominant domestic schools of philosophy—such as utilitarianism and empiricism— while simultaneously *hybridizing* idealism with these schools.[56] By the same token, it should be recognized that idealism later hybridized with the philosophical schools that arose as a reaction to idealism around the turn of the century, notably the neo-realism of thinkers such as Samuel Alexander (1859–1938) and Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947), and the pragmatism of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) and William James (1842–1910). Philosophical "isms," just like political ones, tend to overlap. This is evident in the case of Dewey, but Collingwood also provides an interesting example that should help us question the common boundaries between idealism and other philosophical traditions. In Dewey's case, we may regard his mature philosophy as a hybridization of pragmatism and idealism.

I will show how and why idealism became the dominant philosophical tradition in Britain and the United States in the late nineteenth century by outlining an overview of its *circulation* through encounters, translations, introductions, the formation of groups, and academic journals. This will identify key figures and key environments, such as certain universities and societies, and will also map exchanges between American and British

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54 Ibid., 202.

55 Ibid., 201.

56 For an introduction to "hybridity", see Peter Burke, *Cultural Hybridity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009).

idealists.[57] I regard idealism, like any philosophical tradition, as dynamic and in constant transformation. By focusing on the circulation of idealism, I hope to avoid fruitless attempts to put definite dates on idealism's beginning and end. Instead, I will trace circulation of ideas and identify the teachers, books, journals, and institutions that were of special importance in forming Anglo-American idealism. I will argue that it does, indeed, make sense to view Anglo-American idealism as a single philosophical tradition.[58] I do not, however, want to give the impression that the intellectual exchange between Britain and the United States was symmetrical—it was not. The United States was on the philosophical periphery during the nineteenth century, and Americans turned their gaze more often toward Britain (and other parts of Europe) than the other way around.[59]

The purpose of this chapter is to show what the characteristics of the Anglo-American idealist tradition were and, by doing so, provide an over-

57 The notion of circulation has recently been used in the growing field of history of knowledge, but is equally applicable to the history of philosophy. Circulation turns the gaze from contexts of origin toward contexts of adaptation without regarding later adaptations as diffusions of the original. Circulation highlights the fact that ideas change as they move. It is therefore a more dynamic notion than "reception," and goes well with the notions of hybridity and tradition as defined above. In contrast to reception, circulation emphasizes mediation: the fact that ideas are carried and embodied by actors, institutions, communities, or texts. See, Secord, "Knowledge in Transit,"; and Johan Östling et al., "The History of Knowledge and the Circulation of Knowledge," in *Circulation of Knowledge: Explorations in the History of Knowledge*, Östling et al. (Nordic Academic Press, Lund, 2018), 17–23.

58 Which is not to say that there were no differences between American and British idealism, as well as between individual idealists in both countries. The purpose of treating Anglo-American idealism as one tradition is to question the nationalistic tendencies present in much history of philosophy.

59 For the necessity of taking asymmetry, hierarchy, and power relations into account in transnational history, see Johan Strang and Stefan Nygård, "Conceptual Universalization and the Role of the Peripheries," *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 12:1 (2017), 55–75; Idem., "Facing Asymmetry: Nordic Intellectuals and Center-Periphery Dynamics," in *Decentering European Intellectual Space*, eds. Marja Jalava, Stefan Nygård, and Johan Strang (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 19–42.

view of its thought style.[60] I will also show how the idealist tradition developed in Britain and America, and how it influenced the main characters of the present study, John Dewey and R. G. Collingwood. By taking a transnational approach to the history of idealism, I also hope to counter the tendency toward methodological nationalism present in many histories of philosophy, as discussed in the Previous Research section. Rewriting the entire history of idealism in accordance with the lessons from transnational intellectual history would be a book-length project; here I can merely hope to indicate that such a project would be worth undertaking.

I claim that even as they grew increasingly critical of idealism, Dewey and Collingwood retained many of Anglo-American idealism's defining features and never abandoned the idealistic thought style. They embraced the social liberalism primarily developed by T. H. Green and the notion of unity of experience. Like the idealists, they rejected formal logic, the correspondence theory of truth, and the view that epistemology is the primary field of philosophy. They held on to a broad notion of philosophy as cultural criticism, including metaphysics, religion, ethics, history, aesthetics, and science, and thought practical knowledge was as important as theoretical. They also regarded logic as a theory of inquiry rather than a theory of truth. They did, however, turn away from the more theological and metaphysical aspects of idealism, such as the Kantian "thing-in-itself" and the Hegelian "absolute." In Dewey's and Collingwood's hands, idealism became more practical, historicist, and humanistic.

By tracing the influence of idealism on one American and one British thinker and focusing on their shared background in the tradition of Anglo-American idealism, the neglected similarities between Collingwood and Dewey will be brought to light. It will become clear that this tradition

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60 The notion of "thought style" comes from Ludwik Fleck but I use it in a broader and looser sense than Fleck. According to Fleck, an individual might not be aware of his or her thought style, which is carried by—and must be explained with reference to—a "thought collective." The latter notion is similar to Bevir's notion of "tradition," which I prefer. For a discussion on the relation between thought styles and thought collectives, see Fleck, *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*, eds. Thaddeus J. Trenn and Robert K. Merton, transl. Fred Bradley and Thaddeus J. Trenn (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979), 38–51. For Fleck's exemplifications of thought styles, see ibid., 125–145.

was formative for their thought and that their quests for unity and their vision of a socially-engaged practical philosophy cannot be properly understood without reference to it. Their thought, I argue, provides us with particularly good examples for understanding what has recently been called the afterlife of idealism. During this phase, certain idealist ideals, concepts, and texts continued to live on, although fewer identified as idealists and attempts were made to merge idealism with realism, naturalism, and pragmatism.

The Characteristics of Anglo-American Idealism

Before we proceed to a historical overview of the circulation of idealism in Britain and America, its most important characteristics—which constitute its thought style, were shared by Dewey and Collingwood, and will be elaborated throughout this study—will be identified.[61] In brief, these were: (1) An organic notion of individualism that rejected the dualism between the individual and society and reformed liberalism in a more social and communitarian direction. The idealist liberals regarded individual self-realization as intertwined with working for the common good. (2) The central place given to metaphysics and religion, which, in contrast, were largely neglected by realists. Practicing religion was not primarily a matter of personal belief, but of realizing the Kingdom of God on earth according to the ideal of "social Christianity" for the idealists. (3) This brings us to the central place given to praxis and action. Philosophy was supposed to provide practical guidance in life. It was not merely a narrow theoretical academic conversation, but a necessary social, cultural, and existential activity. (4) This is related to the idealists privileging of experience over knowledge. In contrast to empiricists, idealists held experience to be a broad and inclusive notion that involved more than mere sensory data and

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61 Obviously, some generalizations have been made, since the idealist tradition was more diverse than I can account for here. There were, of course, many disagreements among the idealists themselves, not least between proponents of absolute idealism and the less influential subjective idealism, or "personalism." For an overview of the latter, see David Boucher and Andrew Vincent, *British Idealism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 42–48.

resisted the dualism between subject and object. 5) Bringing about *unity of experience* by inquiring into the interconnectedness of religion, history, science, aesthetics, philosophy and so on, was a central idealist task. These forms of experience were not regarded as merely academic disciplines, but modes of life constantly threatened by fragmentation and specialization.

While there were non-liberal idealists who did not engage with social issues (F. H. Bradley being a notable example), this was generally an important aspect of the Anglo-American idealist tradition.[62] In idealism, progressive thinkers found a philosophy that helped them tackle the set of problems that often is referred to as "the social question," including issues like industrialization, urbanization, crime, poverty, immorality, housing, female suffrage, education, and disease.[63] In light of "the discovery of the social," politicians, philosophers, social scientists, and activists turned to a new sphere of human life and a new set of problems and challenges that revolved around the central notion of "community."[64]

James Connelly and Stamatoula Panagakou suggest that Anglo-American idealism was an answer to the need to renew philosophy in light of these issues and the "dehumanising and unsettling conditions generated by the extreme individualism and unfettered laissez-faire capitalism of the era."[65] David Boucher and Andrew Vincent agree, saying:

> Idealism fulfilled a number of roles in societies that were experiencing the effects of rapid industrialisation, modernisation and secularisation. It acted as a counterbalance to the individualism of the more brash variants of utilitarianism, offering a philosophy that gave much needed emphasis to

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62 For the need to understand Oxford idealism as a "liberal response" to the dominant conservative Anglican tradition, see Francesca Norman, "Mansel and the Oxford Elections of 1859 and 1865: Knowledge Networks, Party Politics, and the Political Context of British Idealism," *CBIS* 24:2 (2018), 271–299. For an account of the "center Hegelianism"—meaning that it neither supported the revolutionary spirit of the young Hegelians nor Prussian conservatism, but emphasized both progressivism and the need for stable institutions—dominant in the United States, see James A. Good, "A 'World-Historical Idea': The St. Louis Hegelians and the Civil War," *Journal of American Studies* 34:3 (2000), 447–464.

63 Per Wisselgren, *The Social Scientific Gaze: The Social Question and the Rise of Academic Social Science in Sweden* (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2015), 19–20.

64 Ibid., 4.

65 Connelly and Panagakou, "Introduction," in *Anglo-American Idealism*, 4–5.

> social cohesiveness and to the closeness of the relation between individual and collective responsibility. Its emphasis on the importance of active social citizenship became an important theme in early twentieth-century politics and welfare theory.[66]

This quote describes British circumstances but works for the United States as well. In the late nineteenth century, the same forces that caused the new social problems also tied the North Atlantic world together through commerce and new means of transportation and communication, which has led one scholar to describe the period between 1870 and 1945 as "the Atlantic era in social politics."[67]

In the United States, the social question became a central concern following the end of the Civil War in 1865. In Britain, there is no single event of equal significance, but the need to reform liberalism after John Stuart Mill's (1806–1873) death and the Liberal party's loss in the 1874 election led to the emergence of two strains of liberalism.[68] One of these was personified by Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), whose libertarian social Darwinism emphasized that competition was necessary for social progress, and therefore held that liberalism should focus on limiting state interference to a minimum and promoting laissez-faire policies. The Oxford idealist T. H. Green personifies the second strain, which held that liberals had been too preoccupied with individualism and laissez-faire policies, and too hostile toward the state. For Green and like-minded liberals on both sides of the Atlantic the social question became the central political issue, with the effect that the "atomistic individualism" of earlier liberals was rejected for a communitarian liberalism centered around the concept of the common

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66 Boucher and Vincent, *British Idealism and Political Theory*, 21–22.

67 Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 4.

68 On the two strains of post-Millian liberalism, see Helena Rosenblatt, "Two liberalisms," in *The Lost History of Liberalism: From Ancient Rome to the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2018), 220–244.

good and a positive concept of liberty.[69] Green's idealistic social liberalism offered a third way between liberalism and socialism and had a major impact on idealist political and social thought—mainly in Britain, where it influenced other idealists and later (non-idealistic) "new liberals" like L. T. Hobhouse (1864–1929) and J. A. Hobson (1858–1940).[70] The idealist social liberals, as well as Dewey and Collingwood, who were also influenced by Green, thought liberalism shared many aims with socialism, but differed in method. Liberals rejected class politics and the use of violence and were, of course, less critical of capitalism than Marxists; they were reformers, not revolutionaries.

In rejecting the dualism between individual self-realization and the common good of the community, the idealists changed the conception of the state within liberalism.[71] Unlike previous liberals, they argued that the state could have a positive role in providing education and a basic level of material welfare, and guaranteeing a certain level of health and security. Hence, the idealists had both a negative and a positive view of liberty, but changed the notion of negative liberty to not merely involve removal of external obstacles to freedom, but also internal, such as unwanted desires

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69 Dewey recurringly rejects atomistic individualism; in *Liberalism and Social Action*, he describes it as an effect of John Locke and J. S. Mill's empiricism and argues that T. H. Green's "organic idealism" "exposed" its "weaknesses" and replaced it with a liberalism concerned with "the common good" (LW 11: 19–20). While the British idealist liberals did not invent "common good politics," Colin Tyler has suggested that they were its greatest exponents. See Tyler, *Common Good Politics: British Idealism and Social Justice in the Contemporary World* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 23–24.

70 As noted in the Previous Research section, the trend in recent research is to extend the definition of "new liberalism" to include British idealists and even non-British thinkers. For an interpretation of Dewey as a new liberal, see Alan Ryan, "Staunchly Modern, Non-Bourgeois Liberalism," in *The New Liberalism*, eds. Simhony and Weinstein, 184–204. On Green's socialist liberalism, see Maria Dimova-Cookson and William J. Mander, "Introduction," in *T. H. Green: Ethics, Metaphysics, and Political Philosophy*, 2.

71 By doing so they influenced social reformers such as John Maynard Keynes and William Beveridge, who were to lay the foundations of the British welfare state to come. Consequently, one might argue that parts of idealistic social liberalism as well as British new liberalism survived in social democracy. On this relation, see Vincent and Plant, *Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship*; and Chris Renwick, *Bread For All: The Origins of the Welfare State* (London: Allen Lane, 2017).

or emotional states that might otherwise lead a person to pursue dishonorable goals.[72] Liberty, therefore, became a "perfectionist" concept that revolved around self-improvement or self-realization, and the fulfillment of one's potential, rather than pursuing one's desires. The goals worth pursuing, according to the idealists, were those that not only realized one's potential, but also benefitted the common good.[73]

The idealists embraced liberal organicism, emphasizing that individuals were interrelated and mutually dependent upon one another. They regarded human nature as social, and individuals were thought to be cooperative rather than competitive. Membership in a community was therefore a prerequisite for self-realization. Society needed to provide individuals with the means for self-realization, which in turn should benefit society, since self-realization meant to realize oneself as a moral and social being. The moral quest for self-realization and the political quest for the common good were therefore interrelated.

The idealists' engagement with social questions is closely connected to another of their central characteristics: praxis. They did not regard philosophy as a merely theoretical activity, but as being always interconnected, if not unified, with practice.[74] The British idealists have been described by David Boucher and Andrew Vincent as departing from Hegel, who in *The Philosophy of Right* claims that philosophy "always comes too late" to offer

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72 Collingwood illustrates this view well: "The freedom of the will is, positively, *freedom to choose*; freedom to exercise a will; and, negatively, freedom *from desire*; not the condition of having no desires, but the condition of not being at their mercy" (NL: 13.25).

73 Here I am in debt to Marc Stears. For a fuller account of the idealist notion of liberty, see his, *Progressives, Pluralists, and the Problems of the State*, 28–32. I have chosen to use "freedom" and "liberty" in their everyday sense, synonymously, since it is my impression that there is no agreement on the distinction between these terms among my sources. For example, some speak of positive and negative liberty, others of positive and negative freedom while obviously meaning the same thing.

74 Mander, Boucher and Vincent make this claim about British idealism, but it applies to American idealism as well. See, Mander, *British Idealism*, 6–7, 268–274; Boucher and Vincent, *British Idealism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 129. The idealist (and pragmatist) notion of praxis should not be equated with the Marxist notion. Nor should it be thought to merely mean making. Praxis rather means the kind of activities humans perform as social beings. I will return to this topic in Chapter 5.

practical advice regarding "how the world ought to be."[75] While I believe British and American idealists stressed the practical side of philosophy to a greater extent than German idealists, I do not think that they regarded their forerunners as merely theoretical. I will show that especially Dewey, in his early idealist days, liked Hegel exactly because he directed philosophy towards practical matters. A British idealist that also stressed the importance of praxis was Edward Caird. According to him, idealism's struggle towards unity and universal synthesis of the increasing body of knowledge must not remain merely theoretical, but needs to address practical problems in "the sphere of *action*."[76] Caird's pupil, Henry Jones, shared this view, and agreed with Green regarding the importance of "the application of ideas to life."[77] In *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, Jones argues that action and reflection are intertwined because "all moral questions for the individual… are social questions."[78] Idealism calls upon the individual to act morally for the sake of the common good and inspires practical engagement with the social world. In a nod to Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, Jones wrote: "The citizen has but to stand in his station and perform its duties in order to fulfil the demands of citizenship. He is like an organ to the organism, best where he is—at his own work."[79]

In his 1903 presidential address to the American Philosophical Association, "The Eternal and the Practical," the absolute idealist Josiah Royce argued that idealism shared the tendency that had recently been popularized by pragmatism: "namely, to characterize and to estimate the processes

75 Hegel's comment is followed by the famous statement that "the owl of Minerva begins its flight only with the onset of dusk." Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood; transl. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), 23; Boucher and Vincent, *British Idealism and Political Theory*, 10.

76 Edward Caird, "The Problem of Philosophy at the Present Time," in *Essays on Literature and Philosophy*, vol. 1 (Glasgow: James Maclehose and sons, 1892), 206, 219, https://archive.org/details/essaysonliterato5cairgoog.

77 Henry Jones, *Idealism as a Practical Creed: Being the Lectures on Philosophy and Modern Life Delivered Before the University of Sydney* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and sons, 1909), 200. Here, Jones quotes Thomas Hill Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, 2 ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1884), 2.

78 Ibid., 113.

79 Ibid., 123. This is a reference to the fourth chapter, "My Station and its Duties," of F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, 2nd rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927).

of thought in terms of practical categories, and to criticise knowledge in the light of its bearings upon conduct."[80] Royce agreed that "thinking, judging, reasoning, believing" are practical and therefore ethical activities, but while "knowledge is action" it "is also never *mere* action."[81] He objected to reducing all philosophizing to matters of practical need, which he thought was a fundamental problem with "pure pragmatism." An improved version of pragmatism should therefore take into account the fact that "we *both* act and reflect, both observe and construct, are both pragmatists and theorists."[82] Here we see in fact an attempt to bring about a *unity of opposites* that is close to how Dewey, after having abandoned absolute idealism for pragmatism, would approach the problem of praxis and action, which will be studied in detail in Chapter 5. Dewey, however, would not agree with Royce's conclusion: "The need for the Eternal is… one of the deepest of all our practical needs. Herein lies at once the justification of pragmatism, and the logical impossibility of pure pragmatism. Everything finite and temporal is practical. All that is practical borrows its truth from the Eternal."[83] It was these aspects—the absolute, transcendental, and eternal—that eventually drove Dewey away from idealism. As we will see, Collingwood, who never abandoned idealism, nevertheless increasingly emphasized the practical side of philosophy while downplaying its theological and metaphysical features.

For the idealists following T. H. Green, it was necessary both to provide students of philosophy with guidance for action and to link philosophy to the world outside the university. Collingwood expressed a deep sympathy with "the school of Green" because of its success in training pupils for a public life and civil service, an ideal Collingwood thought had been sadly abandoned in the interwar era as philosophy became increasingly theoretical and technical (A: 16–17). Here Collingwood touches upon the topic of education, which was interconnected with praxis, and has been described as "the one cause which exercised [the British idealists'] attention

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80 Josiah Royce, "The Eternal and the Practical," *The Philosophical Review* 13:2 (March 1904), 113.

81 Ibid., 117–118.

82 Ibid., 135.

83 Ibid., 142.

more than any other."[84] For example, Green, who had been a school inspector, thought individuals became "effectually crippled" in society without education, which he also regarded as a precondition for individual perfectibility.[85] Green's "Lecture on Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract" and Collingwood's *An Autobiography* provide typical examples of how education was addressed by the British idealists: rather than writing out-and-out treatises on education, they integrated and interconnected the topic with other philosophical, ethical, and sociopolitical issues.[86]

The American idealists differ somewhat from the British in this respect. W. T. Harris, one of America's most important Hegelians, served as the United States commissioner of education between 1889 and 1906. Susan Blow, who belonged to the same group of St. Louis Hegelians as Harris, introduced public kindergartens in the United States, influenced by Friedrich Froebel.[87] Both wrote several books on pedagogy and education, as did Dewey—*The School and Society*, and *Democracy and Education* are among his most cherished works. James Good claims, correctly, I think, that although they did not use the word, the neo-humanist notion of *Bildung* guided the American idealists. After the turn of the century, Dewey was one of few Americans to hold on to this notion, which in his vocabulary was referred to as "growth of experience." Like the British idealists, the St. Louis Hegelians advocated co-education of the sexes and emphasized the practical, liberal, and social aspects of idealism.[88]

The importance of making philosophy practical led many of the Anglo-American idealists to become social reformers, engage in party politics, ethical societies, charity organizations, or the settlement movement. Bernard Bosanquet and his wife Helen were leading figures in the British Charity Organisation Society, and the Scottish-American philosopher Thomas Davidson formed the Fellowship of the New Life in both London

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84 Mander, *British Idealism*, 272.

85 Thomas Hill Green, "Lecture on Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract," in *Works of Thomas Hill Green*, vol. 3, *Miscellanies and Memoir*, ed. R. L. Nettleship (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1888), 373–374.

86 Mander, *British Idealism*, 273.

87 Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity*, 65, 77.

88 Ibid., 65; Boucher and Vincent, *British Idealism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 110–114.

and New York as a spiritual version of the Fabian Society. The most well-known examples, however, are the settlements Toynbee Hall in East London and Jane Addams's Hull House in Chicago, where Dewey served as a board member. The business of the settlement movement was to build a bridge between the universities and the working class to make culture available to the poorer classes of society, and to create an arena for exchanging knowledge between social groups.[89]

Duncan Bell has suggested that the idealists' preoccupation with the common good should be regarded as the political equivalent of the philosophical notion of unity.[90] In Chapter 4, I will argue that this was indeed the case. It is commonly recognized that a focus on unity was a central characteristic of Anglo-American idealists—as it had been for their German predecessors—but this observation is seldom elaborated. I will therefore provide a typology of the different types of idealist unity, and will argue that in addition to *social unity*, or the common good, *unity of opposites*, *unity in diversity*, and *unity of experience* were central idealist notions.

This brings us to another characteristic: the notion of philosophy as a kind of cultural criticism or a "broad cultural program" rather than a narrow, specialized, professional discipline.[91] This, of course, goes along with the emphasis on praxis, but also with the notion of unity of experience. The idealists rejected the narrow empiricist notion of experience as passive sensory data for a much broader view. They regarded experience as a holistic, active, and creative notion that included the body and emotions, rather than merely cognitive processes.[92] Experience is a presupposition for

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89 Vincent and Plant, "Toynbee Hall: The Settlement and Civic Idealism," in Politics and Citizenship; Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 64; Charles M. Bakewell, "A Democratic Philosopher and His Work. Thomas Davidson: Born Oct. 25, 1840. Died Sept. 14, 1900," *International Journal of Ethics* 11:4 (July 1901), 447–448.

90 Duncan Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2016), 246.

91 Jan Olof Bengtsson, "Idealism and the Pantheistic Revolution: The 'Big Picture' and Why it is Needed," in *Anglo-American Idealism: Thinkers and Ideas*, 113.

92 The important predecessor here was Kant who had attempted to bring about a synthesis of empiricism and rationalism by regarding experience as a combination of intuitions and concepts. Terry P. Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760–1860: The Legacy of Idealism* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 24.

thought, but it is also in in thought (or mind) that experience becomes unified.

The Anglo-American idealists followed the German idealists in thinking of different "modes" or "forms" of experience. Religion and aesthetics were the most common examples of such modes,[93] which the idealists thought made up a unity. However, what the different modes of experience were and what the dialectical and possibly hierarchical relation between them was thought to be differed among the idealists. They did, nevertheless, share the view of "philosophy as an integrated system, their idealistic creed permeating every part, so that logic, ethics, metaphysics, even aesthetics, were all conceived as expressions of a single underlying view."[94] The idealists imagined that an underlying unity—the "whole" or "absolute"—connected the different realms of experience, and that the methods of empiricist philosophy were insufficient for reaching a more profound understanding of reality. According to the idealists, empiricism "omitted vital parts of the explanation of human experience: the interpretative dimension and the significance of value and meaning."[95] Hence philosophy, according to the idealists, was more of a humanist discipline concerned with meaning rather than scientific truth.

While nineteenth-century positivism and twentieth-century analytical philosophy often neglected or even rejected religion and metaphysical matters for a strictly naturalistic worldview, idealists placed these issues at the heart of their philosophy as they battled the existential uncertainty and religious doubt associated with the transatlantic Victorian crisis of faith. The historical Bible criticism of F. C. Baur and D. F. Strauss and the emerging natural sciences, with Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) as the paradigmatic example, led to a questioning of Christianity's supernatural foundation. In what is often described as "the Conflict between Religion and Science," idealists generally sought a reconciliation between the two and regarded the positivism of J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer as

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93 On the notion of "modes" of experience in German idealism, see Jay, *Songs of Experience*, 78–79.

94 Mander, *British Idealism*, 4.

95 Den Otter, *British Idealism and Social Explanation*, 9.

their main opponent.[96]

John Henry Muirhead's claim that "British idealism from the first has been in essence a philosophy of religion" is not too much of an exaggeration, but James Bradley is right in observing that Hegel not so much helped to defend Christianity, but to reinterpret it by showing how Darwinism and the historical sciences could be reconciled with religiosity and metaphysics.[97] Idealist religious thought was, therefore, seldom in opposition to science. While Anglo-American idealists rejected strong naturalism and materialism, most accepted Darwin's theory of evolution and thought it could be integrated with a Hegelian view of social and historical evolution.[98]

Books like the Scottish theologian John Caird's *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (1880), and the American Hegelian George Sylvester Morris' *Philosophy and Christianity* (1883) helped establish philosophy of religion as a philosophical sub-discipline. But more often, religion, like education, was integrated with other aspects of philosophy. It has been suggested that Christianity "provided the Idealists with the link between metaphysics and politics,"[99] one example of this being the idealists' ethical notion of "perfectibility" and the interrelated social ideal of the common good.[100] The British idealist Bernard Bosanquet used religion as a symbol for a future utopia:

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96 D. H. Meyer, "American Intellectuals and the Victorian Crisis of Faith," in *Victorian America*, ed. Daniel Walker Howe (Philadelphia, Penn.: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 59; Mander, *British Idealism*, 137–139.

97 Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition*, 197; James Bradley, "Hegel in Britain: A Brief History of British Commentary and Attitudes (1)," *The Heythrop Journal* (January 1979), 12–13.

98 Attempts to reconcile Hegel and Darwin can be found in David G. Ritchie's "Darwin and Hegel," in *Darwin and Hegel, with Other Philosophical Studies* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1893) 38–76, https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.42055; and in William Wallace's influential *Prolegomena to the Study of Hegel's Philosophy and Especially of his Logic*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), 152–157, https://archive.org/details/prolegomenatostoowallgoog. On the importance of the latter text for British idealists, see Bradley, "Hegel in Britain," 19–21.

99 Vincent and Plant, *Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship*, 6; see also Mander, *British Idealism*, 4–5.

100 Vincent and Plant, *Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship*, 16–17.

> All that we mean by the kingdom of God on earth is the society of human beings who have a common life and are working for a common social good. The kingdom of God has come on earth in every civilized society where men live and work together, doing their best for the whole society and for mankind.[101]

Dewey used the same metaphor—the Kingdom of God on earth—as a symbol of social unity, cooperation, harmony, and fraternity in some of his early texts (EW 4: 7–8, 100–101). Similarly, Collingwood emphasized the "emotional force" of Christian values and ideals, which he believed were necessary ingredients in the fight against authoritarian barbarism.[102] Hence religiosity was not primarily a matter of theology, institutions, and supernatural beliefs for the idealists: Christianity was a compass that guided the idealists toward social and moral perfection.

The Anglo-American Idealist Tradition

The philosophy of Immanuel Kant and other German thinkers like Schiller, Goethe and Schelling was introduced in Britain and the United States in the early nineteenth century by literary Romantics such as Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), William Wordsworth (1770–1850), and Samuel Taylor

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101 Bernard Bosanquet, "The Kingdom of God on Earth," in *Essays and Addresses*, 2nd ed. (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1891), 121, https://archive.org/details/essaysaddresses-00bosauoft.

102 R. G. Collingwood, "Fascism and Nazism," in *Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. David Boucher (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 194.

Coleridge (1772–1834).[103] Idealism provided them with an antidote to the materialism, atheism, skepticism and individualism associated with the intuitionism and Scottish common sense realism of Thomas Reid (1710–1796), the empiricism of John Locke and David Hume, and the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), which were the dominating philosophical tendencies in the anglophone world during the first half of the nineteenth century. Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*—published in Britain in 1825, and four years later in an American edition—was particularly influential on both sides of the Atlantic. James Marsh (1794–1842), the president of the University of Vermont, edited and introduced it with a fifty-page "Preliminary Essay," a text that has been called "the first publication of American Transcendentalism."[104] It evidently influenced the young John Dewey, who described Marsh as having been among the first Americans "to venture upon the speculative and dubiously orthodox seas of German thinking," convinced "that the same evils which Coleridge found in England were found also in his own country" (LW 5: 148, 182).

The "Preliminary Essay" expresses the importance of maintaining the notion of spirit without reducing it to nature, and insists on the interconnectedness of philosophy, metaphysics, ethics, Christianity, and poetry according to the characteristic idealist notion of unity of experience. Marsh's text is also typically idealistic in criticizing "the popular metaphysicians of the day"—that is, the philosophical tradition primarily of

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103 In his history of the idealist movement, Murihead describes "Coleridge as the reviver of the Platonic tradition and the founder of nineteenth-century Idealism in England." Carlyle, says Muirhead, anticipated idealist moral philosophy and "exercised an influence in England and America that no other did upon the course of philosophical thought of his time." Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition*, 125, 127. A more thorough account of romanticism lies outside the scope of the present study, but it should be noted that the importance of a transatlantic interpretation of anglophone romanticism has been emphasized in recent studies; see, for example, Richard Gravil, *Romantic Dialogues: Anglo-American Continuities*, 1776-1855 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 11–24. As in the case of idealism, it was mainly the British romantics who influenced their American counterparts rather than the reverse, which is not to say that the influence of Americans on Britons did not exist or should be ignored when it comes to either romanticism or idealism.

104 Majorie H. Nicolson, "James Marsh and the Vermont Transcendentalists," *The Philosophical Review* 34:1 (January 1925), 38.

Locke—for being "at war with religion."[105] In contrast, Marsh insists that reason is not contrary to faith or revelation, but should be regarded as a search for "that principle of unity and consistence… which shall reduce to an harmonious system all our views of truth and being."[106] Furthermore, religion must not be reduced to theory, for it is an "experimental" and "living process," says Marsh, following Coleridge and anticipating later Anglo-American idealists' view of Christianity as social practice.[107]

Marsh, who reproduced Coleridge's flawed interpretation of Kant, made transcendentalism the house philosophy of the University of Vermont, where he was elected president in 1826. Marjorie H. Nicolson claims that Marsh transformed what was an "ineffectual college, into an institution so important that for years it was considered the center of the most advanced thought in New England, and looked upon by other colleges as daring in its innovations; it was the original center of academic idealistic philosophy."[108] The transcendentalist tradition in Vermont was maintained by Marsh's successor, Joseph Torrey, and, after that, by the latter's nephew, H. A. P. Torrey (1837–1902), who became Dewey's first teacher of philosophy.[109]

The focal point of New England transcendentalism soon relocated from Vermont to Concord, Massachusetts, with Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) as the leading figure. Like Marsh, Emerson was a keen reader of Coleridge, Carlyle, and Wordsworth, all of whom he met in person during his European tour in 1833 (a journey later described in *English Traits*). In 1836, Emerson spelled out transcendentalism's philosophical foundations

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105 James Marsh, "Preliminary Essay," in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, 4th ed. Ed. Henry Nelson Coleridge (Burlington: Chauncey Goodrich, 1840), 16, https://archive.org/details/aidstoreflectio01marsgoog.

106 Ibid., 11.

107 Ibid., 26.

108 Nicolson, "James Marsh and the Vermont Transcendentalists," 35.

109 Herbert Wallace Schneider, *A History of American Philosophy*, 3. print. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1947) 269–271; Kuklick, *A History of Philosophy in America*, 75–76; Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity*, 57–58; see also Dewey, "James Marsh and American Philosophy" (LW 5: 178–196).

in the essay *Nature* and the Transcendental Club was formed.[110] It included Margaret Fuller, the editor of *The Dial*, Frederic Henry Hedge, Henry David Thoreau, and Amos Bronson Alcott, among others. The members of the Transcendental Club were no strict followers of German idealism, but their name implied the influence of Kant, who had used the label "transcendental" to describe his own thought.[111] Besides Kant, the transcendentalists read Hegel, Schelling, Schlegel, Schiller, Schleiermacher, Lessing, Herder, and many other German poets and thinkers who were translated and introduced in the popular collection *Prose Writers of Germany* (1848), edited and translated by Hedge, who had studied in Germany and became professor of German at Harvard. Hedge, says Schneider in his history of American philosophy, "knew German idealism from Kant to Hegel at first hand and was the most reliable source for the American transcendentalists in their search for German inspiration."[112] Hegel's influence should not, however, be overstated at that point in time; while Kant was introduced and translated into English early in the nineteenth century, the reception and translation of Hegel was far more gradual.[113]

Idealism grew in popularity in the United States during the 1850s and 1860s and especially after the Civil War (1861–1865), as an increasing number of intellectuals travelled to Germany to study and experience the new German university system at first hand—a model they brought back home to the United States. While the transcendentalists worked outside academia, an increasing number of idealists found their way into America's expanding university system after the war.[114] The creation of a national university system in the United States followed the German model, and Johns Hopkins,

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110 In *Nature*, we find the common idealist message that materialism and empiricism fail to account for the spiritual aspects of life and the interconnectedness of things. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*, in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 1, *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1971), 3–45; idem, *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 5. *English Traits* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1994), 1–12.

111 Kuklick, *A History of Philosophy in America*, 78–79.

112 Schneider, *A History of American Philosophy*, 277–278.

113 James Bradley remarks that neither Coleridge nor Carlyle mentioned Hegel in print; see "Hegel in Britain," 2.

114 For a list of American idealist philosophers and their affiliations, see Schneider, *A History of American Philosophy*, 453.

founded in 1876, was the first modern research university to institutionalize this influence. It was soon followed by others, such as Columbia and the University of Chicago.[115] As idealism increasingly moved into the university system, the studies became more rigorous and there was also a shift in the thinking as to what purpose idealism could supposedly fill. Muirhead has correctly noted that idealists in post-Civil War America thought transcendentalism was too individualistic, and therefore argued that Hegel—who became influential after the war—and other idealist thinkers and ideas should be put to practical and social use.[116] This became the purpose of the St. Louis Hegelians, a group of philosophers that embraced the neo-humanistic notion of *Bildung*, which also would influence Dewey.[117]

Three events were of particular importance in establishing idealism as the dominant philosophical tradition in post-Civil War America: the formation of the St. Louis Philosophical Society, the launch of *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (*JSP*), and the Concord Summer School of Philosophy. These events were all connected to the St. Louis Hegelians, the most influential idealist group in nineteenth-century America. The group was led by William Torrey Harris (1835–1909), a relative of the Torreys in Vermont who had been tutored by the German Hegelian Henry Conrad Brokmeyer (1826–1906), whom he met at the St. Louis Philosophical and Literary Society a few years before the Civil War. Harris and Brokmeyer formed the St. Louis Philosophical Society in 1866 and launched the *JSP* with Harris as the editor the following year. The intention of the journal was to "extend" the philosophical influences in the United States beyond British thought by introducing Plato, Aristotle, and German idealism.[118] Similar hopes were expressed in an 1879 overview of "Philosophy in the United States" written for *Mind.* Here G. Stanley Hall, who was to become one of Dewey's teachers, portrayed the nation as philosophically underdeveloped, but was hopeful that Hegel's *Phenomenology* could provide Amer-

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115 Roger L. Geiger, "Chapter 1: The Shaping of the American Research University," in *To Advance Knowledge: The Growth of American Research Universities, 1900–1940* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), especially, 8–9, 11, ProQuest Ebook Central.

116 Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition*, 312.

117 This is a central argument in Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity*.

118 William Torrey Harris, "Preface," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 1:1 (1867).

ican intellectuals with "a program of the future."[119] William James was of the opposite opinion: only three years after Halls' article, James complained that "Hegelism" had become a "quasi-official" and "singular phenomenon in British and American philosophy," saying:

> [Hegelism] has found among us so zealous and able a set of propagandists that to-day it may really be reckoned one of the most potent influences of the time in the higher walks of thought. Not only in heavier works by professors, but in magazine literature, anonymous book-reviews and the like, we cross the trail of its path.[120]

James and Hall agreed, however, that the *JSP* was the primary forum for introducing Hegelianism. German idealism clearly dominated the journal—the most common thinkers discussed and translated were Hegel, Kant, and Fichte, followed by Schelling and Goethe. The *JSP* is also concrete proof of transatlantic connections between British and American idealism. Edward Caird and William Wallace were among the British contributors, and there were occasional articles on the philosophy of T. H. Green and F. H. Bradley.

Idealism circulated through the *JSP* and the expanding American university system, but also through philosophical clubs. Harris and Brokmeyer's St. Louis Philosophical Society included people like Susan Blow (1843–1916), a leading authority in the kindergarten movement, Denton Snider (1841–1925), the historian of the group, and George Holmes Howison (1834–1916). The latter was influenced by German idealism through Harris and Brokmeyer, had studied with Rudlof Lotze in Germany, and was a friend of the British idealists John and Edward Caird, and James Hutch-

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119 G. Stanley Hall, "Philosophy in the United States," *Mind* 4:13 (January 1879), 95, 99. Interestingly, Hall also noted the growing influence of Herbert Spencer and suggested that Hegelianism helped "prepare the philosophical soil for the theories of evolution… making a safe and easy transition from the orthodox to the scientific stand-point." Ibid., 100. The tension and possible overlap between Darwinian naturalism and Hegelian historicism were to become a recurring theme in philosophy at the close of the nineteenth century. Hall himself, however, was soon to turn his back on Hegel.

120 William James, "On Some Hegelisms," *Mind* 7:26 (April 1882), 186.

ison Stirling. He was a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the 1870s and, from 1885 to 1916, at the University of California, Berkeley, where he established the Philosophical Union, at which Josiah Royce, William James, and John Dewey spoke on different occasions in the late 1890s.[121] Howison eventually abandoned absolute idealism and became one of the leading personal idealists in America, alongside Bowden Parker Bowne (1847–1910) of Boston University.[122]

Besides the St. Louis Philosophical Society (1866–mid-1880s) and the Berkeley Philosophical Union at the University of California (1889–1910s), other important forums that contributed to the circulation of idealism include Harris's Hegel Club in Boston (1880–1888), the original Metaphysical Club at Cambridge (1872–1879), and its spin-off at Johns Hopkins (1879–1885). The Metaphysical Clubs, however, were not strictly idealistic; rather, the discussions revolved around idealism, empiricism, and pragmatism. The original Metaphysical Club in Cambridge can even be regarded as the birthplace of pragmatism, and the original members included William James and Charles Sanders Peirce.[123] Here the close relationship between idealism and pragmatism will only be noted, as it will be returned to in greater depth further on.

Another important idealist institution were the summer schools. In 1879, Bronson Alcott's Concord Summer School of Philosophy, behind which W. T. Harris had been a driving force, was founded. The Summer School became a central forum for bringing together the romantic and literary idealism of the Emersonian transcendentalists and the more rigorous philosophy of Hegel and Kant as practiced by, for example, the St. Louis Hegelians. When the Concord Summer School ceased to exist in 1888, it was replaced by the Farmington Summer School of the Culture

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121 Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity*, 78; Idem., "Varieties of Idealism: An Introduction," in *a*, eds. Frank X. Ryan et. al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2019), 297–298.

122 For a brief biography of Bowne, see Good, "Varieties of Idealism," 295–296.

123 The others being: Chauncey Wright (1830–1875); Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. (1841–1935); Nicholas St. John Green (1830–1876); John Fiske (1842–1901); Joseph Bangs Warner (1848–1923); and Francis Ellingwood Abbot (1836–1903). See John R. Shook, "A Narrative History of the Metaphysical Club," in *The Real Metaphysical Club*, xvii.

Sciences, which was started the same year on the initiative of Thomas Davidson (1840–1900), a Scottish Aristotelian who was a member of the St. Louis Philosophical Society and a contributor to the *JSP*, as well as a recurring lecturer at Bronson Alcott's Summer School. In 1890, Davidson relocated his Summer School to Glenmore, where it remained until his death in 1900. Harris and Dewey were among the attendees, and the philosophy of T. H. Green was one of the many topics of discussion.[124]

While American idealists showed an interest in their British colleagues— mainly Bradley and Green—Britons were less keen to turn their gaze across the Atlantic, and the only American idealist to gain an international reputation was Josiah Royce (1855–1916). After a year of studies in Germany, Royce returned for graduate studies at Johns Hopkins University in 1876. He wrote a thesis on Kant's philosophy, and his first book was *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, published in 1885, the same year he was appointed assistant professor at Harvard. Seven years later, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* became Royce's first "commercial success," and he began gaining a reputation as one of the leading American philosophers.[125] In 1899, Royce was invited, on the recommendation of his friend and colleague William James, to deliver the Gifford Lectures at the University of Aberdeen, which were eventually published as *The World and the Individual*. While in Britain, Royce also lectured at philosophical societies in Glasgow, St Andrews, Edinburgh, and Oxford.[126] He was, undoubtedly, the most important American contributor to the circulation of idealism.

As in the United States, idealism and romanticism were brought to Britain in the early nineteenth century in the literary prose and poetry of Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Carlyle. The dominance of common sense philosophy, empiricism and positivism was much stronger, however, in Britain than in the United States. Intuitionism and the even more dominant positivism of John Stuart Mill did not begin to be seriously chal-

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124 Schneider, *A History of American Philosophy*, 457. Schneider's example of a typical curriculum involves many courses on Green's philosophy, one of them led by Dewey. Ibid., 460. For a brief biography of Davidson, see Good, "Varieties of Idealism," 293–295.

125 John Clendenning, *The Life and Thought of Josiah Royce*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1999), 182.

126 Ibid., 248.

lenged until the 1860s, as idealism gained influence in, primarily, the universities of Oxford and Glasgow. While translations of Kant appeared early in the nineteenth century, "the first really accurate and balanced account of Kant and the post-Kantians in English" was J. D. Morell's two-volume *Historical and Critical View of the Speculative Philosophy of Europe in the Nineteenth Century* (1846).[127] While Hegel figured in Morell's work, translations of Hegel did not appear until the 1850s, and James Bradley remarks that "up to the 1860s English interest in German Idealism in general, and in Hegel particularly, remained marginal."[128] The first serious attempt to engage with Hegel's philosophy in English was James Hutchison Stirling's *The Secrets of Hegel* (1865), a successful and influential book that reached the transcendentalists and idealists on the other side of the Atlantic. But it was said that if the author "knew the secret of Hegel he had managed to keep it to himself."[129]

In 1866, the idealist T. H. Green (1836–1882) was appointed tutor at Balliol College in Oxford. He became an influential teacher, and among those who studied with him or attended his lectures we find idealists like the Bradley brothers, Francis Herbert (1846–1924) and Andrew Cecil (1851–1935), Bernard Bosanquet (1848–1923), David George Ritchie (1853–1903), Richard Lewis Nettleship (1846–1892), Arnold Toynbee (1852–1883), and William Wallace (1843–1897), the primary translator of Hegel, whose essays and translations often travelled across the Atlantic and were published in the *JSP*.

Central to the idealist environment in Glasgow were the Caird brothers, Edward (1835–1908) and John (1820–1898). John was a theologian and the principal of the University of Glasgow during the last 25 years of his life. Edward, who had studied with Green, held the Moral Philosophy Chair

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127 Bradley, "Hegel in Britain," 6.

128 Ibid., 11. Among the more important translations of Hegel into English were William Wallace's translations *The Logic of Hegel* (1874) and *The Philosophy of Mind* (1894). Other important early translations were Hegel's *The Philosophy of Art* (1886), *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (1892–96), and *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1910).

129 Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition*, 171. More comprehensible introductions to Hegel were William Wallace's, *Prolegomena to the Study of Hegel's Philosophy and Especially of his Logic* (1874); Edward Caird's *Hegel* (1883); and, in the United States, George Sylvester Morris' *Hegel's Philosophy of the State and of History* (1887).

at Glasgow from 1866 to 1893, when he became Master of Balliol College in Oxford. He was an influential interpreter of Kant and Hegel, and his most notable idealist students were Henry Jones (1852–1922), John Stuart Mackenzie (1860–1935), and John Henry Muirhead (1855–1940), who also studied with Green.[130]

The most important British idealists were T. H. Green, F. H. Bradley, Edward Caird, and Bernard Bosanquet.[131] The latter was a productive Oxford philosopher whose work covers topics such as logic, aesthetics, religion, and ethics, and he and his wife Helen were among the leaders of the Charity Organisation Society. We will encounter his controversial Hegelian social philosophy in the following chapter. The most groundbreaking idealist works, however, were written by T. H. Green and F. H. Bradley. Bradley was a fellow at Merton College in Oxford, and his *Ethical Studies* (1876) was the first original contribution to anglophone idealist thought. Bradley proposed a Hegelian ethic based on the value of social life and the notion of *Sittlichkeit* combined with an emphasis on character and duty inspired by Aristotle.[132] *Ethical Studies* has suitably been described as one of the "foundations" of British idealism.[133] It was the first idealist work to argue that self-realization is the aim of ethics. According to Bradley, self-realization, which is our ethical purpose, is a matter of realizing ourselves as a social beings and finding our place and function in a community, as "a member in a whole" which is greater than ourselves.[134] While Bradley claims that the ideals that guide our actions are historically and socially contingent, he also argues that morality "implies a higher, which is religion." This anti-individualism and the emphasis on human nature as so-

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130 For an extensive chronology and overview of British idealists, see Mander, *British Idealism*, 7–8; 557–593

131 This is also the opinion of Nicholson, *The Political Philosophy of the British Idealists*, 1.

132 John Stuart Mackenzie remarks that the notion of Sittlichkeit in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* "is probably untranslatable" but that its meaning is close to "manners" and "mannerly"; see Mackenzie, "The Translation of 'Sittlich'," *International Journal of Ethics* 7:1 (October 1896), 96–97. Today, *Sittlich* is usually translated as "ethical (life)".

133 Peter Nicholson claims that *Ethical Studies* "served as a manifesto of British Idealism and became part of its foundations"; see *The Political Philosophy of the British Idealists*, 3.

134 Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, 69, 79.

cial—a notion for which Bradley appeals to Darwin as well as Kantian moral philosophy—are representative of idealistic moral philosophy.[135]

Ethical Studies forms, together with T. H. Green's posthumously published *Prolegomena to Ethics* (1883), the basis of Anglo-American idealist ethics. Bradley's *The Principles of Logic* (1883) and *Appearance and Reality* (1893) were also influential, and made their author, as we will see in the following chapter, the primary target of idealism's critics by the turn of the century. Here, I want to bring attention to Bradley's conclusion to the second edition of *The Principles of Logic*, which is curious since it addresses similarities and differences between Bradley's idealist doctrines and the pragmatist philosophy promoted in the 1917 volume *Creative Intelligence*, which included Dewey's "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy." Here, we touch on a number of important overlaps between idealism and pragmatism that will be returned to throughout this study. Like the pragmatists, Bradley regards experience to be the basis of philosophy and thinks experience involves not merely sensing or knowing but "feeling, doing, enjoying, and suffering." He agrees that the correspondence theory of truth ("the mirror-theory") must be rejected and that subject and object are interdependent. Like the pragmatists, Bradley holds that "all activity without exception is practical" and that the starting point of theory is a practical conflict. However, in contrast to the pragmatists, Bradley stresses that experience is more than "psychical activity" and that no activity is *merely* practical. Humans are not mere "doers". Contrary to Bradley, I do believe Dewey could agree, although he would not accept Bradley's view that truth is eternal ("out of time").[136] For Dewey (and Collingwood), everything is historical.

While the absence of political and social questions in Bradley's philosophy places him outside the liberal Anglo-American idealist mainstream, Green put these matters at the center of his thought. The most notable example being the brief "Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract" (1881), which was influential in redefining the notion of freedom from a negative to a positive conception. Here Green questions the claim that

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135 Ibid., 170, 189, 314. Bradley's *Ethical Studies* will be returned to in more depth in Chapter 4.

136 F. H. Bradley, *The Principles of Logic*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1922), 725–726.

state intervention has negative effects on individual self-reliance and moral development. He takes the 1870 Education Act and factory laws as examples of legislation that interfere with the freedom of contract, but argues that they nonetheless promote individual freedom by providing security and benefitting the individual's health and moral development. Freedom, argues Green, is not merely a negative concept that means the freedom to do as one wishes without compulsion or restraint:

> When we speak about freedom as something so highly prized, we mean a positive power or capacity of something that we do or enjoy in common with others. We mean by it a power which each man exercises through the help or security given him by his fellow-men, and which he in turn helps to secure for them. When we measure the progress of a society by its growth in freedom, we measure it by the increasing development and exercise *on the whole* of those powers of contributing to social good with which we believe the members of the society to be endowed; in short, by the greater power on the part of the citizens as a body to make the most and best of themselves.[137]

Freedom, for Green, meant "liberation of the powers of all men equally for contributions to a common good."[138] The central characteristics of his idealist liberalism emerge from these quotes, the first being the idea that liberty and rights must be understood in both negative *and* positive terms. Every individual should have the right to "a certain standard of moral and material well-being," which should be provided by society through education and the protection of public health.[139] The state is not necessarily an obstacle to liberty, but could assist individual freedom by providing basic welfare and security.

Second, Green's notion of the common, or social good as intertwined with individual freedom was typically idealist. Individual liberty could only be allowed under the condition that it "is not, as a rule, and on the whole, an impediment to social good."[140] This idea is related to the notion

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137 T. H. Green, "Lecture on Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract," 371.
138 Ibid., 372.
139 Ibid., 376.
140 Ibid., 384.

of positive freedom and to the idealist liberals' criticism of atomistic individualism. Rather than viewing individuals as separate atoms, idealists argued that human nature was social, and community, therefore, a prerequisite for self-realization and character development. While self-realization is key to Green and other idealists, it is important to note that this is a "perfectionist" concept, an ethical ideal that stresses the importance of aiming to become the best possible version of oneself.[141] The function of society is to create an environment that nourishes personal moral development which, in turn, contributes to the common good. This is an organic individualism, in contrast to the atomistic individualism of, say, Spencer and Bentham.

Another of Green's important contributions to idealism was his lengthy introduction to the works of David Hume. An account of "Philosophy at Oxford" written for *Mind* in 1876 remarked: "Under the disguise of an introduction, Mr. Green has in fact issued a declaration of war, from an idealist point of view, against the reigning empirical logic." Green's "Introduction" was singled out, alongside William Wallace's 1874 *Prolegomena* to his translation of Hegel's *Logic*, as being of special importance because of the criticism it directed against the "empirical metaphysics" and notion of experience held by Hume, Locke, Berkeley, and, by extension, Mill.[142]

In 1883, a volume dedicated to Green's memory that "had the appearance of a philosophical manifesto" was published: *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, edited by Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison (1856–1931) and Richard Burton Haldane (1856–1928).[143] "The writers of this volume," said Edward

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141 Vincent and Plant, *Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship*, 21.

142 Mark Pattison, "Philosophy at Oxford," *Mind* 1:1 (January 1876), 95–96. In 1880, Green's work on Hume got its American equivalent in the Michigan philosopher George Sylvester Morris's *British Thought and Thinkers*, which criticized the British "repugnance to philosophical speculation" and the "tendency to neglect that more comprehensive and penetrative mental labor which traces the rational connection of all law with its birthplace in the mind and will of an Absolute Spirit." Morris, *British Thought and Thinkers* (Chicago: S.C. Griggs, 1880), 17, 26–27, doi:10.1037/12831-001.

143 Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition*, 174; Dewey also emphasizes the importance of this volume (LW 5: 152). The contributors, besides from Haldane and Seth Pringle-Pattison, were Edward Caird, Bernard Bosanquet, W. R Sorley, D. G. Ritchie, W. P. Ker, Henry Jones, James Bonar, and T. B. Kilpatrick. Oxford was represented by four contributors, Edinburgh and Glasgow by two each.

Caird in the preface, "agree … that the line of investigation which philosophy must follow, or in which it may be expected to make most important contributions to the intellectual life of man, is that which was opened up by Kant, and for the successful prosecution of which no one has done so much as Hegel." Caird emphasized that the literal importation of Kant and Hegel into another country and time would not be possible even if it were desirable," as the questions Britain faced in the 1880s were different from those occupying Kant and Hegel. It was never the aim of Anglo-American idealists to merely reproduce German idealism in a new context, for that would be to treat it as a "dead tradition." According to Caird, the purpose of the collection of essays was therefore to show "how the principles of an idealistic philosophy may be brought to bear on the various problems of science, of ethics, and of religion, which are now pressing upon us."[144]

Caird does not specify which "various problems" he has in mind, but the subjects of the essays were wide-ranging, dealing with science, history, aesthetics, and economics separately and in relation to one another and to philosophy. Criticism was directed against Herbert Spencer's naturalism, hedonistic utilitarianism, Auguste Comte's positivism, and the pessimism of Eduard von Hartmann and Arthur Schopenhauer.

Henry Jones's contribution, "The Social Organism," was a reply to a text by Spencer with the same title. Jones attacked laissez-faire doctrines and Spencer's individualistic "atomism." Individuals, Jones argues, are nothing apart from society, and society nothing apart from individuals; the relation is "organic," meaning that individual and collective welfare cannot be separated.[145] We have already seen that organic individualism and the idea that self-realization and the common good are inseparable goals are typical idealist views, as is Jones's insistence that liberty must not merely be negative, as in freedom from restraint, for the freedom of individuals is interconnected with the freedom of society. "Freedom," says Jones, "flows out into the individual in the form of rights, and returns to itself through its members in

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144 Edward Caird, "Preface," in *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, ed. Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison and Richard B. Haldane (London: Longmans, Green, and co., 1883), 2–3.

145 Henry Jones, "The Social Organism," in *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, 190–191.

the form of services and duties."[146] Another contributor to the volume made a similar point: "There is a feeling that freedom must include the negative element, 'the glorious liberty of being independent,' as well as the positive element of 'doing one's best.' It must include a right as well as a duty."[147]

Bernard Bosanquet's contribution is also characteristic of idealism in assuming a close connection between logic (the science of knowledge) and metaphysics (the science of reality)—a connection that proponents of formal logic denied. Bosanquet's emphasis on experience rather than fact in logic, and the coherentist view of truth he defends are also typical idealist notions. Experience, understood as "a number of growing systems," is "the criterion of knowledge," says Bosanquet.[148] Therefore, facts, meaning, and truth, are constructed in experience as a whole. Here we see an example of the central idealist notion of unity of experience, which will be covered in more detail in Chapter 4.

Essays in Philosophical Criticism and books by (primarily) T. H. Green, Edward Caird, F. H. Bradley, Bernard Bosanquet, and Josiah Royce were essential in establishing Anglo-American idealism, though books were, of course, not the only medium via which idealist philosophy circulated. As in the United States, idealist clubs, societies, and similar "knowledge networks" were important for establishing idealism in Britain. The "Essay Society," started by the Bradley brothers and R. L. Nettleship at Balliol College in Oxford and inspired by T. H. Green's courses in the 1870s, is perhaps the most important example.[149] Idealism also circulated in the new professional international journals that were founded in the late nineteenth century: apart from the *JSP*, the most important philosophical journals in the English language included *Mind* (1876), *The International Journal of Ethics* (1890),[150] and *The Philosophical Review* (1892), the first

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146 Ibid., 208.

147 James Bonar, "The Struggle for Existence," in *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, 227.

148 Bernard Bosanquet, "Logic as the Science of Knowledge," in *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, 68.

149 See Jean-Paul Rosaye, "The Creation of a British Idealist Circle in the Wake of T. H. Green's Courses at Balliol College, Oxford, in the 1870s.," 301–320; and John R. Gibbins, "Knowledge Networks and British Idealism: An Introduction," 145–169; both found in *CBIS* 24:2 (2018).

150 The journal was renamed Ethics in 1938; I will refer to it as *Ethics* for short.

based in Britain, and the latter two in the United States.

Edward Caird and Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison were among the early cooperating editors of *Mind*, a journal frequently containing writings from British idealists and discussions of idealist themes up until the late 1920s. Green made a few contributions before his early death, and Bradley was a frequent contributor until about 1910. Other British idealists who wrote for *Mind* include Mackenzie, Muirhead, Mactaggart, Haldane, Bosanquet and Joachim, with Collingwood making his first contribution in 1922. Submissions by American idealists were rarer: Royce authored a few pieces, Howison only one, but Dewey was a frequent contributor. It was a journal both American and British philosophers followed, whether they were idealists, realists, or pragmatists, although once G. E. Moore became editor in 1921—a position he held until 1947—idealist themes were pushed aside as analytical philosophy became more dominant.[151]

Ethics was founded by Felix Adler's Ethical Culture Society, and Royce, who participated in the society, was its founding editor.[152] The early editorial committee included British idealists J. S. Mackenzie and J. H. Muirhead, and idealist themes dominated *Ethics* during the 1890s. British idealists contributed frequently, but we also find papers by the American Aristotelian idealist Thomas Davidson. Dewey, who took over Royce's place on the editorial committee after the former's death in 1916, made his first contribution in 1891. We can therefore assume that Dewey followed the journal and was well acquainted with British idealists like Ritchie, Muirhead, Mackenzie, and Bosanquet, all of whom frequently contributed articles or reviews, or were the subject of articles by other philosophers, especially during the 1890s. After the turn of the century, the number of idealist thinkers and themes decreased in *Ethics*, but almost every issue until 1920 contained at least one article or review by an idealist, or on an idealist theme.

The pluralism of the philosophical themes covered in *The Philosophical Review* during its first decades is striking. Dewey contributed several articles over the years, with his first as early as 1892 in a volume which also

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151 C. Lewy, "Mind under G. E. Moore (1921–1947)," *Mind* 85:337 (January 1976), 37–46.

152 Clendenning, *The Life and Thought of Josiah Royce*, 162.

contained contributions from David Ritchie, Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, and John Watson, the British idealist who made a career in Canada. American idealists like Davidson, Harris, Howison, and Royce can also be found among the contributors. It is especially interesting to note the number of British contributions to the American *Philosophical Review*, which is evidence of the transatlantic philosophical dialogue.

As in *Ethics*, the number of idealist contributors decreased in *The Philosophical Review* after 1900, but idealism's relation to pragmatism, realism and naturalism was continuously addressed during the first three decades of the twentieth century. This was also the case in *Mind*, especially during the first decade of the twentieth century. The British journal *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* further strengthens these impressions, since realists like G. E. Moore (1873–1958) and Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) published their articles side by side with idealists like Bosanquet and the pragmatist F. C. S. Schiller (1864–1937). Idealists and realists took turns as president of the Aristotelian Society, which was also an important forum for introducing Italian idealism to a British audience, not least through Collingwood's teacher, J. A. Smith, who became president of the Society in 1925.[153] The last idealist president of the Society, from 1928 to 1929, was the Plato scholar Alfred Edward Taylor. As of 1930 there were hardly any idealist contributions, although Collingwood contributed an article in 1938.[154]

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An overview of the contents and contributors in the leading anglophone philosophical journals from the *JSP*'s first issue in 1867 until the outbreak of World War II strengthens the impression that idealism was the domi-

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153 Notable examples of articles on Italian idealism include, J. A. Smith, "The Philosophy of Giovanni Gentile," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 20 (1919–1920), 63–78; A. A. Cook, "The Aesthetic of Benedetto Croce," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 15 (1914–1915), 164–198; C. Pellizzi, "The Problems of Religion for the Modern Italian Idealists," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 24 (1923–1924), 153–168; Douglas Ainslie, "Benedetto Croce's 'Historiography'," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 22 (1921–1922), 205–214.

154 Collingwood, "On the So-Called Idea of Causation," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 38 (1937–1938), 85–112.

nant philosophical tradition in Britain and the United States during the last decades of the nineteenth century. We also see that philosophy became more pluralistic after the turn of the century, and idealism existed side by side with realism, pragmatism, and naturalism until about 1920. There are also clear indications of idealism's rapid decline during the interwar era; by 1940, there were hardly any idealists left on either side of the Atlantic, a development that will be addressed in Chapter 3. Now, we shall turn to an overview of Dewey's and Collinwood's thought throughout their lives, primarily in relation to idealism, which, I will show, indeed did have a lasting impact on their philosophies.

Dewey: Idealism and Experimentalism

John Dewey was born in 1859 in Burlington, Vermont. His father, who was in the grocery business, fought on the side of the Union in the Civil War, and his mother was a devoted Pietist. In his only autobiographical text, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism," Dewey describes "the sense of divisions and separations that were, I suppose, borne in upon me as a consequence of a heritage of New England culture, divisions by way of isolation of self from the world, of soul from body, of nature from God, brought a painful oppression—or, rather, they were an inward laceration" (LW 5: 153). He found an escape from the painful dualisms of New England culture when he began studying philosophy under H. A. P. Torrey at the University of Vermont. Under Torrey's influence, Dewey turned to the American transcendentalists Emerson and Marsh, and the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, which "introduced a revolution into all my thoughts," Dewey reported to a friend.[155] Emerson showed Dewey that philosophy overlapped with poetry and religion, informed ethical practice, and was not merely "a thing of the academic intellect" (MW 3: 188). In Marsh's introduction to the American version of Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*,

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155 Quoted in Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, 15–16. For Dewey's most detailed discussion of American transcendentalism, see "James Marsh and American Philosophy" (LW 5), and "Emerson—The Philosopher of Democracy" (MW 3).

Dewey found "the re-awakening of a truly spiritual religion which had been obscured and depressed under the influence of the prevalent philosophies of John Locke and the Scottish school" (LW 5: 182). Dewey also praised Marsh for having replaced Kant's "subjectivism" with a unified view of the world as "a logically interconnected whole" (LW 5: 185, 188). Dewey found a similar view—of the "unity of spirit which binds man to man and man to nature in one organic whole"—in the poetry of Wordsworth (EW 2: 174).

Romantic poetry and transcendentalism offered young John Dewey solace and a sense of organic unity and interdependence, which was further deepened as he read T. H. Huxley's *Lessons in Elementary Physiology.* He was also impressed by Auguste Comte's "idea of a synthesis of science that should be a regulative method of an organized social life" (LW 5: 147, 154), although he rejected Comtean positivism along with empiricism, intuitionalism, realism, and materialism. Dewey's first article, "The Metaphysical Assumptions of Materialism," written while working as a teacher in Oil City, Pennsylvania, was a critique of the dualistic worldview of materialism. He sent the text to W. T. Harris, the editor of the *JSP*, and asked for "an opinion as to whether you considered it to show ability enough of any kind to warrant my putting much of my time on that sort of subject."[156] "The Metaphysical Assumptions of Materialism" and Dewey's second article, "The Pantheism of Spinoza," were published in 1882, and Dewey has described Harris's encouraging response to his letters as "a distinct factor in deciding me to try philosophy as a professional career" (LW 5: 150).

Idealist Apprenticeship

In 1882, Dewey arrived at Johns Hopkins University—founded in 1876—to pursue his PhD studies. The teaching duties in the philosophy department were divided between G. Stanley Hall, who was devoted to the experimental "new psychology," Charles Sanders Peirce, who would only become an important influence on Dewey from the 1910s onward, and the

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156 John Dewey to William Torrey Harris, May 17, 1881, in *Dewey, 1871–2007*, vols., 1–4. Electronic Edition, ed. Larry Hickman (Charlottesville, VA: InteLex Corporation).

Hegelian George Sylvester Morris (1840–1889).[157] Dewey wrote a thesis on Kant's psychology and took courses on Spinoza's *Ethics*, ancient Greek philosophy, British philosophy from Francis Bacon to Herbert Spencer, and German philosophy from Leibniz to Hegel under Morris's supervision. He was happy with his graduate training in general, but found the teaching in ethics, social philosophy, and logic lacking.[158]

Of his teachers, Dewey was closest to Morris, who became a friend and, as of 1884, a colleague, when Dewey joined him at the University of Michigan shortly after Morris was appointed professor of the philosophy department. Like many of his idealist compatriots, Morris wrote for the *JSP* and participated in the Concord Summer School. He followed the development of British idealism closer than any other American philosopher and studied Green, Stirling, Bradley, the Caird brothers, and Wallace. Morris met many of the British idealists during a three-month trip to Europe during the summer of 1885,[159] and his *British Thought and Thinkers* (1880) has been called "an American analogue to Green's work on Hume."[160] It was through Morris that Dewey encountered not only Hegel, but contemporary British idealism:

> The 'eighties and 'nineties were a time of new ferment in English thought; the reaction against atomic individualism and sensationalistic empiricism was in full swing. It was the time of Thomas Hill Green, of the two Cairds, of Wallace, of the appearance of the *Essays in Philosophical Criticism* … This movement was at the time the vital and constructive one in philosophy. Naturally its influence fell in with and reinforced that of Professor

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157 G. S. Hall's influence can be seen in Dewey's article on "New Psychology" (EW 1), which he wrote during his graduate studies. For Dewey's views on Peirce, see "The Pragmatism of Peirce" (MW 10) and "The Development of American Pragmatism" (LW 2). For Dewey's debt to Morris, see "The Late Professor Morris" (EW 3) and "George Sylvester Morris: An Estimate" (MW 10).

158 Dewey describes his graduate studies in letters to William Torrey Harris, October 5, 1882; and to H. A. P. Torrey, January 17, 1884, in *The Correspondence of John Dewey*.

159 Marc Edmund Jones, *George Sylvester Morris: His Philosophical Career and Theistic Idealism* (Philadelphia: D. McKay, 1948), 208–210.

160 Ibid., 211. Like Green, Morris points to the weaknesses of British realism, positivism, and empiricism. Their works provide us with a map of the problems Anglo-American idealism answers.

Morris. There was but one marked difference, and that, I think, was in favor of Mr. Morris. He came to Kant through Hegel instead of to Hegel by way of Kant, so that his attitude toward Kant was the critical one expressed by Hegel himself. Moreover, he retained something of his early Scotch philosophical training in a common-sense belief in the existence of the external world. He used to make merry over those who thought the *existence* of this world and of matter were things to be proved by philosophy. To him the only philosophical question was as to the *meaning* of this existence; his idealism was wholly of the objective type (LW 5: 152).

This summarizes well Dewey's idealist position during the 1880s and early 1890s. He preferred Hegel to Kant and drew inspiration from British idealism, but rejected the most extreme idealistic extravagancies. The appeal of Hegelianism, as Dewey described it in "From Absolutism to Experimentalism," was mainly existential and practical. It "supplied a demand for unification that was doubtless an intense emotional craving … My earlier philosophic study had been an intellectual gymnastic. Hegel's synthesis of subject and object, matter and spirit, the divine and the human, was, however, no mere intellectual formula; it operated as an immense release, a liberation" (LW 5: 153).

Idealism became the house philosophy of the University of Michigan, which gained a reputation for being a center for idealist thought under Morris and Dewey.[161] Dewey was offered the professorship after Morris's death in 1889, and took over his duties as the editor of the series of "German philosophic classics for English readers and students" for which Dewey had written a book on Leibniz in 1888. As professor, Dewey taught advanced courses on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Caird's *Critical Philos-*

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161 Herbert W. Schneider calls the Michigan version of idealism "dynamic idealism," which was the title of an 1898 book by Alfred H. Lloyd, a member of the department of philosophy at Michigan from 1891 to 1927. This version of idealism differs, says Schneider, from the absolute idealism of Josiah Royce at Harvard, the personal idealism of Borden Parker Bowne at Boston, and the speculative or objective idealism of James Edwin Creighton at Cornell. While differences between the idealists should not be brushed away, I think too many distinctions only lead to confusion. The common distinction is between absolute and personal idealists. See Schneider, *A History of American Philosophy*, 466.

ophy of Kant, Hegel's *Logic* and *Philosophy of Spirit*, and William James's *Principles of Psychology*.[162]

Dewey's philosophical interests became more directed toward the social and practical at the University of Michigan. Partly responsible for this was T. H. Green, whom Dewey once described as the "prophet of our times" (EW 3: 16). The American Hegelians, W. T. Harris (a leading authority on education in the United States) and Thomas Davidson (who "provided Dewey with a concrete model of philosophy as *Bildung*") had a similar influence.[163] Another important influence was Dewey's wife, Alice Chipman. According to their daughter Jane, Alice had "was undoubtedly largely responsible for the early widening of Dewey's philosophic interests from the commentative and classical to the field of contemporary life. Above all, things which had previously been matters of theory acquired through his contact with her a vital and direct human significance."[164]

Dewey's early social and political thought is congruent with his major political writings from the 1920s onward, and gives us a hint of the naturalistic-humanistic religious views he would develop in *A Common Faith* (1934). "The Ethics of Democracy" (1888) and "Christianity and Democracy" (1893) show that Dewey thought Christianity's value was primarily social. Democracy, he said, "represent[s] a society in which the distinction between the spiritual and the secular" and the real and ideal have ceased to exist (EW 1: 248–249); it is not merely a form of government but a "spiritual association" and an "ethical conception" (EW 1: 240). "It is in democracy… that the incarnation of God in man… becomes a living, present thing… This truth is brought down to life; its segregation removed; it is made a common truth enacted in all departments of action, not in one isolated sphere called religious" (EW 4: 9). "The next religious prophet," said Dewey, "will be the man who succeeds in pointing out the religious meaning of democracy, the ultimate religious value to be found in the normal flow of life itself" (EW 4: 367). According to Dewey, the purpose of religion was social and progressive, and "the Kingdom of God"

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162 Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, 45, 64.

163 Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity*, 130.

164 Jane M. Dewey, ed., "Biography of John Dewey," in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1939), 21.

was an ideal to be realized on earth (EW 3: 32). This is very much the view expressed by British idealists like Green and Bosanquet, but it also an example of the social Christianity that was common in the emergent American progressive movement.[165]

While American idealists like Morris, Harris, and Davidson influenced Dewey's early thought, he seldom referred to them in his published texts, which is an indication that his early philosophy was more in debt to the British idealists, particularly T. H. Green and Edward Caird.[166] In "The Philosophy of Thomas Hill Green," Green is said to put the question of experience at the heart of his philosophy, and to treat it as "a connected whole" (EW 3: 22). He is also said to aim for a reconciliation of science and religion, and to provide a social conception of the human organism. His notion of self is perfectionist, and Dewey clearly shares Green's ethic of self-realization and his notion of progress as "the extension of the area of the common good" (EW 3: 28). These are attributes that could describe Dewey's own philosophy at any stage of his life as well.

Dewey was not an uncritical follower of the British idealists, but compares and evaluates their individual philosophies. For example, in "On Some Current Conceptions of the Term 'Self'" (1890), Dewey rejects the notion of self in the personal idealist Andrew Seth's *Hegelianism and Personality* (1887) as representing "merely the formal unity of thought." Seth, says Dewey, regards the self as logical, abstract, and theoretical, while Green and Hegel correctly regard it as real, experiential, and practical (EW 3: 58,

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165 On the importance of social Christianity among the America progressives, see T. J. Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877–1920* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 4, 195–196. For a fuller account of Dewey's religious thought and activities during this period, see Rockefeller, "Christian Liberalism and Social Action," in *John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism.*

166 Robert Westbrook speaks of the "thoroughly British character of Dewey's social philosophy" during his years in Michigan, and I think the evidence is in his favor rather than in James Good's, who downplays the British influence while emphasizing the influence of the American Hegelians. Both authors agree, however, that Dewey's moral and social philosophy was at bottom Hegelian. Westbrook even says that "it would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that in the United States Dewey was the neo-Hegelian left." Good, on the other hand, attempts to adjust this picture somewhat by showing that Harris and the St. Louis Hegelians were more progressive than they have generally been portrayed. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, 37; Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity*, 62–77.

73). Not even Green escapes criticism: in a review of Edward Caird's *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, Dewey praises Caird's philosophy over Green's because he "has a positive, constructive touch which in final seems to have been denied Green" (EW 3: 182). In "Green's Theory of the Moral Motive" (1892), Dewey praises Green for having provided "the best of the modern attempts to form a metaphysic of ethic," but thinks that he nevertheless fails to provide concrete guidance for action. The reason for this, says Dewey, is that the influence of Kant led Green to adopt a "dualism between the end which would satisfy the self as a unity or whole, and that which satisfies it in the particular circumstances of actual conduct" (EW 3: 159). Since only the latter is connected to action, the result is that action can never be "truly moral," for a true morality would need to take the whole self into account, desires included; according to Green, however, "the self distinguishes itself *from* the desire" (EW 3: 161), leading to the impossible position that the unity of the ethical self is realized *opposed to* rather than *through* action, leaving self-realization an unreachable ideal. In "Self-Realization as the Moral Ideal," where his critique and revision of Green's ethical theory continues, Dewey says that the self must not be seen as "fixed or presupposed" (EW 4: 43–44); rather, the self is active, and its realization must mean the practical realization of certain capacities.

While Dewey agrees with Green that the moral ideal, or "motive," can only be realized in a social environment, he holds that the implicit position of Green's theory must lead to formalism and abstractions: "Instead of urging us to seek for the deed that would unify the situation, it rather says that *no* unity can be found in the situation because the situation is particular, and therefore set over against the unity" (EM 3: 164). Giving content and concreteness to idealist ethics and bridging the gap between theory and practice—without regressing to utilitarianism—was something that would occupy Dewey during the early 1890s, as we will see in an account of Dewey's two other main fields of interests in the 1880s and 1890s: logic and psychology.

Scientific Idealism: Logic, Psychology, and Ethics

In "Kant and Philosophic Method" (1884), a version of his lost thesis, Dewey agrees with Kant's attempt to solve the problems of empiricism and rationalism by showing that knowledge and experience form a "synthetic unity" (EW 1: 36, 38). But while Kant was correct in holding that philosophy's aim is to provide a method for working out the relation between the categories of thought and experience and provided a richer account of experience than that found in empiricism, Dewey thought he was trapped in dualisms that it took Hegel to solve. In refusing dichotomous divisions between the subjective and the objective, the analytic and the synthetic, unity and difference, Hegel's logic represented "the completed Method of Philosophy" (EW 1: 44).

In "Is Logic a Dualistic Science?" (1890), "The Logic of Verification" (1890), and "The Present Position of Logical Theory" (1891), Dewey engaged with what he thought of as a new kind of logic: the logic of science. He counts Wundt and Lotze in Germany and Bradley and Bosanquet in Britain among the proponents of this logic, which Dewey also characterizes as a development of the Hegelian anti-dualistic transcendental logic, as opposed to the inductive logic of empiricism practiced by Locke and Mill and the "intellectual gymnastic" of formal logic (EW 3: 127). Only transcendental logic, says Dewey, unites theory and practice, idea and reality, thought and fact.

Logic, argues Dewey, must not make a division between "a world of observation and a world of conception," for there is only one world, and the difference between ordinary and scientific observation is merely a matter of degree (EW 3: 81). The "logical character" of ordinary perception "is undeveloped, is latent, and hence is utilized at random… and erroneously." In contrast, scientific thinking is characterized by reflectivity and by making the implicit explicit (EW 3: 82). What, then, is the standard for testing ideas? According to Dewey, it lies in unifying abstract universal ideas with particular facts. The universal "is verified" when it "absorbs" particulars, "and there is no other test of a theory than this, its ability to *work*, to organize 'facts' into itself as specifications of its own nature" (EW 3: 88). Particulars (facts) are not isolated, but exist in an interconnected

universal system; this, says Dewey, is Hegel's notion of logic, which "represent the quintessence of the scientific spirit" (EW 3: 138).

Despite his interest in philosophical method, Dewey's early writings in logic provide few methodological recommendations, but are rather characterized by trying to bring together modern science and Hegelianism. This was also the aim in Dewey's early engagement in psychology, seen in "The New Psychology" (1884), "Soul and Body" (1886), "The Psychological Standpoint" (1886), "Psychology as Philosophic Method" (1886) and the 1887 textbook *Psychology*.

"The New Psychology," which was influenced by G. S. Hall, rejected Mill, Hamilton, Reid, and Hume, and sought to relate psychology more closely to physiology, biology, and experimental science, as well as the social and historical sciences.[167] The human being, says Dewey, must be regarded as an organism living in a social, biological, and historical environment; with that conception "comes the impossibility of considering psychical life as an individual, isolated thing developing in a vacuum" (EW 1: 56). The "new psychology" is, in Dewey's view, characterized by treating the human organism as situated rather than as an isolated atom. It is also, like Dewey's notion of logic, characterized by rejecting certain dualisms, notably between soul and body, mind and matter, psychology and physiology. Like T. H. Green, Dewey views the human being as working toward "the end of the whole, self-realization" (EW 1: 104), but he criticizes "the post-Kantian movement" represented by Green for its hostility toward psychology (EW 1: 123–124; 147). Dewey does, however, find the seed of a transcendental psychology, a "true psychological standpoint" (EW 1: 137), in Edward Caird, whom he quotes:

> A true psychology … must conceive man as at once spiritual and natural; it must find a reconciliation of freedom and necessity. It must face *all the difficulties involved in the conception of the absolute principle of self-consciousness*—through which all things are and are known—*as manifesting itself*

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167 On American "new psychology," see John C. Burnham, "The New Psychology," in 1915, *the Cultural Moment: The New Politics, the New Woman, the New Psychology, the New Art, and the New Theatre in America*, eds. Adele Heller and Lois Rudnick (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1991), 117–127.

in the life of a being like man, who "comes to himself" only by a long process of development out of the unconsciousness of a merely animal existence.[168]

Dewey argues that psychology should reject both subjective idealism and realism, as both positions imply a dualism between subject and object and the latter unfortunately also presupposes the existence of "things-in-themselves" (EW 1: 133). The psychology Dewey envisions "shows how subject and object arise within conscious experience, and… that all consciousness whether of 'Mind,' or of 'Matter' is, *since* consciousness, the unity of subject and object" (EW 1: 137).

While Dewey claims that psychology rather than logic provides the true philosophical method, it is hard to see where he marks any substantial difference between them. Like Dewey's logic, his psychology rests on a firm anti-dualism and is concerned with the realization of the individual in the universal and vice versa (EW 1: 148–49). It is only in experience that the distinctions between parts and wholes arise, and the absolute self-consciousness that is the object of philosophy exists only in the conscious experience of individuals, says Dewey. Since psychology is the science of experience, psychology must provide philosophy with its method; psychology unites philosophy with science and turns the philosopher's attention from being to becoming and from the eternal to the temporal (EW 1: 157–161).

In these early texts on psychology and logic, Dewey seeks to get around the notion of a transcendental absolute while combining post-Kantianism with recent developments in science. He rejects realism and subjective idealism and aims to situate experience in a biological and social environment. After completing his 1887 textbook *Psychology*, Dewey sent a letter to W. T. Harris saying that it was Harris who first opened Dewey's eyes to "the great psychological movement from Kant to Hegel," and admitting that his book was an attempt to "translate a part at least of the significance of that movement into our present psychological language."[169] This attempt did not

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168 Edward Caird "Metaphysics," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th ed. Quoted by Dewey (EW 1: 155).

169 John Dewey to William Torrey Harris, December 17, 1886, in *The Correspondence of John Dewey*.

convince either idealists or psychologists. William James thought Dewey's *Psychology* a "great disappointment" and G. S. Hall's critical review described it as a failed attempt to make psychology speak Hegelian.[170] Dewey got the message and reduced the Hegelian vocabulary in later editions.[171]

Dewey's most influential psychological text is "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology" (1896), which argues that the dualism between stimulus and response is an effect of the deeper dualism between mind and body. This article testifies to the influence William James's *Principles of Psychology* (1890) had on Dewey's understanding of the mind, which he now conceives as biological. His psychological vocabulary no longer relies on the absolute idealist jargon present in his *Psychology*, though it should be noted that Dewey thought James's psychology could be fused with Hegelian idealism, calling James's theory of emotions an example of "good Hegelianism." He also tried to convince James that while the criticism directed at Kant and Green in *Principles of Psychology* was fair, James did, in fact, have more in common with Caird and Hegel than he realized.[172] R. W. Sleeper's suggestion that "The Reflex Arc" "marked Dewey's final break with idealism" is therefore too hasty.[173]

Dewey's psychology continually aims to show that the experiencing self is social and biological. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that his psychological texts often contain a good deal of ethics, and it is, in fact, rather difficult to distinguish between ethics, logic, and psychology in Dewey's works. In all these fields, Dewey fought dualisms, realism, and subjective idealism while drawing heavily upon Hegel, Morris, and the British idealists. While these influences are mostly implicit in *Psychology*, they are explicit in *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics* (1891), where Dewey openly admitted his debt to Hegel and, in the preface, to the British idealists in particular (EW 3: n357):

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170 William James to Thomas Davidson, January 12?, 1887, in *The Correspondence of John Dewey*; G. Stanley Hall, review of *Psychology*, by John Dewey, *The American Journal of Psychology* 1:1 (November 1887), 155–159.

171 For a discussion of the publication history and revisions in later versions of Dewey's *Psychology*, see Herbert W. Schneider, "Introduction to Dewey's Psychology" (EW 2: xxiii–xxvi).

172 John Dewey to William James, May 6, 1891, in *The Correspondence of John Dewey*.

173 R. W. Sleeper, *The Necessity of Pragmatism: John Dewey's Conception of Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1986), 21.

> I may state that for the backbone of the theory here presented—the conception of the will as the expression of ideas, and of social ideas; the notion of an objective ethical world realized in institutions which afford moral ideals, theatre and impetus to the individual; the notion of the moral life as growth in freedom, as the individual finds and conforms to the law of his social placing—for this backbone I am especially indebted to Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, to Mr. Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, to Professor Caird's *Social Philosophy of Comte* and *Critical Philosophy of Kant* (to this latter book in particular my indebtedness is fundamental), and to Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress* (EW 3: 239).

Dewey refers to these philosophers throughout the *Outlines* and follows their critique of Mill, Spencer, and Sidgwick. He rejects Kantian ethics because it takes only motives into account, and hedonism because it takes only consequences into account and privileges pleasure over other equally valid motives for action (EW 3: 249, 272). According to Dewey, ethics must judge human action and conduct "in its whole reach," both motives and consequences included (EW 3: 241). Pleasure is individualistic and having it as the sole criterion for action can never lead to "a common good, and therefore fails to give a social unity to conduct—that is, it does not offer an end for which men may co-operate" (EW 3: 273).

Here Dewey's vocabulary is very much an echo of the idealist ethics he draws upon. Another similarity is his (indirect) appeal to virtue ethics in emphasizing the role of character, which Dewey says cannot be separated from conduct (EW 3: 272). Despite the criticism directed at T. H. Green, which we have already encountered, Dewey nevertheless follows Green and describes self-realization as "the end of action," which is found "neither in the getting of a lot of pleasures through the satisfaction of desires just as they happen to arise, nor in obedience to law simply because it is law (EW 3: 300). Self-realization, then, is not about following moral laws, not about increasing individual pleasure; instead, it is a social act, for self-realization is also "the realization of a community of wills." This community may be the family, the state, or what have you; the point is that individual moral action aims at contributing to "the whole of which he is a member by realizing its spirit in himself" (EW 3: 314). This whole is generally referred to as "the common good," and the central problem in Dewey's

textbook on ethics is to unify the common good with individual self-realization in concrete moral action.

Three years after *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics*, Dewey wrote a second textbook on the same topic, *The Study of Ethics: A Syllabus* (1893). He continued to draw inspiration from idealism and repeatedly refers, for example, to J. H. Muirhead's *The Elements of Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (1892) and J. S. Mackenzie's *A Manual of Ethics* (1893)—books that, along with Dewey's, can be regarded as attempts to popularize and develop the ethics of Green and Bradley.[174] Dewey, however, rejects the "abstract idealism" of Kant and Green, and for the first time identifies his philosophic standpoint as belonging to "experimental idealism" (EW 4: 264). He says that the notion of self-realization must be "understood in the sense of expressing the concrete capacity of an individual agent, and not in the sense of filling in the blank scheme of some undefined, purely general self," as it is for Green, Bradley, and Mackenzie (EW 4: 246). The "purely general self" is too abstract an ideal: "it does not and cannot become a working principle for what has to be done" (EW 4: 261–262).

Dewey did not see his "experimental idealism" as conflicting with Hegel's philosophy, but he was becoming increasingly critical of contemporary Anglo-American idealists. He wrote to his student James Rowland Angell:

> While I continue to get more and more out of Hegel, I get less and less out of the Hegelians so-called. They seem to be largely repeating phrases when they ought to be analyzing the subject matter. Metaphysics has had its day, and if the truths which Hegel saw cannot be stated as direct, practical truths, they are not true.[175]

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174 Muirhead and Mackenzie, like Dewey, think of human nature as essentially social, and see ethics as a question regarding the contribution of individuals to the common good. Furthermore, all three authors reject both Kantian and hedonistic ethics and aim to make philosophy practical by bringing about a unity between the real and the ideal; see Thom Brooks, "Muirhead, Hetherington, and Mackenzie," in *The Moral, Social and Political Philosophy of the British Idealists*, 225–226; and Mander, *British Idealism*, 222–226.

175 John Dewey to James Rowland Angell, May 10, 1893, in *The Correspondence of John Dewey*.

Here we see that Dewey was no longer a mere follower of Anglo-American idealism. He pressed the practical and social side of philosophy harder than any contemporary idealist and was more concerned with incorporating science into philosophy. While he did identify as an experimental idealist, he had abandoned the notion of a transcendental absolute and continuously criticized contemporary idealists for being abstract and formalistic.[176] Dewey wanted to bring idealism into closer conversation with science—particularly the new psychology—and aimed to make philosophy practical and socially significant. In *The Study of Ethics*, Dewey found the philosophy of Mackenzie and Muirhead "hardly adequate upon the psychological side" (EW 4: 350). He also criticized W. T. Harris's "complete ignoring" of modern psychology, which led his theory of education to reproduce the dualism between content (the known object) and method (the knowing subject) (EW 5: 165–167, 376).

Similar to the criticism Dewey directed against Green, Harris is said to fail to connect the abstract, formal, and universal to the specific and individual. Nevertheless, Dewey appreciated Harris's "continued endeavor in all directions to make philosophy applicable to the guidance of life, and to bring practical life within the grasp of that consciousness of unity which is the essence of philosophic thought" (EW 5: 385). This is the same qualities Dewey had praised in "The Philosophy of Thomas Hill Green."

In a letter to Alice, Dewey describes a Sunday night gathering at a colleague's where he read a paper which argued that science and philosophy must be experimental and become "tools of action" to serve democracy. This apparently cause a reaction from the idealist Denton Snider and other unnamed philosophers, and an amused Dewey writes that "after having been called a speculative Hegelian by the scientific brethren I finally had the pleasure of being set down by the orthodox Hegelians as a crass em-

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176 Dewey, however, continued to engage with idealist philosophy, but as his reviews of Josiah Royce's *The World and the Individual* show, he attacked the notions of immortality, eternity, and the transcendental Absolute, which he thought further distanced philosophy from the problems of ordinary life and everyday experience. Nevertheless, Dewey admired Royce's work and thought it could "be compared only with Mr. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* in recent metaphysical thought" (MW 1: 256).

piricist."[177] Apparently, being identified as Hegelian or idealist was no longer important to Dewey by 1894, when he accepted a position at the young University of Chicago.

Chicago, 1894–1904: Instrumentalism and Education

Chicago was a center for radicalism at the close of the century, and Dewey, who was becoming increasingly interested in social issues, had visited the city in the early 1890s when lecturing at Jane Addams's Hull House.[178] When he moved to Chicago in the summer of 1894, the railroad workers at George Pullman's factory were on strike. Although the strike failed, it became a formative experience for Dewey, Addams, and other socially conscious middle-class reformers, and may be regarded as the starting point of the progressive movement that flourished in the early twentieth century.[179] Dewey quickly became a leading figure in the movement, but while his engagement in social issues grew, he did not write explicitly about politics during the decade he spent in Chicago.

The philosophy department Dewey led at the University of Chicago was cooperative and included Dewey's former colleague James H. Tufts and the social psychologist George H. Mead, who was a close friend of the Deweys and became one of the leading pragmatists. Besides philosophy, the department also included psychology and pedagogy, and while social psychology, ethics, and logic remained important interests for Dewey during his years in Chicago, he was primarily engaged with the subject of pedagogy, his most notable publications being "My Pedagogical Creed" (1897),

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177 John Dewey to Alice Chipman Dewey and children, November 20, 1894, in *The Correspondence of John Dewey*.

178 Founded in 1899, Hull House was a center for progressive thought and activities and the most famous social settlement in the United States. Dewey visited Hull House for the first time in 1892 and was much impressed. He became a member of the board of trustees, and he and Alice eventually named one of their daughters after Jane Addams. For Dewey's first impression of Hull House, see John Dewey to Jane Addams, January 27, 1892, in *The Correspondence of John Dewey*.

179 We will return to this event and the fate of American progressivism in the following chapter. For a fuller account of Dewey's relation to the Pullman Strike, with which he sympathized, see Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, 86–88.

The School and Society (1899), and *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902). These texts contain a rather radical message, and it is easy to see why Dewey's educational ideal soon became known as "progressive." "I believe," he writes, "that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform" (EW 5: 93). His pedagogical theory stresses learning by doing, through activity and not merely passive listening. Dewey also envisions the school as a community within the community, and the organic individualism he learned from Hegel and Green forms a philosophical basis for his theory of education. We are social by nature and "f we eliminate the social factor from the child we are left only with an abstraction; if we eliminate the individual factor from society, we are left only with an inert and lifeless mass" (EW 5: 86).

Education, argues Dewey, is not mere preparation for life outside school, but a part of life itself. There is, and must be, a continuity between school and society. Education is not just a matter of acquiring knowledge about subject matter—it is about socialization and growth of "life experience" (EW 5: 88). While the notion of "self-realization" has not disappeared entirely from Dewey's vocabulary, he increasingly prefers to speak of "growth" (of experience) as the goal of education—perhaps to avoid being misunderstood as holding a notion of preconceived or fixed ends in education. "Growth" or self-realization is not individualistic but should benefit the common good:

> When the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership within… a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious (MW 1: 19–20).

While he was moving away from the transcendental and metaphysical aspects of idealism and idealist references are few in his writings on educational theory, Dewey had not abandoned the social and ethical lessons he learned from idealism. His educational theory is essentially a development of the notion of *Bildung* as found in Herder, Goethe, and Hegel, who, according to James Good and Jim Garrison, regarded

education as the developmental formation of an individual's unique potential through participation in the social practices and institutions of their culture (that is, family, school, university, civil institutions, and such). These thinkers envisioned an endlessly actualizing self that is both willing and able to make unique cultural contributions through immanent critique and creative reconstruction of cultural norms, beliefs, and values, positively affecting their subsequent self-development and the education of future generations.[180]

Personal freedom is always acquired in a social context and education is, among other things, a matter of understanding, criticizing, and changing the contexts that shape who we are. Importantly, the neo-humanist ideal of *Bildung* is processual and involves the person as a whole—body and emotions included—and stresses cultivation and harmonization of the self as well as social responsibility.

Dewey's view of philosophy as *Bildung*, a notion he refers to only in an article on "Culture and Culture Values" written for *A Cyclopedia of Education* in 1911,[181] is most clearly expressed in *Democracy and Education* (1916), his most famous book on pedagogy. Here he even defines philosophy as "the general theory of education" (MW 9: 338). He regards education as socialization, communication, and the sharing of experience. Like Hegel, Dewey rejects the "false psychology" of (Lockean) empiricism, which regards the learning subject as passive (MW 9: 33). Learning involves self-reflection and meaning; if these components are excluded, we may acquire

180 James A. Good and Jim Garrison, "Traces of Hegelian *Bildung* in Dewey's Philosophy," in *John Dewey and Continental Philosophy*, ed. Paul Fairfield (Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 2010), 44, ProQuest Ebook Central.

181 Dewey describes "the humanistic ideal of education" as opposed to "naturalism." He connects the former to culture and the notion of *Bildung*, which he defines as "the conscious and deliberate formation of human personality through assimilation of the spiritual products of the past," and says that this "was made the standard and goal of education, as over against the appeal to spontaneous, native, but raw and crude instincts and impulses which, in contrast with *Bildung*, defined *Nature*" (MW 6: 405–406). As we will see later, Dewey rejected the dualism between naturalism and humanism, which might explain why he avoided the notion of *Bildung*, which he thought was opposed to naturalism, especially the naturalism of Rousseau.

habits of which we are unaware, habits that then "possess us, rather than we them" (MW 9: 34). Education must therefore not be a matter of "mechanical routine and repetition to secure external efficiency of habit, motor skill without accompanying thought"; rather, the aim of education is the process of "continual reorganizing, reconstructing, transforming"—or what Dewey calls "growth" (MW 9: 54).

Besides from being more appreciative of the natural sciences, Dewey's theory of education and learning is more progressive and democratic than the neo-Humanistic notion of *Bildung*. For Dewey, education should unite society by overcoming divisions between different groups and classes, though he is careful to emphasize that the "social aim" of education becomes "obscured" when identified with national aims. (MW 9: 103) He also stresses the importance of studies that are both liberal and mechanical, social and physical, humanistic and naturalistic, theoretical and practical. Battling these dualisms is central to Dewey's theory of education and he thinks that both empiricists and idealists have been guilty of preserving them, which by extension serves to preserve class society (MW 9: 343–344). Dewey's notion of education as "growth of experience" is therefore a reformed notion of *Bildung* meant to serve a democratic and socially progressive society.

Dewey was keen to put his educational theory to the test, and in 1896 he managed to convince the University of Chicago to establish a "laboratory school" (often referred to as "the Dewey school") where Alice Chipman Dewey taught, supervised, and, for a period, served as principal.[182] The Laboratory School built on Dewey's principles on the interconnectedness of logic, social psychology, and ethics, and his refusal to separate theory from practice. It advocated a pedagogy that sought to reconcile the approaches to education of child-centered pedagogy, as promoted by thinkers such as Dewey's former teacher G. S. Hall, and curriculum-centered pedagogy, as promoted by, for example, the Hegelian W. T. Harris, the United States commissioner of education.[183] According to Dewey, the subject mat-

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182 For Dewey's presentation of the Laboratory School, see "A Pedagogical Experiment" (EW 5).

183 The is an important point, since Dewey sometimes has been regarded as belonging to the "child-centered camp," which is a misconception; see Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, 96–99.

ter of education must not be regarded as contrary to the children's experience, which was a central argument in *The Child and the Curriculum*. Children were seen as naturally active and inquiring, and the purpose of the school was to cultivate these tendencies and guide children through different subject matter. Most importantly, education was supposed to make children democratic citizens. As Robert Westbrook notes, Dewey's

> deconversion from absolute idealism did not affect his identification of democracy with equal opportunity for all the members of a society to make the best of themselves as social beings, and thus he retained the link between self-realization and social service which was such an important aspect of the neo-Hegelian concept of positive freedom. Individuals, he continued to argue, achieved self-realization by utilizing their peculiar talents to contribute to the well-being of their community, and hence the critical task of education in a democratic society was to help children develop the character—the habits and virtues—that would enable them to achieve self-realization in this fashion.[184]

Like Dewey's moral philosophy, his pedagogy maintained the idealistic aim of realizing the self by contributing to the common good. Guiding children toward this ideal was the ultimate purpose of the pedagogical experiment at Chicago. The Laboratory School was personal for John and Alice, perhaps too personal: when they resigned from the university in 1904, it was because of a conflict with the university's president regarding Alice's role at the school.

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Dewey's major publication during the decade in Chicago was not, however, in the field of philosophy of education, but in logic. *Studies in Logical Theory* was co-written with seven of his colleagues, and was the book that

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184 Ibid., 104–105.

began to build Dewey's reputation as one of the leading pragmatists.[185] His changing conception of logic had been foreshadowed in "Some Stages of Logical Thought" (1900). Here, Dewey describes logic as a "doubt-inquiry process" (which indicates the influence of C. S. Peirce) and criticizes transcendental, empirical, and Aristotelian logic for "setting up something fixed outside inquiry"; and emphasizes "social usage" in contrast to the notion of truth as correspondence (MW 1: 153, 173). None of these kinds of logic—transcendental, empirical, or Aristotelian—was compatible with contemporary experimental science, according to Dewey; the purpose of *Studies in Logical Theory* was creating a logic that was.

Dewey contributed four essays and, as the editor, wrote the preface, which acknowledged the influence of Mill, Lotze, Bosanquet, Bradley, and, in particular, William James. The influence of James's pragmatism can be seen in the authors' shared view "that there is no reasonable standard… except through reference to the specific offices which knowing is called upon to perform in readjusting and expanding the means and ends of life." The authors also agreed "that judgment is the central function of knowing" and, as in Dewey's earlier texts on the topic, saw a close connection between logic and psychology. They also held that "reality must be defined in terms of experience" (MW 2: 296); reality and experience were conceived as dynamic rather than static categories, and the dualism between fact and value was rejected. Concepts, theories, and ideas were tools for helping humans *cope* with reality, not for *copying* reality, as in the correspondence theory of truth. In Dewey's terms, the Chicago school promoted a logic that was instrumental rather than epistemological (MW 2: 304).

While the ideas promoted in Dewey's chapters in *Studies in Logical Theory* are congruent with his logical essays written around 1890, there are no longer any references to Hegel, and Dewey has apparently become more critical of transcendental logic, which he claims shares a fundamental failure with empirical logic: namely, "the failure to view logical terms

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185 Dewey and his co-authors never described the work as "pragmatist," but that was how it was received. See the reviews by Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, *The Philosophical Review* 13:6 (November 1904), 666–677; W. H. Sheldon, *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 1:4 (February 1904), 100–105; F. C. S. Schiller, *Mind* 13:49 (January 1904), 100–106.

and distinctions with respect to their necessary function in the reintegration of experience" (MW 2: 336). Despite the few references to idealists, Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison noted that *Studies in Logical Theory* had more in common with Bosanquet's logic than its authors were willing to recognize. Seth also emphasized the similarity between Dewey's criticism of Lotze's logic and Henry Jones's *Philosophy of Lotze* (1895), which Dewey also references. While he agrees with Jones's criticism of Lotze, Dewey emphasizes his points of disagreement with Jones:

> I cannot agree in the belief that the business of thought is to qualify reality as such; its occupation appears to me to be determining the reconstruction of some aspect or portion of reality, and to fall within the course of reality itself; being, indeed, the characteristic medium of its activity. And I cannot agree that reality as such, with increasing fullness of knowledge, presents itself as a thought-system, though, as just indicated, I have no doubt that practical existence presents itself in its temporal course as thought-specifications, just as it does as affectional and aesthetic and the rest of them (MW 2: 333n8).

Dewey's contributions to *Studies in Logical Theory* were reissued in 1916 (along with additional material) as *Essays in Experimental Logic*. Twenty-two years later, his logic culminated in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*. What is important to note here is that while Dewey rejects transcendentalism and the notion of "reality as such," he is still in conversation with the contemporary idealists in 1903, which indicates that he has not abandoned idealism completely. In fact, Dewey continued to hold on to the processual and dynamic view of reality and regarded the human subject as historically and socially situated, and therefore also regarded truth and knowledge as contextual. These were lessons Dewey had learned from Hegel, but blended, as we have seen, with evolutionary biology and social psychology.

While the explicit references to idealists are fewer and less appreciative in Dewey's publications after he moved to Chicago, he continued to teach idealist philosophy and lectured on Hegel, Caird's *Metaphysics*, and Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, and held seminars which compared the phi-

losophies of Bradley, Green, and Royce.[186] Of special interest is Dewey's 1897 lecture on Hegel's *Philosophy of Spirit*, which, according to John Shook and James Good, provides us with valuable clues regarding Hegel's lasting influence on Dewey.[187] This lecture shows that the "experimental idealism" Dewey had begun to embrace downplayed the theological and metaphysical aspects in Hegel's thought for a more practical, historicist, and humanistic reading, which was continuous with views Dewey would later develop without reference to Hegel. For example, Dewey interprets Hegel's philosophy of religion as holding that revelation means discovering "that the ground and aim of his existence is neither in man as a mere individual nor in a world of physical force external to him, but in a living process which unites within its activity him and all other persons, the process of nature itself."[188] Here we find the basis of the naturalized religiosity Dewey would promote in *A Common Faith* (1934). Religion is about realizing the kingdom of God on earth; it is about social unity and cooperation. The eventual existence of God is not a central issue.

Dewey's reading of Hegel also foreshadows his turn to pragmatism:

> Hegel was a great actualist. By this I mean that he had the greatest respect, both in his thought and in his practice, for what has actually amounted to something, actually succeeded in getting outward form. It was customary then, as now, to throw contempt upon the scientific, the artistic, the industrial and social life, as merely worldly in comparison with certain feelings and ideas which are regarded as specifically spiritual. Between the two, the secular, which after all *is* here and now, and the spiritual, which exists only in some far off region and which *ought* to be, Hegel had no difficulty in choosing. Hegel is never more hard in his speech, hard as steel is hard, than when dealing with mere ideals, vain opinions and sentiments which have not succeeded in connecting themselves with this actual

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186 Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey*, 81.

187 See John R. Shook, "Dewey's Naturalized Philosophy of Spirit and Religion," and James A. Good, "Rereading Dewey's 'Permanent Hegelian Deposit'," both in their *John Dewey's Philosophy of Spirit, with the 1897 Lecture on Hegel* (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 2010).

188 John Dewey, "Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit: 1897, University of Chicago," in *John Dewey's Philosophy of Spirit*, 173.

world.[189]

In contrast to Kant, whose problems were internal philosophic problems, Hegel's problems were practical, and the point of Hegel's speculative thought was to answer the "practical problem" of finding a life in which feeling and reason and individual and society were united, says Dewey.[190] His reading of Hegel downplays the metaphysical aspects and regards the "absolute spirit" as a matter of self-knowledge acquired through insight into humanity's historical development. Hegel's spirit is said to exist in an "organic unity" with the body, and nature is described as "the basis of spirit" as well as its "negation."[191] Spirit, then, means self-consciousness of and reflection upon our own nature. For Hegel, philosophy "is not the process by which the individual mind knows a reality over against itself, it is the process by which this reality comes to a consciousness of its own basis, meaning and bearings."[192] This interpretation of Hegelian idealism is by no means in opposition to the pragmatism we usually associate Dewey with but forebodes it.

Pragmatism as Hegelian Darwinism

The Deweys resigned from the University of Chicago in 1904. John, who was regarded as one the leading philosopher's in the United States, was quickly offered a position at Columbia University. He was also elected president of the American Philosophical Association in 1905, the same year

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189 Ibid., 97.
190 Ibid., 100, 103.
191 Ibid., 114–116.
192 Ibid., 117.

the Deweys moved to New York after travelling through Europe for a couple of months.[193]

Dewey's first decade at Columbia was productive. He had less administrative work than in Chicago and was less engaged in activism, which left him time to develop his philosophy, and he emerged as a leading proponent of pragmatism. The philosophy department at Columbia University was diverse compared to Chicago and included leading realist philosophers such as Frederick J. E. Woodbridge and William Pepperell Montague. The realists challenged Dewey's views, and the exchanges, which often concerned Dewey's notions of experience and truth, generally took place in the *Journal of Philosophy*, which had been founded by Columbia philosophers in 1904. We shall return to Dewey's notion of experience in following chapters, but the result of his exchanges with the realists are to an extent found in the three books Dewey published during his first five years at Columbia: *Ethics* (1908), *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought* (1910), and *How We Think* (1910).

These books show that Dewey's interest in the interconnected fields of logic, ethics, and psychology continued. As in his idealist period, Dewey was preoccupied with developing a philosophical method that was scientific, had social significance, and brought together theory and practice. Despite this continuity, Dewey began to identify his philosophical standpoint with pragmatism, and increasingly distanced himself from the idealist vocabulary and all kinds of "absolutism." The reception of the three above-mentioned books shows that he was also perceived as a pragmatist

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193 The Deweys had previously travelled Europe before moving from Michigan to Chicago, and were struck by tragedy during both trips. In 1894, their son Morris (named after G. S. Morris) died, at the age of three, of diphtheria. In 1904, they lost their son Gordon, aged eight, to typhoid fever. See Rockefeller, *John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism*, 230. An interesting detail regarding the first trip is that Dewey met with Edward Carid, who apparently had read and appreciated Dewey's work. On June 4, 1895, Caird wrote to a Miss Mary Sarah Talbot, telling her that he and his wife "had the Sidgwicks, Dicey, Wallace, and an American pair, Professor Dewey and Wife [over for dinner]. He wrote a good handbook of Ethics and one of Psychology." Quoted in Henry Jones and J. H. Muirhead, The Life and Philosophy of Edward Caird (Glasgow: Maclehose, Jackson, 1921), 208. Here we have another concrete example of Anglo-American idealism in circulation.

by the philosophic community.[194]

Like Dewey's earlier moral philosophy, *Ethics* (co-written with his former colleague James H. Tufts) sought a way out of the dominance and opposition between utilitarianism and Kantian ethics. *Ethics* refuses the dualisms between theory and practice, social and individual aims, means and ends, and insists that ends are plural and never fixed (MW 5: 353). While *Ethics* contains references to idealist philosophers like Bradley, Caird, Seth, Mackenzie, and Muirhead, these references are fewer than in Dewey's earlier works of moral philosophy. He still follows T. H. Green's critique of hedonism, however, and builds on Green's notions of the common good and self-realization.

The major difference between *Ethics* and Dewey's earlier moral philosophy is that he, along with Tufts, attempts to show how to apply ethics more broadly, especially in the third part of the book, "The World of Action," where the relation between individual morality, the state, civil society, the family, and the economic order is discussed. Theoretically, *Ethics* is, however, rather in line with Dewey's earlier moral philosophy, apart from the introduction of the notion of "dramatic rehearsal," an imaginative method for reasoning that forecasts possible outcomes of action (MW 5: 292–293). Dewey later developed this idea in *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), where the dramatic rehearsal is identified as a deliberative and imaginative "experiment in making various combinations of selected elements of habits and impulses, to see what the resultant action would be like if it were entered upon." The purpose is to predict "outcomes, and thereby avoids having to await the instruction of actual failure and disaster" (MW 14: 132–133). Here we see that imagination and humanistic understanding are central to Dewey's moral philosophy—it is not a mere matter of scientific rationality and utilitarian calculation, as the term "in-

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194 See, for example, Max Eastman, review of *How We Think*, by John Dewey, *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 8:9 (April 1911), 244–248; W. Caldwell, review of Ethics, by John Dewey and J. H. Tufts, *The Philosophical Review* 18:2 (March 1909), 221–229; Henry Sturt, review of *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, and other Essays in Contemporary Thought*, by John Dewey, *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 7:20 (September 1910), 557–559; J. E. Creighton, review of *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy*, by John Dewey, *The Philosophical Review* 20:2 (March 1911), 219–221.

strumentalism" might mislead one to assume.

While *How We Think* outlined the implications of psychology and logic for Dewey's theory of education, the essays included in *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought* provide the best measure of Dewey's early pragmatism. The title essay criticizes philosophy's traditional preoccupation with permanence and its tendency to regard reality as "lying behind and beyond the processes of nature" (MW 4: 6). Darwin, says Dewey, "freed the new logic for application to mind and morals and life… he emancipated, once for all, genetic and experimental ideas as an organon of asking questions and looking for explanations" (MW 4: 7–8). Darwin directed philosophy toward becoming "a method of locating and interpreting the more serious of the conflicts that occur in life, and a method of projecting ways for dealing with them: a method of moral and political diagnosis and prognosis" (MW 4: 13). Dewey's message is that philosophy after Darwin must become practical but also contextual, contingent, and experience-based.

Dewey criticizes both idealists and realists for their dualistic views of (inner) experience and (outer) reality. In contrast, he suggests an "immediate empiricism" which places experience at the center of philosophy and rejects any difference between an object and the experience of it. Dewey does not, however, deny the existence of objects outside experience, nor does he mean that reality is what it is experienced as (MW 3: 158–159, 166–167). While reflecting upon our experiences may transform them and make them "truer," it will not make them more "real," says Dewey (MW 3: 161). For the same reasons, he rejects the notion of reality as something outside human experience, and also rejects psychologies that consider consciousness to be "something in and by itself" (MW 3: 114). For Dewey, all psychology is social psychology[195]—a view most Anglo-American idealists would agree with, since they rejected atomistic individualism and regarded the human as a social being. Dewey does think, however, that the idealists—at least most British idealists and notably T. H. Green—failed to

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195 This view is most explicitly expressed in "The Need for Social Psychology" (1917), where Dewey rejects the antithesis between individual psychology and social psychology with the rationale that humans are social beings (MW 10: 53–63).

pursue the implications of this view because they are trapped in Neo-Kantian "intellectualism" (MW 4: 50). While Dewey argues that Bradley was among those who redirected philosophy toward a basis in experience, he criticizes him for failing to abandon his notions of "Absolute Experience" in contrast to everyday experience and "Absolute Truth" in contrast to "Finite Truth," as well as for having an overly dichotomous view of theory and practice; consequently, Bradley is also guilty of "intellectualism" (MW 4: 51, 58–60, 66). Dewey, then, agrees with Bradley and other idealists that experience is the starting point of all inquiry; but because he rejects their absolutistic notions, Dewey argues that it is the experience of everyday life that is the foundation of philosophy (and all other kinds of inquiry), making philosophy practical and continuous with everyday life.

While Dewey accuses idealists, positivists, and materialists of being equally guilty of ignoring the experiential and practical basis of philosophy, he suggests that Hegel is an exception, since his philosophy proceeds from "life in its own developing movement," which is how Dewey interprets Hegel's notion of *Geist* (MW 3: 86n3). He argues that Hegel's notion of history gave content to "the empty reason of Kant," and that Hegel "lifted the idea of process above that of fixed origins and fixed ends, and presented the social and moral order, as well as the intellectual, as a scene of becoming, and… located reason somewhere within the struggles of life" (MW 4: 43). Here Dewey's reading of Hegel is perfectly compatible with Darwinism and pragmatism.

Dewey's continual attacks on epistemology should be understood in the context of his notion of experience as the dynamic and temporal starting point of meaning and knowing. He contrasts epistemology with inquiry and regards the former as concerned with the certain, fixed, and stable, and the latter with the continuous dynamic process of experimental scientific research (MW 3: 93). The question is not, says Dewey, how knowledge is possible (an epistemological question), but how "particular beliefs that are better than other alternative beliefs regarding the same matters are formed" (MW 3: 119). Dewey's point is that philosophy has traditionally been occupied with permanence and transcendental reality, regarded as something "lying behind and beyond the processes of nature" (MW 4: 7). The alternative, he suggests, is a philosophy grounded in the social, biological, and

historical reality of human experience, and with actual human problems as the starting point for inquiry. This approach to philosophy is apparently influenced by both Hegel and Darwin.

The purpose of philosophy must not be to provide epistemological grounds for knowing, but to aid in adapting to, understanding, and changing actual problems and situations. Philosophy, Dewey argued, needs to be emancipated from its entanglement in "epistemological questions that are artificial and that divert energy away from the logical and social fields in which the really vital opportunities for philosophy now lie" (MW 7: 55). His conception of philosophy, which we will revisit this topic in Chapter 5, were developed in works such as "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy" (1917), *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920), *The Quest for Certainty* (1929), and *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938).

Idealism's "Permanent Deposit"

Much of what Dewey came to regard as typically pragmatist was in fact already present in Hegelian idealism, as he interpreted it. Hence, he arrived at pragmatism as a continuous development of his early idealism. After having spent his first decade at Columbia developing the theory behind his philosophy in conversation with other philosophers, the outbreak of World War I and the crises that followed during the interwar era led Dewey to leave the lecture hall and make his philosophy public in newspapers like the *Nation*, *The Dial*, and the *New Republic*. We will return to Dewey's conception of the early twentieth-century crises, his political philosophy and political activities in Chapter 3. Here I will focus on his changing relation to idealism and its lasting influence on his thought.

In 1915, Dewey published *German Philosophy and Politics*, his most polemical and unnuanced attack on idealist philosophy. As we have seen, Dewey had already turned away from absolutism and transcendentalism in the 1890s, and he became more convinced of the necessity to do so in light of the war, as he thought absolutism in idealist philosophy led to "social absolutism" in politics.[196] Dewey also addressed the problem of

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196 See, Dewey, "Social Absolutism" (MW 13: 311–316).

absolutes and transcendental reason in *Democracy and Education*, where he said that these conceptions led Hegel to regard the aim of education as "ready-made," which implied that education was merely a means to an end. In contrast, Dewey regarded education as growth, which was an end in itself (MW 9: 73). In the same book, Dewey also criticized Hegel's defense of institutions "as they concretely exist," which Dewey thought was an ideal that forced individuals to conform and deprived them of freedom and agency (MW 9: 64).

While Dewey recognizes that "some of Hegel's followers sought to reconcile the claims of the Whole and of individuality by the conception of society as an organic whole, or organism," he argues that this theory limited each individual to "a certain… place and function" in the whole (MW 9: 65); in other words, organicism provides a justification for class society. This critique is somewhat surprising, since Dewey himself had previously described democracy as a "social organism" in which "the individual and society are organic to each other" (EW 1: 234, 237). Here, in *The Ethics of Democracy*, Dewey argues that we only realize ourselves as social beings in society. This was an idea he often returned to, and he also continued to use the organic metaphor, for example in *Individualism, Old and New* (LW 5: 65, 83), and in *Liberalism and Social Action*, where Dewey gives credit to the "organic idealism" of T. H. Green for having replaced the atomistic individualism of Locke, Mill, and Bentham with a social conception of the self, and thereby making self-realization an aim intertwined with working for the common good (LW 11: 19–20). Dewey was very much a follower of this kind of "organic" social liberalism, and hence it is not Green he has in mind when criticizing some Hegelians for limiting individuals to their "place and function" in the whole; this instead seems more like an unnuanced reading of the chapter "My Station and Its Duties" in F. H. Bradley's *Ethical Studies*.[197]

While Green's social, political, and ethical thought had a lasting influence on Dewey, he was, as we have seen, critical of the formalistic and

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197 Bradley used the organic metaphor frequently and said things like: "We have found ourselves, when we have found our station and its duties, our function as an organ in the social organism." Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, 163

Kantian aspects of Green's philosophy, and preferred Hegelians like G. S. Morris and Edward Caird. In terms of logic, however, it seems that Hegel, Bradley, and Bosanquet had the most important impact on Dewey, who explicitly recognized their influence on his early thought but sought to develop their logic in a more practical direction, which eventually led him to instrumentalism and pragmatism (MW 10: 98–108; LW 2: 14). Bertrand Russell, however, never got over the suspicion that Dewey's logic remained similar to Bradley's (and Hegel's).[198] Dewey disagreed, of course, but the contrast between Russell's and the idealists' conception of philosophy is worth noting, since it reveals two distinct thought styles. Here I think it is fair to place Dewey on the side of the idealists, even though he came to reject and revise some idealist doctrines.

In a review of Bosanquet's posthumous *Science and Philosophy and Other Essays* (1927), Dewey focuses on the opening essay, "Science and Philosophy," where Russell's philosophy is described as theoretical and concerned only with "purely logical subject matter" and propositions. In contrast, Bosanquet's notion of philosophy seeks, according to Dewey, to extend "the scope and jurisdiction of philosophy to whatever has value for man" (LW 3: 298). Dewey clearly sides with Bosanquet here. Almost two decades later, Dewey approvingly quoted another idealist's conception of philosophy's task: "You philosophize when you reflect critically upon what you are doing in your world. And what you are doing is, of course, in the first place living. And living involves passions, faiths, doubts, and courage. The critical inquiry into what these mean and imply is philosophy" (LW 15: 168). Like Bosanquet, Josiah Royce took human life as the starting point of philosophy. Dewey approved, although he thought Royce, like Hegel, tended to use philosophy to justify "the world" (i.e., society) as it is rather than to transform it into something better (LW 15: 169).

Like the idealists and unlike most analytical philosophers, Dewey regarded philosophy as a form of cultural criticism that included the whole range of human existence and subjects such as aesthetics and religion. The

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198 See Bertrand Russell, "*Dewey's New Logic*," in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, 137–156. Dewey replied that Bradley's logic aimed for "final all-comprehensive Unity, equivalent to the Universe as an unconditioned whole," while his own logic was more concrete and merely aimed to bring unity to a particular situation (LW 13: 29, 33–34).

persistence of the idealist thought style comes to the surface when Dewey addresses these subjects. In *A Common Faith* (1934), his only book on religion, Dewey rejected supernaturalism and instead of speaking of institutional religion, turned to religious experience. For him, this was a form of experience that was continuous with other experiences, not least aesthetic experience. While this kind of experience could guide us morally, it was not merely moral; this conception of religion has been compared to Bosanquet's.[199]

Art as Experience (1934) proposed an aesthetic theory resembling Croce's and Collingwood's. In it, Dewey regards aesthetic experience, like religious experience, to be of a particular quality but not separate from everyday, or common, experience. Restoring the continuity between art and everyday life is one of Dewey's aims (LW 10: 9), and he says that an aesthetic experience is mature and unified (LW 10: 47–48). Like Collingwood, he regards imagination and expression to be central components of art, and thinks of expression as a "clarification of turbid emotion" that leads to self-knowledge (LW 10: 83). Again, like Collingwood, Dewey dismisses the notion of art as passive or contemplative: "For to perceive, a beholder must *create* his own experience" (LW 10: 60). They also agree that art is not merely subjective and individual, but "a remaking of the experience of the community in the direction of greater order and unity" (LW 10: 87). Dewey also describes art as the most "complete and unhindered" form of communication and, like Collingwood, therefore regards art as expressive and a form of language (LW 10: 110–111).

Collingwood's *Principles of Art* was published four years after Dewey's book, and it is unlikely that Dewey had read Collingwood's previous and less developed texts on the philosophy of art. He had, however, read Croce, and referred to him a few times in *Art as Experience*. Dewey criticized Croce's notion of "intuition," which is said to suffer from his "philosophical baggage of only viewing the mind as real" (LW 10: 299). Croce was not pleased with this assessment. He felt misrepresented, and criticized Dewey

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199 See Milton R. Konvitz's "Introduction" to *A Common Faith* (LW 9: xxv). The comparison is based on Bosanquet's Gifford Lectures on religion that were published as *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* (1913).

for being oblivious of the Hegelian background of his own aesthetics and the similarities between *Art as Experience* and contemporary Italian idealistic philosophy of art.[200] Why this ignorance? Croce speculated:

> Perhaps… the fanaticism and emptiness of the orthodoxy of the Kantians and Hegelians who were his first masters in America stirred in him a revolt which has not yet quieted down. Perhaps this feeling of revolt has prevented him from seeing that the Hegelian and related structures have fallen to pieces and that the Absolute which he found so forbidding, no longer exists as such, but has become one with the world, experience, and history; that the new philosophy has rejected the static elements of Hegelianism in order to preserve and develop the dynamic ones.[201]

The kind of idealism Croce describes—in which the absolute has been abandoned and history and experience are brought to the foreground—is also the idealism of Collingwood, and I think it is correct to say that Dewey's pragmatism was close to this kind of "neo-idealism." While Dewey did not recognize any resemblance between his aesthetics and idealist theories of art, he had not abandoned idealism altogether. He did, for example, speak of pragmatism as "empirically idealistic" and used "experimental idealism" synonymously with pragmatism as late as 1929 (MW 10: 21; LW 4: 134). He insisted that "idealism of purpose" should be united "with realistic survey and utilization of existing conditions," and regarded pragmatism as a *via media* between idealism, on the one hand, and realism, positivism, and empiricism on the other (LW 9: 128). Dewey recognized that

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200 Croce went so far as to claim that "an Italian reader is pleasantly surprised to meet on every page observations and theories long since formulated in Italy and familiar to him" (Croce provided a list containing eighteen examples of points of agreement); Benedetto Croce, "On the Aesthetics of Dewey," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 6:3 (March 1948), 203. Like Croce, Dewey's fellow pragmatist Stephen Coburn Pepper also thought *Art as Experience* was essentially Hegelian; see Pepper, "Some Questions on Dewey's Esthetics," in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, 369–390. See also Dewey's reply to Croce in the same number of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (reprinted in LW 15: 97–100), and Croce, "Dewey's Aesthetics and Theory of Knowledge," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 11:1 (September 1952), 1–6.

201 Benedetto Croce, "On the Aesthetics of Dewey," 207.

Hegel had been important in making historical and evolutionary interpretations of religion possible and saw an affinity between Hegel's process metaphysics and his own, as developed most thoroughly in *Experience and Nature* (LW 1: 49; LW 17: 374).

Dewey's only autobiographical text, *From Absolutism to Experimentalism* (1930), contains an oft-quoted passage where he says that while he "drifted away from Hegelianism" it nonetheless left "a permanent deposit in my thinking" (LW 5: 154). I think Dewey's remark is correct, and the discussion above should have shown this to be the case. The coming chapters will explore this influence and elaborate on Dewey's reasons for "drifting away" from idealism. First, however, we need a similar account of Collingwood's relation to idealism throughout his career.

Collingwood: A Hesitant Idealist

Robin George Collingwood was raised in an artistic and intellectual environment in Lanehead, near Coniston Water in England's Lake District. He learned to paint and play music and accompanied his father, William Gershom, to archaeological excavations. W. G. Collingwood, a former student of Bernard Bosanquet, was a close friend, biographer, and private secretary to John Ruskin (1819–1900) during the 1880s and 1890s, and Professor of Fine Art at University College in Reading from 1907. William Gershom home-schooled his son until 1903, when Robin, at the age of fourteen, won a scholarship to Rugby School, where he studied until departing for University College in Oxford in 1908.[202]

"Going up to Oxford was like being let out of prison," says Collingwood (A: 12). He claims to have had no social life, to have read all day and night,

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202 For more details on Collingwood's biography, see the essays included in the latest edition of *An Autobiography*. The only book-length biography to date is Fred Inglis, *History Man*. A detailed chronology of Collingwood's life and work can be found in Connelly, Johnson, and Leach, *R. G. Collingwood: A Research Companion*, 11–56. I have relied on the latter book for chronological facts used throughout the rest of this chapter which borrows its title from James Connelly, "The Hesitant Hegelian: Collingwood, Hegel, and Inter-War Oxford," *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 26 (2005), 57–73. Connelly's conclusion, which I agree with, is that while Collingwood had some reservations against idealism and different idealists, he nevertheless stood firmly in the Hegelian tradition.

and to have studied modern philosophy from Kant onward largely on his own (A: 13–14). Collingwood's early interests at Oxford included music, religion, and archaeology, but he also began to develop a taste for philosophy, where the conflict at the time lay between the realists and idealists. Collingwood was exposed to both doctrines: his teachers J. A. Smith and H. H. Joachim (1868–1938) were among the leading Oxford idealists, but Collingwood was equally attentive to the philosophical doctrines of his realist teachers, John Cook Wilson and E. F. Carritt. This mixture of realism and idealism influenced Collingwood's first book, *Religion and Philosophy* (1916). Only about two years after its publication, Collingwood remarked that *Religion and Philosophy*'s "complete failure with the public gives me great satisfaction" since it represented "the high-water mark of my earliest line of thought—dogmatic belief in New Realism in spite of an insight into its difficulties … The whole thing represents a point of view I should entirely repudiate."[203]

Two decades later, in *An Autobiography*, Collingwood claims to have identified as a realist—though "not without some reservations"—until about World War I (A: 22). The few but positive references to Hegel and Kant in *Religion and Philosophy*, and the fact that Collingwood speaks of the absolute as a central concept in philosophy should make us doubt his own characterization of the book (RP: 48, 115); it does not strike one as realistic, and one reviewer even recognized the method employed as dialectical, which indicates a relationship to Hegelian idealism.[204]

In *Religion and Philosophy*, Collingwood had evidently adopted the understanding common to the British idealists that "Hegel's work is based upon Kant, in the sense that many of Kant's truths are Hegel's truths too; but Kant also makes errors which Hegel corrects" (RP: 48). As Collingwood saw it, the opposite of idealism was not realism, but materialism and mechanism (RP: 73), and he believed a reconciliation between idealism and realism to be possible:

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203 Quoted by James Connelly and Guiseppina D'Oro, "Editor's Introduction" (EM: xxii–xxiii).

204 G. Galloway, review of *Religion and Philosophy*, by R. G. Collingwood, *Mind* 28:111 (July 1919), 365–367.

> There is an idealism with which I feel little sympathy and there is a so-called realism which seems to me only distinguishable from that idealism by its attempt to evade its own necessary conclusions. But I do not wish to appear as a combatant in the battle between what I believe to be the better forms of the theories. Indeed, if they are to be judged by such works as Joachim's *Nature of Truth* on the one hand and Prichard's *Kant's Theory of Knowledge* and Carritt's *Theory of Beauty* on the other I hope I have said nothing with which both sides would not to some extent agree; though I can hardly expect to avoid offending one or other—or both—by the way in which I put it (RP: 101n).

We should read *Religion and Philosophy* as an attempt to reform the idealist tradition, which was something Collingwood struggled with throughout his career. He was also to continue the attempt to reconcile religion and science, which, of course, had been important to idealists in the previous generation, and he returned to this subject in *Speculum Mentis* (1924) and *Faith and Reason* (1928). The latter was a pamphlet written for the "Affirmation Series" which argues that religious faith and scientific reason are both necessary in life and that we cannot have one without the other. As he often would, Collingwood begins by stating the problem, then proceeds historically to show how the relation between faith and reason was addressed by Plato, medieval Christianity, Descartes, and finally Kant, who solved the problem by realizing that "the finite falls within the infinite… therefore the sphere of faith and the sphere of reason are not two mutually exclusive spheres, but the sphere of reason falls within the sphere of faith. Faith is our attitude toward reality as a whole, reason our attitude toward its details as distinct and separate from each other."[205]

Faith, then, is the whole or the unity into which the particulars that can be provided by science fall. Belief in the existence of natural laws and deductive reasoning cannot be defended by reason alone, but requires faith, as does the conviction that life is worth living and that we are free agents. This is not to say that these beliefs are irrational, nor is it to deny the importance of science; in fact, in *Religion and Philosophy* Collingwood argues for a "rap-

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205 Collingwood, *Faith and Reason, in Faith and Reason*, ed. Lionel Rubinoff (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), 140.

prochement" between religion and science, where science can provide us with greater understanding of the details, particulars and the finite, and faith a better sense of the interconnectedness of these particulars in the infinite and universal whole (RP: 138–139, 141, 145). We see here an attempt to bring about a *unity of opposites* that would prevail in Collingwood's thought—which we will revisit in Chapter 4—and that he never abandoned, although religion is less present in his works after *Faith and Reason*.

In *Religion and Philosophy*, we see that Collingwood was well-acquainted with Kant and Hegel by 1916. He had, in fact, already attempted to read Kant at the age of eight, and although he did not understand the *Groundwork in Metaphysics*, he "felt as if a veil had been lifted and my destiny revealed" (A: 4). While he had been undecided between idealism and realism, as he wrote *Philosophy and Religion*, Collingwood became increasingly hostile to realism during the second half of the 1910s—a hostility that remained throughout his life. It is, however, notable that he uses the term "new realism" in the quote above. This is a label Collingwood saved for the realist philosophers he respected the most—notably Samuel Alexander, whom he befriended when they served together in the Admiralty during World War I, and later also Alfred North Whitehead.[206]

The difference between realists, such as John Cook Wilson (1849–1915), H. A. Pritchard (1871–1947), H. W. B. Joseph (1867–1943), and E. F. Carritt, and the new realists, according to Collingwood, is that only the former reject the possibility of metaphysics and ignore history. New realists, like idealists and in contrast to realists, are said to regard the knowing subject and the known object as interdependent. Since Collingwood takes the separation of subject and object to be the central doctrine of realism, he thinks the label "neo-realism" is inappropriate. For Collingwood, the thought of Whitehead and Alexander was rather a sign that philosophy had begun "re-establishing contact with the tradition which 'realism' meant to break" (A: 46). That tradition, of course, is the idealist tradition.

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206 See, for example, Collingwood's discussion of Whitehead and Alexander in *The Idea of Nature* (IN: 158–174). See also R. G. Collingwood to Samuel Alexander, February 13, 1935. Dep. Collingwood, 26, Bodleian Library, Oxford. For an account of Collingwood's activities during World War I, see Peter Johnson *A Philosopher at the Admiralty: R. G. Collingwood and the First World War* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2012).

Among the problems with realism according to Collingwood, then, is that it ignores metaphysics and history and relies on a false epistemology.

In the late 1910s Collingwood was not only influenced by the idealism of Kant and Hegel, but must also have been familiar with the British idealist tradition. He was, after all, a student of J. A. Smith and H. H. Joachim, and older idealists like Bradley and Bosanquet were still actively publishing books and articles in leading philosophical journals, as were younger idealists like Muirhead and Mackenzie. Oxford was still the center for idealism in Britain, although it was a tradition in decline.

Italian Influences

Idealism's influence on Collingwood is hard to estimate, since he is sparse with references, though it has been established that he owed much to contemporary Italian idealism.[207] In Britain, the interest in Italian idealism was largely an Oxford affair, and it was Collingwood's teachers—the idealist J. A. Smith (1863–1939) and the realist E. F. Carritt (1876–1964)—who led the way with their studies of Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) and Giovanni Gentile (1875–1944). Smith was appointed Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy in 1910, and his inaugural lecture, *Knowing and Acting*, attended by Collingwood, was largely a tribute to the philosophy of Croce, whose *Estetica* had been translated into English the previous year.[208] In Croce and Gentile, Smith found an emphasis on experience,

207 For Collingwood's debt to the Italians, see Benedetto Croce, "In Commemoration of an English Friend, a Companion in Thought and Faith, R. G. Collingwood," in *Thought, Action and Intuition as a Symposium on the Philosophy of Benedetto Croce*, eds. L. M. Palmer and H. S. Harris, (Hildesheim: George Olms, 1975), 48–65; Myra Moss, "Croce and Collingwood: Philosophy and History," in *The Legacy of Benedetto Croce: Contemporary Critical Views*, eds. Jack D'Amico, Dain A. Trafton, and Massimo Verdicchio (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 145–162; Rik Peters, *History as Thought and Action*; idem, "Croce, Gentile and Collingwood on the Relation between History and Philosophy," in *Philosophy, History, and Civilization: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on R. G. Collingwood*, eds. David Boucher, James Connelly and Tariq Modood (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), 152–167; James Connelly, "Art Thou the Man: Croce, Gentile or De Ruggiero?" in *Philosophy, History, and Civilization*, 92–114; and idem, "Collingwood, Gentile and Italian Neo-Idealism in Britain," *CBIS* 20:1–2 (2014), 205–234.

208 Connelly, "Collingwood, Gentile and Italian Neo-Idealism," 207.

history, unity of mind, and process metaphysics that attracted him and would attract Collingwood. In his introductory article to Gentile's philosophy, Smith wrote that the Italian idealists built their philosophy on the experience of the "History which we enact" and, by doing so, "create in thought and judgement."[209] This interpretation shows clear similarities with Collingwood's famous formulation of history as "re-enactment of past thought in the historian's mind" (IH: 228). Smith's article also emphasizes the interconnectedness between philosophy and history, and presents philosophy as a "reconciliation" of art and religion,[210] which bears similarities both to Hegel's *Philosophy of Spirit* and Collingwood's *Speculum Mentis*.

In 1912—the same year he became a tutor in philosophy and was elected fellow of Pembroke College—Collingwood acquired books by Croce and Joachim's *Nature of Truth*, of which he published a revised edition in 1939. His first publication, however, was a translation of Croce's *Philosophy of Giambattista Vico* (1913).[211] He also expanded and revised Douglas Ainslie's translation of Croce's *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic* in 1922, and translated Croce's entry on "Aesthetics" for the 1929 edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica* and his *Contributo alla critica di me stesso* as *An Autobiography*—the same title Collingwood would later give to his own book—in 1927.[212]

Collingwood was often thought of as a follower of Croce and was undoubtedly influenced by him. They corresponded from 1912 until the outbreak of World War II and met in person on a couple of occasions, and it is not uncommon to see references to "the Croce-Collingwood theory of art"

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209 J. A. Smith, "The Philosophy of Giovanni Gentile," 65–66. For a brief introduction to Gentile's thought and its reception in Britain and the United States, see H. S. Harris, "Introduction," in *Genesis and Structure of Society*, by Giovanni Gentile (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960), 7–33.

210 Smith, "The Philosophy of Giovanni Gentile," 70, 73–74.

211 Vico remained an important influence on Collingwood, as he had been for Croce, and would especially influence Collingwood's philosophy of history; see B. A. Haddock, "Vico, Collingwood and the Character of a Historical Philosophy," in *Philosophy, History, and Civilization*, 130–151.

212 For a list of Collingwood's translations (and all his published works), see Connelly, Johnson, and Leach, *R. G. Collingwood: A Research Companion*, 191–221.

in the field of aesthetics.[213] In *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art* (1925), Collingwood explicitly says that he followed the conception of art found in Croce and Coleridge;[214] however, in *The Principles of Art* (1938), Croce is only referred to in a critical footnote (PA: 46n). But when Collingwood sent Croce a copy of his book in April 1938, he acknowledged his "indebtedness… to you in every area of thought and more especially in aesthetics."[215]

Collingwood was by no means uncritical of Croce, and in fact often shared in the criticism directed at Croce by the other leading Italian neo-idealists, Giovanni Gentile and Guido De Ruggiero (1888–1948), the latter of whom became a close friend and philosophical ally. Collingwood translated De Ruggiero's *The History of European Liberalism* (1927), which he thought of as an example of "how history ought to be written" and a representation of a kind of "idealistic liberalism" close to the political philosophy of T. H. Green,[216] and also translated, with A. H. Hannay, De Ruggiero's *Modern Philosophy* (1921). In their co-authored preface, Collingwood and Hannay described Croce as "the founder," but merely "the first stage" of a new movement in idealism that was further developed by Gentile and De Ruggiero. They also pointed to the importance given to history as the "primary characteristic" of Italian idealism.[217] This description echoes De Ruggiero, who thought Croce had begun the important task of developing the idealism of Kant and Hegel, but without reference to transcendentalism or the Kantian thing-in-itself.[218] De Ruggiero agreed with Croce on the importance of maintaining a dialectic of opposites—such as

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213 Alan Donagan, "The Croce-Collingwood Theory of Art," *Philosophy* 33 (1958), 162–167; J. Hospers, "The Croce-Collingwood Theory of Art," *Philosophy* 31 (1956), 291–308; G. Kemp, "The Croce-Collingwood Theory as Theory," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 61:2 (2003), 171–193.

214 Collingwood, *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art* (1925), in *Essays in the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Alan Donagan (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1964), 45.

215 The letter from Collingwood to Croce dated April 20, 1938 is quoted by Croce in "In Commemoration of an English Friend," 55.

216 R. G. Collingwood to Guido De Ruggiero, November 18, 1926, and 4 October, 1927, Dep. Collingwood, 26, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

217 Collingwood and A. H. Hannay, "Preface," in Guido De Ruggiero, *Modern Philosophy*, trans. Collingwood and Hannay (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 5–6.

218 De Ruggiero, *Modern Philosophy*, 362, 367.

between truth and error— while avoiding expanding this endeavor, as Hegel had, to a dialectic of distincts, such as between the true and the beautiful.[219] The present task of philosophy as begun by Gentile was, according to De Ruggiero, to rethink the unity between the forms of the spirit without rejecting their individuality.[220] This was the task Collingwood would undertake in *Speculum Mentis*. He would also repeat Croce and De Ruggiero's message regarding the need to distinguish between opposites and distincts in *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, where he argued that philosophy should only be concerned with the former (EPM: 63–68).

While Collingwood became friends with Croce and especially De Ruggiero, this was not the case with Gentile. He never translated Gentile's works and, as far as we know, the two of them never corresponded, meeting only once in 1927.[221] Politically, Collingwood sided with the liberalism of Croce and De Ruggiero against Gentile's fascism, and an oft-quoted reference to Gentile in Collingwood's work reads: "There was once a very able and distinguished philosopher who was converted to Fascism. As a philosopher, that was the end of him" (A: 158). However, in 1937, only two years prior to this statement, Collingwood wrote a positive review of Gentile's philosophy of history, which he largely identified with his own notion of history as reenactment of past thought.[222]

In "Can the New Idealism Dispense with Mysticism," Collingwood aims to show that religion, or mysticism, in the sense of "an intuitive or immediate consciousness of the supreme reality as one, eternal, and spiritual," has an important place in Gentile's philosophy as "a permanent and necessary form of the spirit."[223] Collingwood claims that Gentile's re-

219 Ibid., 350.

220 Ibid., 357.

221 Connelly, "Collingwood, Gentile and Italian Neo-Idealism in Britain," 212; R. G Collingwood to G. De Ruggiero, 16 April, 1927, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Dep. Collingwood, 26.

222 R. G. Collingwood, review of *Philosophy and History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer*, eds. Raymond Klibansky and H. J. Paton, *The English Historical Review* 52:205 (January 1937), 143–144.

223 R. G. Collingwood, "Can the New Idealism Dispense with Mysticism," in *Faith and Reason*, 270, 272. The text was originally published in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Volumes (1923).

ligious thought can only be understood if one properly understands his processual view of reality as history, although he also says: "Only the permanent can change; and therefore the principle of permanence, the unchanging reality, must be immanent in the very process of change."[224] There is no strict dualism between process and permanence, the ideal and the actual, or immanence and transcendence, for "the last word lies with the synthesis which is neither mere transcendence nor mere immanence"; this point, says Collingwood, is where Gentile's British critics have misinterpreted him and wrongly compared him to Henri Bergson.[225] Collingwood also emphasizes that Gentile, Croce, and De Ruggiero are not as detached from Hegel and "the well-established tradition of post-Kantian idealism" as they are sometimes portrayed and therefore would be offended by the label "new idealists."[226] What they bring to the table is the emphasis on the absolute not being eternal in the sense of unchanging, but processual. Hence history has a central role in the philosophy of the Italian idealists, as it had for Collingwood, and like them he rejects intuitionism and holds that all experience is mediated—even mystical experience.[227]

In the early 1920s, Collingwood was an idealist who regarded Hegel's philosophy as a continuation and development of Kant's. He was influenced by idealism through his teachers, H. H. Joachim and J. A. Smith, and the latter turned Collingwood's attention to Italian idealism. In De Ruggiero, Collingwood found a liberalism congruent with the political thought of T. H. Green. In Croce and Gentile, he found and an idealism more attuned to historiography. The Italians regarded reality as processual and dynamic and downplayed transcendental aspects of idealism. Like them, Collingwood regarded philosophy to be inseparable from history.

"The Only English Neo-Hegelian"

Collingwood's engagement with idealist philosophy peaked with the publication of *Speculum Mentis* in 1924. While he had been ambivalent about

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224 Ibid., 275.
225 Ibid., 276.
226 Ibid., 277.
227 Ibid., 281.

realism in *Religion and Philosophy*, his engagement with Italian idealism and the philosophy of Hegel between the publication of the two works turned Collingwood into a convinced anti-realist. We can see this development in several texts written in the late 1910s and early 1920s, many of which were unpublished. In 1917, Collingwood wrote *Truth and Contradiction*, a book that was rejected by Macmillan, and of which only the second chapter has survived.[228] Here Collingwood refers to Joachim, Croce, and Hegel, and embraces the latter's notion of dialectics and identity in difference. In his autobiography, Collingwood described *Truth and Contradiction* as the work in which he first developed his "logic of question and answer" (A: 35–42), which we will learn more about in Chapter 5.

In another unpublished text, "Notes on Hegel's Logic" (1920), Collingwood writes appreciatively of Hegel, although he agrees with De Ruggiero that Hegel failed to extend his dialectics to the domain of the natural sciences. In this work, Collingwood explicitly rejects contemporary realism and describes Bertrand Russell's logic as "reactionary."[229] In contrast, Hegelianism is portrayed as the philosophy of the future and as the final break with the Platonic dualisms that has dominated the history of philosophy. This meant that the static and realistic notion of the world as Being is abandoned for a processual view of the world as existing in a state of becoming. This notion was developed in *Libellus de Generatione*, which Collingwood wrote for De Ruggiero's visit to Oxford in 1920. Here Collingwood adds empiricism, materialism, and subjective idealism to the list of doctrines he rejects. He particularly discards the realist philosophers' distinction between the knowing subject and the known object, saying that in the "world of becoming," dualism is rejected although opposites exist, but only in a synthesis.[230] Identity is therefore identity in difference, and it reveals itself in the process

228 R. G. Collingwood, *Truth and Contradiction*, Chapter 2 (1917), Dep. Collingwood, 16/1, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

229 R. G. Collingwood, "Notes on Hegel's Logic" (1920), Dep. Collingwood, 16/2, Bodleian Library, Oxford. Collingwood's debt to Hegel is also obvious in "A Footnote to Future History" (1919), Dep. Collingwood, 12/2, Bodleian Library, Oxford. I will return to these texts in more detail later. For a comprehensive summary of Collingwood's debt to Hegel during this period, see Browning, *Rethinking R. G. Collingwood*, 34–37.

230 R. G. Collingwood, *Libellus de Generatione: An Essay in Absolute Empiricism* (1920), Dep. Collingwood, 28, Bodleian Library, Oxford, 47.

of becoming. This leads Collingwood to conclude that history and philosophy necessarily coexist.[231] It is, he says, the central place given to history that distinguishes the "neo-idealists" from the old idealists. In 1920, Collingwood wrote to De Ruggiero, saying that he was ready to "undertake the task… of being the only English neo-Hegelian."[232]

Collingwood undertook this task in *Speculum Mentis*, which brings together much of what had been outlined in the shorter texts—published and unpublished—discussed above. *Speculum Mentis* contains few references to idealists—it mentions neither De Ruggiero nor Gentile, and only refers to Croce on three pages when discussing aesthetics (SM: 74, 76, 87)—but Collingwood did admit to De Ruggiero that much of the book was "stolen from Hegel and other people."[233] "Other people," of course, includes the Italians and Kant, but also F. H. and A. C. Bradley, who figure in the index of *Speculum Mentis*, and certainly Collingwood's teachers, Joachim and J. A. Smith.[234]

The language of *Speculum Mentis* is undoubtedly idealistic, even though Collingwood includes some reservations regarding idealistic doctrines. He rejects, for example, the notion of "world-spirit" as mythology and is skep-

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231 Ibid., 78.

232 R. G. Collingwood to G. De Ruggiero, October 2, 1920. Dep. Collingwood, 26, Bodleian Library, Oxford. As we saw above, Collingwood, rejected the label "new idealism" in 1923, as did he in *Speculum Mentis* (SM: 13). He was apparently working out his philosophical position at the time and was undecided regarding what label best suited it (he never came to a decision). We might understand Collingwood's growing unease with the label "new idealist" as an attempt to distance himself from the Italians as well as from his teachers, especially J. A. Smith.

233 R. G. Collingwood to G. De Ruggiero, August 24, 1923, Dep. Collingwood, 26, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

234 H. S. Harris has pointed to the similarity between Collingwood's five forms of experience and Gentile's triad of art, religion, and knowledge, where knowledge is said to consist of subjective science, objective history, and their absolute synthesis in philosophy. James Connelly has suggested that Collingwood's analysis of the individual forms of experience owed much to Croce, while the notion of there being a unity of experience came from Gentile. See Harris, "Introduction," in *Genesis and Structure of Society*, 18; and Connelly, "Collingwood, Gentile and Italian Neo-Idealism," 225. The inspiration might also have come from the British idealists, who were also concerned with unity of experience, which I will show in Chapter 4.

tical toward "something called idealism, namely, the explanation of the entire universe in terms of mind," but nevertheless accepts the notion of "absolute mind" regarded as "an historical whole" including all individual minds (SM: 266, 298–299). He also underscores that he does not regard natural objects as unreal or "mere ideas," but claims that "my knowing them is organic to them: it is because they are what they are that I can know them" (SM: 311). The mind, says Collingwood, only knows itself "through the mediation of an external world, know that what it sees in the external world is its own reflection" (SM: 315). What Collingwood rejects, then, is the realistic separation of knowing subject and known object, though he does not reject the existence of mind-independent objects.

Speculum Mentis presents an analysis of the five basic forms of experience—art, religion, science, history, and philosophy—and its purpose is to show their interdependence and importance in human life. Collingwood demonstrates how each form of experience, when it is brought to its end and its insufficiencies are revealed, develops into the next form, until the dialectical process becomes fulfilled in the philosophical stage.

The five forms of experience are, according to Collingwood, at bottom practical and necessary in human life, but he worries that they have become increasingly neglected as people's interests become more directed toward such things as sports, business, and amusement (SM: 19). This, says Collingwood, is a symptom of a deeper civilizational crisis and the fragmentation of human life caused by individualism, professionalization, specialization, and "detachment" of the basic "forms of experience … from one another; and our cure can only be their reunion in a complete and undivided life" (SM: 36).

Collingwood argues that the order of the five forms of experience is not merely a logical construct, for "they have a natural order" (SM: 50). While he finds the notion of "a scheme of the 'the ages of man' is crude and abstract," he still thinks there is "some truth in it" (SM: 51).

> Childhood, adolescence, and maturity seem thus to correspond with art, religion, and science… [I]n the practice of education; we all educate children by developing their aesthetic consciousness, we all believe in the importance of religious guidance for the adolescent, and we all begin a serious scientific training after the age at which children normally leave school (SM: 51).

These remarks should lead us to consider reading *Speculum Mentis* as a *Bildungsroman*, an interpretation I have not encountered before. It is, however, not merely the "coming of age" of an individual, but of society and humanity, that concerns Collingwood. He suggests that the place and role of the five forms of experience in the history of humanity is roughly parallel to their place in an individual's life (SM: 54–55). Collingwood recognizes that the importance and quality of the forms of experience varies over one's lifetime, and suggests they are all interrelated and develop dialectically; for example, the aesthetic experience of a young person is not the same as later in life, when it has developed and become enriched in contact with the other forms of experience.

Art, says Collingwood, is individualistic, playful, and imaginative—it reveals the mysteries we are searching for but cannot provide answers. The next form of experience is religion, which "is the giver of freedom and salvation because it liberates the soul from the life of imagination, of semblance and unreality, and leads from the things that are seen and temporal to the things that are unseen and eternal" (SM: 153). Religious experience is (in contrast to art) social, and involves the formation of beliefs. It is symbolic and metaphorical, but is trapped in a paradox because it "claims truth but refuses to argue" (SM: 131). It is not that religion is not rational—according to Collingwood, it is—but that its rationality and meaning are only discovered as the religious experience is succeeded by the next phase of experience, the scientific. In this phase, expression becomes thought, hypothesis, and questioning, "the cutting edge of the mind" that leads to assertions (SM: 186). The scientific form of knowledge is biased toward abstractions and does not recognize its own historicity, however, which means that it does not recognize art and religion as its predecessors (SM: 161). "Science," therefore, "is the question whose answer is history. To ask that question implies that history is already in existence; and thus we get a process of history–science–history" (SM: 186). Here we see that Collingwood does not think that one form of experience simply succeeds the others, but that they are always present and interconnected: religion, science, and so on, move forward and back and enrich each other in the process of life.

History, says Collingwood, aims toward concretion by interpreting facts in their context, in contrast to the abstractions found in science. We must

not make the mistake of assuming that we discover the past as it was, as if we were merely copying it, however (SM: 246); this insight is only reached as we pass into the final form of experience, philosophy. At this stage, we reach self-knowledge and realize the interdependence of subject and object, the concrete and the universal, truth and error, the individual and society, and the synthesis of all forms of experience with each other and with life. At this stage, we realize that, for example, aesthetic experience is not restricted to the realm of art, but also appears in other spheres of life. We also realize that philosophy is not mere theory, or thought, but finds concretion in, for example, art. Therefore, the distinction between theory and practice cannot hold, and self-knowledge turns out to be identical to self-creation (SM: 305).

In contrast to the increasingly popular mode of thought that was to become analytical philosophy (which will be revisited in the next chapter), Collingwood does not regard philosophy's main task to be epistemological, since true knowledge and education are not a matter of knowing facts, but "helping a mind to create itself, to grow into an active and vigorous contributor to the life of the world" (SM: 316). The "life of the mind," says Collingwood in the last paragraph of the book,

> consists of raising and solving problems, problems in art, religion, science, commerce, politics, and so forth. The solution of these problems does not leave behind it a sediment of ascertained fact, which grows and solidifies as the mind's work goes on. Such a sediment is nothing but the externality of a half-solved problem: when the problem is fully solved the sediment of information disappears and the mind is left at liberty to go on. Philosophy, therefore, is not a prerogative kind of knowledge immune from this reabsorption into the mind's being: it is nothing but the recognition that this reabsorption is necessary and is indeed the end and crown of all knowledge, the self-recognition of the mind in its own mirror (SM: 317).

The emphasis on unity and growth of experience, the processual and historical character of thought and reality, and the practical and existential implications of philosophy shows an affinity for the notion of philosophy as *Bildung*, or self-cultivation. The above quote also illustrates a central concern for Collingwood: raising and solving problems. What Colling-

wood called his "logic of question and answer" became an important foundation in his thought and, as I will argue in Chapter 5, brings his philosophy close to pragmatism.

   Speculum Mentis was regarded, despite its author's attempts to distance himself from idealism, as belonging to the contemporary neo-idealist movement, and Collingwood was initially excited about its reception. He wrote to De Ruggiero that people were saying that what T. H. Green had been to Kant and Hegel, Collingwood was to Croce and Gentile, and the book was "regarded as possibly opening a new movement in English philosophy."[235] This did not happen, which Collingwood soon realized. In 1927, he wrote to De Ruggiero complaining that the critics had not treated *Speculum Mentis* seriously, blaming the hegemony of realism in British philosophy—"those who disagree with it are either abused or merely neglected."[236] This judgement is not fair to the reviewers, however, most of whom praised the book— even those who disagreed with it. The critics recognized *Speculum Mentis* as thought-provoking and original, although some objections were raised regarding its idealistic language and level of abstraction.[237]

"A Rapprochement Between Philosophy and History"

Collingwood maintained his interest in art and religion throughout the 1920s.[238] He also continued his archaeological work and wrote extensively

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235 R. G. Collingwood to G. De Ruggiero, November 16, 1924, Dep. Collingwood, 26, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

236 R. G. Collingwood to G. De Ruggiero, October 4, 1927, Dep. Collingwood, 26, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

237 Notable reviews include John Laird, review of *Speculum Mentis*, by R. G. Collingwood, *Mind* 34:134 (April 1925), 235–241; F. S. Marvin, "An Oxford Sketch of the Evolution of Thought," *Nature* 2881:1 (January 1925), 79; C. E. M. Joad, "What is Left of Modern Philosophy," *The Spectator*, October 18, 1924, 18. Benedetto Croce's review was originally published in *Critica* (1925); see the translation in *Thought, Action and Intuition*, 66–74.

238 We have already noted that Collingwood published the pamphlet *Faith and Reason* in 1928. He also wrote a book on aesthetics, *Outline of a Philosophy of Art*, in 1925.

on Roman Britain, a field in which he was considered a leading expert.[239] His parallel interests in history and philosophy led Collingwood deeper into what he later would describe as his "life's work": "to bring about a *rapprochement* between philosophy and history" (A: 77). As we have seen, one of the main reasons for Collingwood's rejection of realist philosophy was its unhistorical character (A: 28). He did not, however, find the British idealists T. H. Green, Edward Caird, and F. H. Bradley "historically mind-ed" enough, although one could at least find "traces of a historical point of view" in their thought. But the idealist school was on decline, and Collingwood felt that his own "attempts to introduce a slender thread of historical thought into English philosophy are met everywhere with a blank refusal."[240]

Collingwood's philosophy of history was developed during the 1920s in his repeated lectures on the topic and in *Speculum Mentis*, as well as in several shorter texts that have been collected and republished as *Essays in the Philosophy of History*.[241] According to Collingwood himself, the manu-script "Outlines of a Philosophy of History" was of particular importance (A: 107). In it, Collingwood formulates some of his most characteristic ideas about the philosophy of history, which would later appear in more elaborated form in *The Idea of History*, *The Principles of History*, and *An Autobiography*.

Written in 1928 in Die, France, "Outlines" is explicitly in debt to the philosophy of Kant, but also lets us know that Collingwood thinks Croce made "the first really decisive step forward that the philosophy of history has made since Hegel" (IH: 429). While Hegel's philosophy of history is metaphysical, Croce takes methodology into greater account. Colling-wood attempts to combine the neo-idealist methodological conception of

239 Collingwood's role as an archaeologist and historian of Roman Britain lies outside the scope of this study. For a valuable and critical discussion which shows that Colling-wood not always practiced history as he taught it, see Ian Hodder, "Of Mice and Men: Collingwood and the Development of Archaeological Thought," in *Philosophy, History and Civilization*, 364–383.

240 R. G. Collingwood to G. De Ruggiero, January 9, 1931, Dep. Collingwood, 26, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

241 R. G. Collingwood, *Essays in the Philosophy of History*, edited with an Introduction by William Debbins (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1965).

philosophy of history with the doctrine of the ideality of history—meaning that the object of history is not material objects, but thought, experience, or events (as far as they are thoughts)—and this, he says, leads to a rejection of the separation of historical thought from historical fact. A historian's purpose is not to acquire knowledge of past reality, "but to solve with accuracy and certainty the particular historical problems which present themselves to his mind, in terms of the evidence at his disposal" (IH: 427). Here Collingwood again insists on "the logic of question and answer," and claims that historical fact is always interconnected with active historical thought. What the historian does is to *reenact* past thought, which makes history the history of thought (IH: 444). This reenactment is not a copy of the past, but "*the past itself* so far as that is knowable to the historian" (IH: 450). This is the fundamental difference between Collingwood's philosophy of history and the corresponding realist, empiricist, or positivist philosophies. Knowledge (or truth)—in history as in any other discipline—is not a matter of correspondence, according to Collingwood, for historians do not study the past as such, but select and interpret the available evidence to answer specific questions:

> The only knowledge that the historian claims is knowledge of the answer which the evidence in his possession gives to the question he is asking. And the question itself is relative to the evidence, as the evidence is to the question: for, just as nothing is evidence unless it gives an answer to a question which somebody asks, so nothing is a genuine question unless it is asked in the belief that evidence for its answer will be forthcoming (IH: 487).

In his posthumous *The Idea of History*, Collingwood first presents the development of historical thought over time, and his "Epilegomena" then lays out his own philosophy of history, which is supposed to finally turn history into an autonomous science.[242] Collingwood argues that romanti-

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242 *The Idea of History* was intended to be a historical work, while Collingwood's philosophy of history was supposed to be presented in *The Principles of History*. T. M. Knox, who edited Collingwood's manuscripts decided to only publish one work, which was mainly historical. The excluded manuscripts were lost for several years but finally published in the rather fragmentary *The Principles of History* (1999).

cism, idealism, and a "historical movement" from Herder to Hegel brought history to the "threshold" of becoming scientific by abandoning the notion of human nature as static, and by managing to examine the past with less bias (IH: 86–87, 113). History now became concerned with human actions, in contrast to natural events, and Hegel was, according to Collingwood, correct in regarding all history as the history of thought (IH: 115–116). Hegel's primary fault was that he regarded history as merely political history, and thereby neglected the cultural, religious, and other aspects. Marx, of course, committed a similar error in reducing history to economic history (IH: 122–123).

It was only in the latter half of the nineteenth century that "scientific history" emerged, with proponents like Bradley, Dilthey, and Croce. Despite their merits, Bradley fails to realize that the historian reenacts the thought of past agents, and while Dilthey realizes that the historian does so, he falsely thinks that what is reenacted is an "immediate experience"; that is, the actual experience as had by the historical agent. This turns history into psychology, according to Collingwood (IH:138, 172–174). Croce does better and is described as being the first to liberate history from "the tyranny of natural science" (IH: 193). Doing so requires that we regard the object of history as reflective experience (thought) but realizes that the historian does not simply enter or copy a past actor's experience, but "re-enacts it in the context of his own knowledge and therefore, in re-enacting it, criticizes it, forms his own judgement of its value, corrects whatever errors he can discern in it" (IH: 215). Historiography therefore involves critical, evaluative, and interpretive aspects and must never, according to Collingwood, accept testimony without testing it against experience and available evidence. Furthermore, history must always be approached with questions and problems in mind; otherwise, the historian would not know what evidence to collect (IH: 239, 281).

In *An Autobiography*, Collingwood wrote that he had come to regard "the history of thought" as his primary subject (A: 1). His studies in archaeology made Collingwood realize the importance of "questioning activity," which helped him come to see that to understand a statement or a proposition meant to understand what problem or question it was intended to solve (A: 30, 39). According to Collingwood, this method, the "log-

ic of question and answer," is the historical way to study philosophy (we will revisit his views on these subjects in Chapter 5). What is important to note here is that from the 1920s onward, Collingwood was preoccupied with bringing about a rapprochement between history and philosophy. He was also concerned with defending the humanities from the dominance of the natural sciences, since he believed that self-knowledge was an essential ingredient in human life and that only the human sciences—primarily history, philosophy, and art—could provide it. Collingwood was a humanist philosopher through and through.

Self-Knowledge and Dialectics

Collingwood became increasingly concerned with methodological questions, not only in historiography, but also in philosophy. He began writing *An Essay on Philosophical Method* in 1932. Its purpose was to assert the autonomy of philosophy in the face of the increasing dominance of empirical science. Unlike science, Collingwood says, philosophy is not about discovering the unknown, but is intended to "clear up thoughts" through self-reflection (EPM: 1, 96–97, 161). This, he says, is accomplished through a "scale of forms" analysis in which the lower stages of the scale are summed up and incorporated into the higher, which means that the stages (or concepts) in a scale of forms can differ in both kind and degree simultaneously (EPM: 57, 89). This, he argues, is not a new method, as it was practiced by thinkers such as Plato, Kant, and Hegel. We also recognize this approach to philosophy from Collingwood's previous book, *Speculum Mentis*, where art was incorporated into religion, which in turn was incorporated into science, and so on. In fact, *An Essay on Philosophical Method* has been described—correctly, I think—as a retroactive defense of the dialectical method employed in *Speculum Mentis*.[243]

The reviewers agreed that *An Essay on Philosophical Method* was original, lucid, and well-written, but the book also seems to have caused some confusion. One reviewer thought it was "one of the finest restatements in contemporary British philosophy of a Platonic and Hegelian metaphysics

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243 See Mink, *Mind, History, and Dialectic*, 73.

viewed from a modern standpoint," while another associated the "scale of forms" method with Kant, Leibniz, and C. S. Peirce.[244] F. C. S. Schiller thought Collingwood described the knowledge process in philosophy very well but failed to recognize that this was also the process of science, which Collingwood did not treat justly.[245] Another reviewer had the opposite view, and thought Collingwood was right in claiming the autonomy of philosophy, but unclear in regard to its method.[246] Most critical was C. J. Ducasse who thought the whole argument was "unsound" and its premises "demonstrably false."[247]

These mixed judgments are understandable, for *An Essay on Philosophical Method* is not an easy book. In fact, one does not get a clear idea of *how* Collingwood thinks one should perform philosophy, which might be expected from a book on philosophical methodology. A paper on "Method and Metaphysics" that Collingwood read before the Jowett Society in the summer of 1935 presents Collingwood's notion of philosophy in a more condensed and clear form. In it, he claims, in opposition to the realist G. E. Moore, that philosophical concepts like "reality" or "right action" "do not consist of common characteristics" like "man" or "triangle,"[248] because reality or truth are not all or nothing affairs, but matters of degree,[249] and in a "scale of forms" differences of kind and degree are combined, as are oppositions and distinctions. Another characteristic "is that each term in the scale sums up in itself the whole scale to that point."[250] Therefore,

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244 Anon., "A Discourse on Method," *Times Literary Supplement*, issue 1674, March 1, 1934; Charles Hartshorne, review of *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, by R. G. Collingwood, *International Journal of Ethics* 44:3 (April 1934), 357–358.

245 F. C. S. Schiller, review of *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, by R. G. Collingwood, *Mind* 43:169 (January 1934), 117–120.

246 Arthur E. Murphy, review of *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, by R. G. Collingwood, *The Philosophical Review* 44:2 (March 1935), 191–192.

247 C. J. Ducasse, "Mr. Collingwood on Philosophical Method," *The Journal of Philosophy* 33:4 (February 1936), 95–106.

248 R. G. Collingwood, "Method and Metaphysics," in *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, 330.

249 This was a doctrine Collingwood took from F. H. Bradley, whose thought he was engaged with at this time. More on this below.

250 Collingwood, "Method and Metaphysics," 345. Here, one might add that being a man or a human is arguably not an all or nothing affair but a matter of degree.

Collingwood insisted that philosophy must proceed historically, as he did in *The Idea of Nature* and *The Idea of History*, and dialectically, a method he demonstrated most clearly in *The Principles of Art* (1938).

Before *The Principles of Art*, Collingwood had addressed aesthetics in a chapter in *Speculum Mentis*, in *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art* (1925), and in shorter essays. He had also, as we saw above, translated some of Croce's works on aesthetics, and acknowledged that *The Principles of Art* was influenced by Croce.[251] In contrast to Collingwood's earlier aesthetics, *The Principles of Art* no longer defines art in terms of beauty. The explicit purpose of the book is to answer the question "What is art?" by showing how "art proper" overlaps with, but also differs from, craft, representation, amusement, and "magic." These categories have some common features, but also others that distinguish them from one another; hence they differ in both kind and degree, which Collingwood, in *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, said is the characteristic of a philosophical concept. Like craft, art requires technical skills, but while technical skill alone may be enough for the craftsman, it is not for the artist, since craft is created with a preconceived end in mind, while art is not (PA: 15). Therefore, art cannot be a matter of representation, but a representation may be a work of art (although it is not the representative aspect that makes it so) (PA: 42, 46). Nor can art be amusement or magic, for these categories also maintain the distinction between means and end. The purpose of magic is to "generate in the agent or agents certain emotions that are considered necessary or

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251 Collingwood's former teacher, E. F. Carritt, who knew Croce's aesthetics well, regarded *The Principles of Art* as a continuation of Croce's theory; see See Carritt, review of *The Principles of Art*, by R. G. Collingwood, *Philosophy* 13:52 (October 1938), 492–496. Carritt's main criticism is directed toward the idealistic aspects of the work, especially Collingwood's idea that the audience has the same aesthetic experience as the artist. It is correct that Collingwood fails to give a satisfactory account of this doctrine, but it could be interpreted in light of his philosophy of history. We saw above that Collingwood argues that the historian not merely reexperiences a past actor's experience but "re-enacts it in the context of his own knowledge and therefore, in re-enacting it, criticizes it, forms his own judgement of its value" (IH: 215). We can never get into another person's head, but we can certainly understand other people. If we can reexperience ("re-enact") a historical actor's thought, why should we not be able to reexperience an artist's emotions (granted that we do so in a context different from theirs, and that the emotion involves self-reflection and not merely bare feeling)?

useful for the work of living; their secondary function is to generate in others … emotions useful or detrimental to the lives of these others" (PA: 66–67). Magic, then, has a social value and includes practices like weddings, dances, funerals, amateur sports, and folk art. Amusement, on the other hand, also generates emotion, but emotions that lack social value and even, says Collingwood, threaten civilization (PA: 103). This leads him to view art as a matter of *expressing* emotion—as distinguished from *arousing* emotion, which is the aim of amusement—that leads to self-knowledge, because the artist does not know beforehand what it is that he or she feels. This self-knowledge of emotion is also reached, says Collingwood, by the audience. Therefore, "art proper" (like magic) has social value. Here we see that art shares attributes with related categories, even though it has a specific identity that only emerges once we compare it to related categories. It is only by doing so that we realize why art, in contrast to amusement or craft, is of such importance in our lives.

Critics have argued that Collingwood draws too sharp a distinction between art and craft, and that he fails to separate the question "What is art?" from the question "What is good art?" He has also been criticized for identifying art with language and for regarding art to be a thing that only exists in the mind, and not as a physical object.[252] T. J. Diffey's suggestion that we rephrase the major question of *The Principles of Art* as "Why is art important to us?" makes Collingwood's aim in the book clearer.[253] This interpretation works well with my pragmatic reading of Collingwood, which will be developed in Chapter 5. Once we ask "Why is art important to us?" rather than "What is art?," it becomes easier to see why Collingwood regarded it as one of the basic forms of experience in *Speculum Mentis*. Art is important because it leads to self-knowledge of our emotions, and since Collingwood holds emotions to be a presupposition of thought, he worries that without "art proper" the human consciousness will be "corrupted"—that is, repressed (PA: 217–218). As we saw above, Collingwood argues that the purpose of philosophy is self-reflection and

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252 The criticism against Collingwood's philosophy of art has been neatly summarized by T. J. Diffey, "Aesthetics and Philosophical Method," in *Philosophy, History and Civilization*, 64.

253 Ibid., 76.

to "clear up thoughts." He also stresses that through philosophy, we come to know better what we already, to some extent, knew before. Similarly, Collingwood claims that the purpose of history is also self-knowledge, but of ourselves as rational agents rather than of our emotional lives. Additionally, he argues that self-knowledge is, simultaneously, self-creation (SM: 305). I think these remarks reveal clearly that Collingwood was a humanistic philosopher close to the tradition of *Bildung*. He wants us to understand ourselves as thinking, feeling, desiring, and acting agents, which is also the reason he continually attacks realism, positivism, and naturalism, and attempts to turn philosophy into an empirical science. Collingwood does not, of course, deny that humans are natural beings, nor does he reject the theory of evolution, but instead maintains that to understand ourselves as humans we must recognize that we are historical and cultural beings and understand ourselves as such.

Rethinking Bradley

From the mid-1930s, Collingwood became increasingly interested in metaphysics as he simultaneously continued to work out his philosophy of history. Beginning at this point in time, we also see an increasing ambivalence toward idealism in Collingwood's writings that is especially prominent in two texts about F. H. Bradley written during this period. In "The Metaphysics of F. H. Bradley: An Essay on 'Appearance and Reality'" (1933) and "The Nature of Metaphysical Study" (1934),[254] Collingwood argues that Bradley has been misunderstood by the modern realists—Russell, Moore, Cook Wilson, and Pritchard—and in fact was "the father of modern realism." But the realism Bradley paved the way for is not opposed to "the objective or absolute idealism of a Plato or Hegel, but the subjective or psychological idealism of the nineteenth century" (EM: 370).

According to Collingwood, Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* (1893) rejects the phenomenalist distinction between appearance and reality, since

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[254] "The Metaphysics of F. H. Bradley: An Essay on 'Appearance and Reality'" is published in the new edition of *An Essay on Philosophical Method* (EPM: 227–252) and "The Nature of Metaphysical Study" in the new edition of *An Essay on Metaphysics* (EM: 356–378).

"nothing can be mere appearance" (EPM: 239). What appears must be reality, and reality, or the absolute, exists (EPM: 242). Up to this point, Collingwood thinks modern realists would agree,[255] although a realist would not refer to the absolute. The real disagreement is that the realists reject Bradley's idea that truth and reality come in degrees, which Collingwood accepts and takes as the equivalent to his own dialectic, or "scale of forms," as outlined in *An Essay on Philosophical Method* (EM: 371; EPM: 244–245).

According to Collingwood, the reason modern realists have failed to appreciate Bradley is that they do not realize how well his thought fits in with the relativistic physics of Einstein and Freudian psychology, which emerged simultaneously in the early 1890s. Modern physicists agree "that all appearances somehow belong to reality," and modern psychology rejects the distinction between normal and abnormal and holds that a healthy mind is a matter of degree, and that "the process of becoming sane or healthy in mind is a process of coming to know oneself" (EM: 374; EPM: 252). The "modern metaphysician" should therefore "begin from Bradley, with the principle that all appearances belong to or qualify reality, and with that principle in mind to approach the physics of Einstein and the psychology of Freud" (EM: 375). We do, of course, recognize these themes— the processual world view, the importance of self-knowledge, and the necessity of the dialectical method—all of which we have encountered above.

Collingwood's most celebratory account of Bradley is his 1935 inaugural lecture "The Historical Imagination," which he gave when he replaced his teacher J. A. Smith as the holder of the Chair of Metaphysical Philosophy at Magdalen College. Here Collingwood defended the necessity of historical thinking in philosophy against "recent English philosophers" (the realists), who not merely ignored history, but with their epistemology implicitly denied its possibility (IH: 233). Instead of drawing inspiration from Hegel, Croce and Gentile, the philosophers of history who had been of primary importance to Collingwood's thought on the subject, he presents Bradley's *The Presuppositions of Critical History* as having produced a "Copernican revolution in the theory of historical knowledge" by challenging

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255 Collingwood also thought this was Hegel's position (IN: 129).

the "common-sense theory," according to which "historical truth consists in the historian's beliefs conforming to the statements of his authorities" by appeal to experience (IH: 240).

Bradley's pivotal role in the philosophy of history is toned down in a later revision of this lecture, which also is included in *The Idea of History*.[256] In the later version, Collingwood regards the British idealists as taking part in the late nineteenth-century "revolt against positivism"; a revolt, says Collingwood, which was not against science, but "against the philosophy which claimed that science was the only kind of knowledge that existed or ever could exist" (IH: 134)—in other words, positivism and its twenti-eth-century successor, realism.

Bradley is described as "the leader of the new movement" in England, and the constructive side of the movement is said to claim "history as a form of knowledge distinct from natural science and yet valid in its own right" (IH, 134–135). Bradley's critical historian is presented as an active interpreter that does not accept testimony without "making the thought of the witness one's own thought: re-enacting that thought in one's own mind" (IH: 138). The problem is that Bradley does not realize that the "historian re-enacts in his own mind not only the thought of the witness but the thought of the agent whose action the witness reports" (IH: 138). Furthermore, Bradley's account of experience is flawed, according to Collingwood, as he holds that the experience the historian brings to ques-tion the "authorities" is "ready-made," and hence exists prior to the histor-ical investigation.

> Consequently this experience is regarded not as consisting of historical knowledge but as knowledge of some other kind, and Bradley in fact conceives it as scientific knowledge, knowledge of the laws of nature. This is where the positivism of his age begins to infect his thought. He regards the historian's scientific knowledge as giving him the means of distinguis-hing between what can and what cannot happen; and this scientific know-

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256 Confusingly, the later revision of the text is placed before the earlier version in *The Idea of History*. Robert M. Burns has argued that the relation between these two texts is key for understanding what he regards as a radical change in Collingwood's philosophy from transcendentalism to historicism. Burns, "Collingwood, Bradley, and Historical Knowl-edge," 178–180.

ledge he conceives in the positivistic manner, as based on induction from observed facts on the principle that the future will resemble the past and the unknown the known (IH: 138–139).

Collingwood's evaluation of Bradley is somewhat contradictory. He claims that Bradley "relapsed into positivism" because of the influence of J. S. Mill's inductive logic (IH: 134, 139), but also regards the autonomy of history as an implication of Bradley's philosophy and sees him as a forerunner to Croce (IH: 140). Right after praising Bradley for having conceived logic and metaphysics from "a radically historical point of view," Collingwood says that because Bradley did not manage to escape the dualism between the subjective and objective, he had to deny the possibility of self-knowledge, which, according to Collingwood, is the purpose of history (IH: 140–141, 315).

Robert Burns has shown that Collingwood deemphasized Bradley's role in the development of historical thought in unpublished lectures from June 1940, and that transcendentalism becomes irrelevant in Collingwood's work from the late 1930s, which indicates a move away from idealism. I do, however, think that Burns goes too far in following T. M. Knox's "radical conversion hypothesis."[257] While Collingwood's account of Bradley's role in the philosophy of history is ambiguous and contradictory, I believe we should read it in the context of Collingwood's account of Bradley's metaphysics, and his own struggles with finding a philosophical alternative to the dominant schools in interwar era England: realism, idealism, and pragmatism. The latter was never an option for Collingwood, although I will argue in Chapter 5 that he misunderstood pragmatism and its similarities with his own thought. Nor was realism an option; as we have seen, Collingwood associated it with positivism and nineteenth-century empiricism and rejected it throughout his career because of its neglect of history and metaphysics and its false epistemology. But identifying as an idealist was not an appealing option either; it was the philosophy of yesterday, had been under fierce attack, and was in steady decline in the 1930s—a topic I will return to in the following chapter.

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257 Ibid., 191. See also the discussion in the "Previous Research" section.

Collingwood wanted to distance the British idealists from Kant and Hegel and tried to show that Green and Bradley belonged to an English philosophical tradition, following Locke, Hume, and Mill. Nevertheless, Bradley's targets are said to be positivism as well as subjective idealism and phenomenalist psychology, exemplified by British philosophers like Berkeley, Hamilton, Spencer, and Mill. While Collingwood (unconvincingly) claims Bradley is the father of modern realism, he never criticizes Bradley's idealistic doctrines, but accuses him of not having managed to break free from the empiricism and positivism of his British forerunners. Furthermore, while Collingwood aims to show that Russell, More, Cook Wilson, and Pritchard share more with Bradley than they realize, Collingwood also charges them with not following Bradley's more idealistic doctrines regarding the necessity of seeing truth and reality as matters of degree.

Reassessing "the School of Green"

The increasing importance of history and the declining importance of transcendentalism in Collingwood's thought is most obvious in *An Essay on Metaphysics*, which Collingwood wrote while sailing the Dutch East Indies after suffering his second stroke. While he failed to convince reviewers to accept the main thesis of the book—that metaphysics is a historical science—the reception was generally positive. In Susan Stebbing's opinion, it was "the best of Prof. Collingwood's philosophical writings."[258]

Metaphysics, said Collingwood, tends to be misunderstood as leading to "knowledge of a reality which [transcends] the phenomenal world" (EM: 166), quoting the definition given by A. J. Ayer (1910–1989) in the influential *Language, Truth, and Logic* (1936).[259] Ayer, whom we will return to in the following chapter, argued that propositions must be verifiable, and since metaphysical propositions are not, they should be rejected as

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258 L. Susan Stebbing, review of *An Essay on Metaphysics*, by R. G. Collingwood, *Mind* 50:198 (April 1941), 184. See also Aline Lion, review of *An Essay on Metaphysics*, by R. G. Collingwood, *Philosophy* 16:61 (January 1941), 74–78; and C. J. Ducasse review of *An Essay on Metaphysics*, by R. G. Collingwood, *The Philosophical Review* 50:6 (November 1941), 639–641.

259 Alfred Jules Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1936), 16.

nonsensical. Collingwood, whose book can be read as a reply to Ayer's, agreed that metaphysical statements are not verifiable, but claimed that they never were supposed to be, for they are not propositions but *absolute presuppositions*—that is, the implicit assumptions that structure all production of knowledge and which change over time. Hence metaphysics is a historical science, and the metaphysician's task is to make the unexpressed and often unconscious assumptions that structure human thought explicit (EM: 49). The purpose of metaphysics, according to Collingwood, is "the attempt to find out what absolute presuppositions have been made by this or that person or group of persons, on this or that occasion … in the course of this or that piece of thinking" (EM: 47). Becoming aware of the absolute presuppositions of the past may well help us see the "arbitrary character of our own classifications" (EM: 195); in other words, metaphysics opens our eyes to the contingency of history.

According to Collingwood, absolute presuppositions are typically conjoined in "constellations" that change gradually, and their "logical efficacy" depends not on their truth-value, but on their usefulness for science (EM: 32, 66). He exemplifies this with an example from physics: in Newton's universe everything that happened was thought to have a cause, but in modern physics nothing happens because of cause, but according to laws (EM: 50). Newtonian, Kantian, and Einsteinian physics therefore all rely on different constellations of absolute presuppositions; the metaphysician's job is not to determine if any of these are true, only to bring them to light.

A logical positivist like Ayer would run into trouble over the choice between classical physics and quantum physics, says Collingwood, for the two are neither consistent nor verifiable, which means that both are built on different constellations of metaphysical assumptions. Since the logical positivists reject metaphysics because of its unverifiability, they would, consequently and against their intentions, need to reject physics (EM: 259–260). It turns out, then, that metaphysics is a necessary part of science, which is an insight that has escaped Collingwood's realist contemporaries because of their "hatred of 'metaphysics'" (EM: 44). Once we understand this and accept that metaphysics is a historical science, it should also be clear that historical knowledge is fundamental to all thought, which also means that realism must be rejected.

As we have seen, not all variants of realism were rejected by Colling-
wood. He tended to use the label "neo-realism" for the realists he liked the
best: Samuel Alexander and Alfred North Whitehead. In the lectures writ-
ten mainly in 1934 that became the posthumous *The Idea of Nature*,
Collingwood attempts to show that the new realism of Whitehead and
Alexander was a development of Hegel's absolute or objective idealism. In
these lectures, Collingwood again demonstrates his philosophical method
by proceeding historically from the cosmology of ancient Greece to the
Renaissance's mechanistic view of nature to Hegel, who provides a transi-
tion to the modern Darwinian view of nature.

As in his unpublished writings from the late 1910s, *The Idea of Nature*
emphasizes the importance of Hegel's metaphysics of process and becom-
ing, which breaks from the Platonic concern with Being and regards con-
cepts as evolving organisms (IN: 121). Hegel is also said to break with the
subjective idealism of Kant and Berkeley by regarding nature as real and
independent of the human mind, and by embracing an organic view of it.
While Hegel himself did not manage to work out the relation between
philosophy and science, "physical science of to-day has arrived at a view of
matter and energy which so far agrees with the implications of Hegel's
theory of nature" (IN: 127–128). This relation, according to Collingwood,
was worked out by Whitehead—who is credited with being a realist phi-
losopher not obsessed with rejecting idealism (IN: 165)—and Alexander
in their processual metaphysics. Here Collingwood sees the possibility of
bringing about a synthesis between philosophy and modern science, the
key to which is to understand that scientific facts and theories must be
understood historically (IN: 175–177). In *An Autobiography*, Collingwood
again downplays the differences between idealism and the neo-realism of
Whitehead and Alexander, even though he attacks realism more fiercely in
his autobiography than in any other book, primarily because of the realists'
dualistic separation of the knowing subject and the known object. Since
neither Alexander nor Whitehead are said to share this realist assumption,
Collingwood is hesitant to label them neo-realists; instead, he sees their
thought as evidence of the beginning of a fruitful conversation between
idealism and realism (A: 45–46).

We saw above that Collingwood attempted to portray Bradley as belonging to an English philosophical tradition to shield him from being interpreted as a Hegelian. In *An Autobiography*, he does the same with T. H. Green. Collingwood complains of having been classified as an idealist, "which meant a belated survivor of Green's school" (A: 56), but he also says that "idealism" and "Hegelianism" are inappropriate labels for "the school of Green" since it represented "a continuation and criticism of the indigenous English and Scottish philosophies of the middle nineteenth century" (A: 15). The reason leading realists such as Cook Wilson, H. A Prichard, H. W. B. Joseph, and E. F. Carritt did not recognize this continuity was because realism ignores history, which is a major reason behind Collingwood's rejection of realism.

While Bradley is described as "the greatest English philosopher of the nineteenth century" in *An Essay on Metaphysics*, he only figures in *An Autobiography* as a part of "the school of Green" alongside Bernard Bosanquet, William Wallace, and Robert Lewis Nettleship (EM: 162; A: 15). Collingwood downplays the British idealist movement's dominance at the University of Oxford, and claims that its strength lies in training its pupils for public life:

> The school of Green sent out into public life a stream of ex-pupils who carried with them the conviction that philosophy, and in particular the philosophy they had learnt at Oxford, was an important thing, and that their vocation was to put it into practice. This conviction was common to politicians so diverse in their creeds as Asquith and Milner, churchmen like Gore and Scott Holland, social reformers like Arnold Toynbee, and a host of other public men whose names it would be tedious to repeat. Through this effect on the minds of its pupils, the philosophy of Green's school might be found, from about 1880 to about 1910, penetrating and fertilizing every part of the national life (A: 17).

It seems like idealist metaphysics and transcendentalism became less important for Collingwood toward the end of his life, as his interests were directed more at politics and developing a practical conception of philosophy. Collingwood sought to avoid the debate between realism and idealism but, as a firm anti-realist, always seem to end advocating typically

idealist ideas. In his last and only political book, *The New Leviathan* (1942), which we will return to in the following chapter, Collingwood put forward a political philosophy in line with the idealistic liberalism of T. H. Green, and even described the political method he promoted as "dialectical." Indeed, a very idealistic notion.

Collingwood was an anti-realist and a hesitant idealist. Having previously thought of himself as a neo-Hegelian working in the tradition of Croce and Gentile, in the 1930s Collingwood increasingly attempted to distance himself from idealism while simultaneously attacking the contemporary realism of Ayer, More, and Russell. He began insisting on interpreting Bradley and Green as working in a tradition of English philosophy rather than as followers of Kant and Hegel. Yet when Collingwood criticizes the British idealists, it is usually because he thinks that they fail to break away from positivism and realism. He also indicates that the philosophy most compatible with modern biology and modern physics is a continuation of the philosophy of Hegel and Bradley, such as Whitehead's and Alexander's neo-realism, which, according to Collingwood, rejects the realistic separation between subject and object.

History became increasingly important to Collingwood, and he insisted that reality and human nature are historical, that science must be understood in historical terms, and that a rapprochement between history and philosophy is necessary. As we have just seen, he even argued that metaphysics was a historical science, which must be seen as a break with traditional idealist metaphysics. While transcendentalist idealist notions like spirit and the absolute became less important for Collingwood, he was nevertheless very much a part of the idealist tradition, and his main influences were Kant, Hegel, Green, Bradley, Smith, Joachim, Croce, Gentile, and De Ruggiero. Collingwood's firm anti-realism, his ideal of unity of experience, processual metaphysics of becoming, insistence on history being fundamental for all kinds of thought, and his wish to bring about a rapprochement between theory and practice are evidence of idealism's lasting influence on his thought.

Summary

Idealism began circulating in Anglo-America in the 1820s through the influence of British literary romanticism and, a decade later, American transcendentalism. This laid the groundwork for the idealist "boom" in the 1860s and 1870s. Idealism became the dominant philosophical tradition in American universities after the Civil War, and the American *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* became the first professional philosophic journal in English. This thoroughly idealist journal also included contributions by notable British idealists who were often affiliated with the universities in Oxford and Glasgow, where idealism dominated during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. But idealism not only had a significant impact on narrowly philosophical matters, such as logic and metaphysics, but on religious thought, ethics, social politics, and culture at large.

Anglo-American thinkers turned to idealism as a reaction against individualism, utilitarianism, empiricism, and materialism, which were regarded as insufficient tools for responding to the social question and the Victorian crisis of faith. Influenced by Hegelian organicism, the idealists rejected the dualism between the individual and society and regarded humans as essentially social beings. They saw freedom as both negative and positive, and self-realization was viewed as a matter of contributing to the common good. This doctrine was intertwined with the idealist notion of social Christianity, so that religiosity primarily became a matter of contributing to one's community in accordance with the ideals and values of the Bible; this was one aspect of the idealists' attempt to make philosophy practically useful. Rather than engaging in epistemology and formal logic, the idealists wanted philosophy to provide meaning in life and guidance for action, and education and ethics were therefore central aspects of idealist thought.

While I do not want to give the impression that Anglo-American idealism was the most important influence on either Dewey or Collingwood, I do claim that this tradition had a lasting impact on their thought. By emphasizing it, I have aimed to provide Dewey and Collingwood with a common background that explains some of the similarities in their thought. I also hope to have convinced the reader that British and Amer-

ican idealism should not be regarded as two separate traditions. That said, two differences between American and British idealism should be recognized: First, while American intellectuals followed the philosophical developments in Britain, British intellectuals remained largely oblivious to American philosophy and Collingwood largely ignores it. The United States was on the philosophical periphery during the nineteenth century, while Britain had long since been one of the philosophical centers of the world. Second, no American except Josiah Royce made any influential and original contributions to idealist thought, while many British philosophers, from T. H. Green and F. H. Bradley in the 1870s to Oakeshott and Collingwood in the interwar era, did.

As we have seen, Dewey was socialized into idealism, the dominant tradition in the United States, when he began his PhD studies in the early 1880s. Once a convinced Hegelian "absolutist," Dewey soon became increasingly critical of its transcendental, theological, and metaphysical aspects of idealism, and described himself as an "idealist experimentalist" in 1893. He approved of idealism's broad notion of experience and its rejection of the dualism between the experiencing subject and the experienced object, but argued that experience should be grounded in everyday life and not in a transcendental sphere. This is related to his attempt to combine idealism with the modern sciences—most notably, psychology and biology. Dewey wanted to make idealism more practical and socially useful long before he began identifying as an instrumentalist and pragmatist.

Anglo-American idealists like Harris, Davidson, Morris, Green, Bradley, and Caird influenced Dewey's views on ethics, education, and social and political philosophy. While Dewey always tried to develop their doctrines, he continued to recognize the importance of Green's social and political philosophy in the interwar era, and his moral philosophy never substantially diverged from his early idealist ethics. That said, "pragmatism" is a better label for Dewey's philosophy after the turn of the century, although we should recognize the continuity between his early and later thought and the lasting impact of idealism on his thought style.

Collingwood, who was thirty years younger than Dewey, never fell under the spell of Hegelianism to the same extent as Dewey, but never freed himself from it to the extent as Dewey, either. Collingwood was always an

idealist, but sometimes reluctant to identify as such. Unlike Dewey, he began studying philosophy in an environment where idealism and realism coexisted. He regarded his philosophy to be a continuation of German, Italian, and British idealism, but was reluctant to call describe himself as an idealist and sometimes claimed that realism had more in common with idealism than its proponents realized. Nevertheless, Collingwood could never accept the realists' division between subject and object, fact and value, theory and practice, and its unhistorical view of philosophy. Hegelian process metaphysics convinced Collingwood that we live in a world of becoming which must be interpreted dialectically and historically. He was influenced by Croce's views on history and aesthetics, and his political views were in accordance with those of De Ruggiero and Green. Like Dewey, Collingwood became more concerned with making his philosophy practical and grounded in everyday experience rather than in a transcendent realm. He even regarded metaphysics to be a historical discipline. Like most Anglo-American idealists, he thought the value of Christianity lay in its social significance.

Like the idealists, Collingwood and Dewey approached a broad range of cultural fields—such as philosophy, science, aesthetics, ethics, logic, politics, history, and religion—and approached them as interconnected forms of experience rather than (more narrowly) knowledge. Much like Hegel, they thought that philosophical problems should be viewed in their social and historical context. Like T. H. Green and most of the Anglo-American idealists, they were social liberals who rejected atomistic individualism, which they replaced with the notion of the common good and a positive notion of freedom. They also shared the idealist critique of the realists' specialized and professionalized conception of philosophy, which disconnected it from religion, aesthetics, and the world outside the philosophy department. Inspiration from idealism helped them form a conception of philosophy as a broad cultural program and practically-engaged social ideal. We therefore see in Dewey and Collingwood that the idealistic thought style continued to influence philosophy during the first half of the twentieth century. In both their cases, the social, practical, humanistic, and historicist aspects of idealism were kept and developed, while the transcendental, theological, metaphysical, and absolute aspects

were downplayed or even rejected. In the following chapter, we will see that their revisions of idealism must be understood in light of the criticism directed at it in the early twentieth century.

3. Liberal Idealism and the Crisis Imaginary

Idealism's influence began to wane in Britain and the United States after the turn of the century, and by the interwar era, it was in a state of crisis. But the crisis of idealism was only one of many, often intertwined, transatlantic crises. As Reinhart Koselleck notes, the notion of "crisis" became present in a growing number of fields from the late eighteenth century. Following "World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II, cultural critiques and global interpretations with 'crisis' in their titles, have proliferated."[260] While its meaning is ambiguous and often vague, "crisis" signals change and transition (for better or worse). It denotes a mood and a situation and is a call for decision, choice, and action.[261] To address a phenomenon as a crisis can therefore be a rhetorical strategy meant to stress the importance of one's concern, or simply a general expression of worry and uncertainty. Although there was no general agreement as to what the crisis during the period of present concern consisted of, it functioned as an unstructured background feature of social existence that warrants speaking in terms of a general *crisis imaginary*. Although few intellectuals developed coherent theories of the crisis, it shaped people's expectations about the future and provided "that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy."[262]

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260 Reinhart Koselleck, "Crisis," trans. Michaela Richter, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67:2 (2006), 397.

261 Ibid., 358, 399.

262 Here I draw on Charles Taylor's notion of "social imaginaries"; see Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2004), 23.

In this chapter, the notion of crisis will be used as an analytical nodal point for identifying the basic social, political, and philosophical struggles of the era. The aim is to show what the crisis of idealism consisted of and to give an account of Dewey's and Collingwood's respective *crisis imaginaries*, which will help us understand which problems their philosophies were intended to solve.

First, I will provide a brief account of the general crisis imaginary in Europe and North America during, roughly, 1870–1945. Here I am loosely inspired by the methods of conceptual history advocated by Koselleck and others.[263] This perspective highlights the fact that crisis and its partner concepts were popular and ambiguous notions that were central in contemporary cultural and existential debates. The purpose of this section is to show that the philosophical and sociopolitical aspects of the crisis were often regarded as intertwined, and that there was widespread agreement that new forms of thought and practices were needed to tackle the threats and problems of the time. While many intellectuals regarded forms of thought such as idealism and liberalism to be outdated, others sought to renew them in light of contemporary challenges.

The close relation between the political and philosophical aspects of the crisis will become obvious as we turn to the specter of "Prussianism," the anti-German sentiment that haunted the imagination of Anglo-Americans in the wake of World War I. We will see that idealism's crisis lies very much in its association with German forms of thought and that even Collingwood and Dewey raised some criticisms of German idealism by the time of the war. Unlike more hostile critics they did, however, not regard the liberal Anglo-American idealists to be infected with authoritarianism and militarism, which was a common charge even though idealism had provided Anglo-American thinkers with tools to push liberalism in a more collectivistic direction. As a result, the social liberal tradition had to split

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263 For introductions to conceptual history, see Jan Ifversen, "About Key Concepts and How to Study Them," *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 6:1 (June 2011), 65–88; Reinhart Koselleck, "Introduction and Prefaces to the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*," trans. Michaela Richter, *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 6:1 (June 2011), 1–37; and idem., "*Begriffsgeschichte* and Social History," in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2004).

with idealism because of the accusations against it of Prussianism. This did not, however, save liberalism, which was widely regarded to be in a state of crisis itself. We will compare the collapses of British "new liberalism" and American progressivism, and see how Dewey and Collingwood responded to the crisis of liberalism in their national contexts. One interesting similarity is that, as different as their political philosophies were, both conceived liberalism as a political method not unlike their philosophical methods, which will be studied in Chapter 5.

After considering the crisis of liberalism, we turn to the crisis of idealism, where I will show that it was not merely the German connection and accusations of Prussianism that led to its decline. Many regarded the theological and metaphysical aspects of idealism as incompatible with modern science, and the synthetic idealist thought style was not in accord with the increasing professionalization and specialization of the time. Idealism became the target of philosophical schools that nowadays tend to be included under the umbrella term "analytical philosophy": the Cambridge philosophy of "analysis" advanced primarily by G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell; the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle and A. J. Ayer; and the "new realism" and "critical realism" promoted by American philosophers. The analysts were united in their attempt to make philosophy more scientifically rigorous. Their main interests were formal logic, epistemology, and language analysis, and their purpose was to provide a secure ground for knowledge, which seemed called for in a time of relativism and uncertainty.

While Dewey abandoned idealism for pragmatism and Collingwood was hesitant to identify as an idealist, neither of them abandoned the idealist thought style. They understood the problems of philosophy rather differently than the analysts, as we will see when we conclude the chapter by turning to their respective crisis imaginaries. The aim of this, the most contextual chapter, then, is to show what challenges the Anglo-American idealist tradition faced, how Dewey and Collingwood understood the crises of the era, and how their interpretation differed from that of idealism's critics. This should help us understand Dewey's and Collingwood's philosophical struggles, their quests for unity, and why they came to revise or reject certain aspects of the idealist tradition.

The Crisis Imaginary

It has been common—both among those who lived during the period and in historical accounts—to refer to the era from the last decades of the nineteenth century to World War II, especially the interwar era, in terms of crisis and other related concepts, indicating that the Western world was meeting a new set of problems and undergoing radical changes. E. H. Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939*, published at the outbreak of World War II, viewed the failure of the Paris Peace Conference and the lack of a science of international relations as key features of the crisis. Like many others, Carr regarded the political and philosophical aspects of the crisis to be interconnected:

> The breakdown of the post-War utopia is too overwhelming to be explained merely in terms of individual action or inaction. Its downfall involves the bankruptcy of the postulates on which it is based. The foundations of nineteenth-century belief are themselves under suspicion. It may be not that men have stupidly or wickedly failed to apply right principles, but that the principles themselves were false or inapplicable. It may turn out to be untrue that if men reason rightly about international politics they also act rightly, or that right reasoning about one's own or one's nation's interests is the road to an international paradise. If the assumptions of nineteenth century liberalism are in fact untenable, it need not surprise us that the utopia of post-War international theorists has made so little impression on reality.[264]

Here Carr situates the origins of the crisis in a longer historical narrative by pointing to the need to rethink the values and ideals of the Enlightenment and the liberalism it birthed. This, we will see, was not an uncommon opinion among liberals, Dewey and Collingwood included.

Although the origins, content, and time frame of different crises during the period of this study's concern differ, intellectual historians generally agree that the crisis began before the outbreak of World War I. For exam-

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264 Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1939), 53.

ple, John W. Burrow claims that a "crisis of reason" spread through Europe following the disillusionments of the 1848 revolutions, and Marvin Perry identifies a "crisis of the European mind" that began in the late nineteenth century and accelerated following the war.[265] Perry describes threats of relativism and fragmentation caused by aspects such as a loss of faith, social unrest, and worries following the discovery of the darker and more irrational sides of human nature by Freud, Nietzsche, and Dostoevsky, as central to the crisis imaginary.[266] The many appeals to unity and wholeness during the period should be understood as attempts to propose solutions to these problems, but the suggested cures, of course, differed greatly between German National Socialists, representatives of the conservative right such as Henri Massis, radical leftists like the members of the Frankfurt School, and liberals like Dewey and Collingwood.[267]

While there was disagreement regarding the causes and cures of the crisis, many united behind a vocabulary in which it became increasingly common to speak of a "crisis of civilization" described in terms of "catastrophe," "sickness," and "decline."[268] The latter concept owed its popularity to Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* (1918), but also became a central notion for describing the history of twentieth-century Britain in relation to the fall of its empire and loss of global status.[269] For Germans like Spengler, the crisis was above all a *Kulturkrise*, while the British and French considered it to be a crisis of civilization. Debates regarding the differences between the two concepts were common during the period, as

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265 John Wyon Burrow, *The Crisis of Reason: European Thought, 1848–1914* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2000); Marvin Perry, "The Crisis of the European Mind," in *An Intellectual History of Modern Europe* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993).

266 Perry, *An Intellectual History of Modern Europe*, 452–453.

267 Jan Ifversen, "The Crisis of European Civilization After 1918," in *Ideas of Europe since 1914 the Legacy of the First World War*, eds. Menno Spiering and Michael Wintle (Gordonsville: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 19. On the Frankfurt school's battle against fragmentation of experience, see Jay, *Songs of Experience*, 312–360.

268 Given the medical origins of the concept, it is no surprise that the crisis is often addressed in terms of "disease," "sickness," and "diagnosis"; see Koselleck, "Crisis," 360, 370.

269 Ifversen, "The Crisis of European Civilization After 1918," 14, 17. For a critical discussion of British "declinism" as an ideology, see Jim Tomlinson, *The Politics of Decline: Understanding Post-War Britain* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000), 1–6.

"civilization" came to stand for the material, technological and external side of modernity, including democratic institutions, while "culture" was associated with the internal and spiritual side, religion, art, and ethics. These issues were addressed in works like Paul Valery's *The Crisis of the Mind* (1924), which stated that though European civilization was spreading, its core (culture) was being diffused because an "intellectual crisis" and "disorder of mind" plagued contemporary Europe.[270]

The need for new forms of thought and practices can be seen in the growing impression that the two dominant philosophical traditions of the nineteenth century, positivism and idealism, were outdated by the 1890s. Stuart Hughes has described prominent continental thinkers of the period, such as Croce, Freud, and Weber, as belonging to a generation that "shared a wider experience of psychological malaise: the sense of impending doom, of old practices and institutions no longer confirming to social realities… The sense of the demise of an old society, coupled with an agonizing uncertainty as to what the forms of the new society might prove to be."[271]

Like Ifversen and Perry, Hughes predominantly describes the crisis as a continental European concern, but intellectuals in the anglophone world addressed similar issues.[272] The Victorian era had ended in Britain and the United States, and its culture, values, and ideals was replaced by a culture of modernism. A strong sense of civilizational decline and pessimism had infected Britain by the time of World War I, as illustrated by the increasing use of the word "crisis" in the British Parliament during the period: "crisis" was used nearly three times as often during the 1910s as in the preceding

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270 Ifversen, "The Crisis of European Civilization After 1918," 15–16. For more examples of pessimistic views expressed by intellectuals and artists during the interwar era, see Perry, *An Intellectual History of Modern Europe*, 409–412.

271 H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 13–14.

272 *Modernist Impulses in the Human Sciences, 1870–1930,* edited by Dorothy Ross shows that these issues indeed were transatlantic. Ross discusses Hughes book in relation to the notion of "modernism"—a word not used by Hughes himself—and argues that the development of "modernist" social and human sciences during the turn of the century must be understood in relation the widespread crisis consciousness of the era. See, Ross, "Introduction: Modernism Reconsidered," in *Modernist Impulses in the Human Sciences, 1870–1930,* ed. Ross (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1994), 1–15.

decade, and in the 1930s it was used more than twice as much as in the 1910s.[273] Richard Overy notes that the common British perception of civilizational crisis was often addressed using dramatic rhetoric, and fears were often exaggerated: "there were few areas of intellectual endeavour, artistic, literary, scientific, philosophical, that were not affected in some form or other by the prevailing paradigms of impending decline and collapse" in interwar Britain.[274] Dystopic notions spread through public lectures, pamphlets, the popular press, and, of course, in novels—Aldous Huxley's dystopic classic *Brave New World* (1932) being a paradigmatic example. Huxley portrays a world plagued by hedonism and cheap entertainment, which were commonly regarded as threats (by Collingwood, among others), as well as anxieties surrounding the perceived decline in morality and religiosity, free market capitalism, the threat of another war, and the racist fears expressed by advocates of eugenics.

While the notion of crisis was strongest in Europe, it also affected the United States, where it can be detected in, for example, the broad anti-modernist cultural movement of the late nineteenth century.[275] As new modes of communication and transportation—such as the telegraph, railroads, and steamships—connected the world, it seemed increasingly as though the fates of Europe and the United States were intertwined. Marc Stears has captured the spirit of Anglo-American interconnectedness in the early twentieth century well:

> In such an age, the *Manchester Guardian* dramatically declared, "space has been eliminated" and "frontiers no longer exist." After generations of expecting that the course of political development would be sharply different in the New World than in the Old, activists and intellectuals now began

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273 In the 1900s, "crisis" was used 831 times; in the 1910s, 2,571 times; in the 1920s, 1,614 times; in the 1930s, 5,825 times; and in the 1940s, 4,578 times. These statistics were retrieved from the Hansard Corpus of the British Parliament, accessed June 24, 2020, https://www.english-corpora.org/hansard/.

274 Richard J. Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain and the Crisis of Civilization* (London: Penguin, 2010), 7, 15. Interestingly, Collingwood explicitly refers to the condition of interwar Britain as "morbid" (SM: 22); he is not, however, mentioned in Overy's book.

275 See T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981).

to believe that the "problems" facing Great Britain and the United States were "essentially the same." In the twentieth century, the *Guardian* argued, "the problems of Great Britain interest every American of good-will who labors for a readjustment in the United States." American reformers themselves confirmed the judgement, contending that "they and their British counterparts were facing a similar enemy and fighting much the same kind of fight for comparable ends."[276]

Transatlantic interconnectedness and the promise of increased cooperation and communication had been met with optimism at the turn of the century, but such sentiments decreased after World War I when the United States chose to opt out of the newly formed League of Nations. Liberal internationalism and the promise of unity beyond national borders decreased in the interwar era, which was one of the factors behind the crisis in liberalism.

The twentieth century began looking like the "American Century" as the American political, economic, military, and cultural presence in Europe increased, while European economies struggled.[277] Things changed, however, when the "Roaring Twenties" ended abruptly following Black Thursday, October 29, 1929. The financial crisis hit fast and hard in the United States: unemployment rates doubled in two months as industrial production shrank, businesses closed, and banks collapsed. The United States could no longer aid the European economies and the financial crisis spread to Europe, where it reinforced already existing problems. These developments caused transatlantic exchanges to come to a halt, and world trade diminished by half between 1929 and 1932. Unemployment rates hovered between 20% and 30% in the United States and most of Europe, with Germany peaking at 44% in the early thirties.[278] An increasing number of people began to consider authoritarianism to be a possible solution, while liberals like Collingwood and Dewey were forced to rethink liberal-

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276 Stears, *Progressives, Pluralists, and the Problems of the State*, 2.

277 Life magazine coined the term "American Century" in 1914. For early twentieth-century European worries about "Americanization," see Mary Nolan, *The Transatlantic Century: Europe and America, 1890–2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2012), 30–36.

278 Ibid., 104–108.

ism in the face of the new sociopolitical situation and the threats from fascism and revolutionary socialism.

The early twentieth-century crisis imaginary included political, economic, social, cultural, and philosophical worries and uncertainties. The world was changing rapidly because of warfare and urgent social problems; technological, scientific, and industrial developments; but also because of large-scale cultural changes as the era of Victorianism and the Enlightenment belief in progress and reason faded away in the transition to a culture of modernism. Trying to understand the problems of the period and providing solutions was, of course, a task all intellectuals had to face. The proposed diagnoses and cures, however, were extremely diverse, and I will primarily focus here on the challenges that faced philosophers working in the liberal Anglo-American idealist tradition.

The Prussian Specter

Before we turn to the post-war challenges facing liberalism and the attacks on idealism as a philosophical doctrine, it is necessary to understand idealism's decline in early twentieth-century Anglo-America in the context of the rejection of German politics and a more general anti-German sentiment that became prevalent after the unification of Germany under Otto von Bismarck in 1871.[279] Critiques of Prussianism or "the German theory of the state," which often were no more than downright rejections of every philosophical or political doctrine associated with Germany, became common around the outbreak of World War I. Following Hitler's attainment of power in 1933, "Hitlerism" became a related notion, although it differed from Prussianism in that it referred to "an actually existing German fascist ideology rather than an artificial and simplified assembly of political the-

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279 While I will limit myself to investigating the philosophical community, it should be noted that anti-German sentiment was culturally widespread. Numerous books on "the image of Germany" have been written; for an overview from the American perspective, see Waldemar Zacharasiewicz, "Introduction: Images of Germany in America," *Images of Germany in American Literature* (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2007), ProQuest Ebook Central. On the relation between Britain and America, see Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism 1860–1914* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1980).

ories."[280] Both terms, however, referred to authoritarianism, militarism, nationalism, anti-liberalism, anti-individualism, and the glorification of the state. The interconnectedness of the political and philosophical sides of the crisis imaginary are rarely as obvious as in the case of Prussianism.

Because of idealism's German background, its proponents were often accused of Prussianism, even though most of the Anglo-American idealists were liberals. But the main targets of attack, of course, were German thinkers, and sometimes all continental philosophy. The usual suspects typically included Hegel, Fichte, Rousseau, Nietzsche, Bernhardi, and von Treitschke.[281] Little effort was made to distinguish between these diverse thinkers, and the tendency was not merely to claim that continental philosophy had troublesome political implications, but that it was inherently aggressive and anti-liberal. This remained a common belief among Anglo-American philosophers even after World War II and was central to establishing the divide between analytical and continental philosophy.[282]

One of the more famous attacks on these aspects of idealist political thought came from Britain's first professor of sociology, the new liberal Leonard Hobhouse. Although he was influenced by the liberal tradition of T. H. Green, Hobhouse was keen to distance himself from its philosophical heritage because post-Kantian romantics and idealists were said to have provided the philosophical justification for the conservative, anti-individualistic and anti-democratic Prussian ideology.[283] Hegel was the

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280 Leonie Holthaus, "Prussianism, Hitlerism, Realism: The German Legacy in British International Thought," in *Radicals and Reactionaries in Twentieth Century International Thought*, ed. Ian Hall (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 132–133, SpringerLink.

281 An example of such an interpretation is the American philosopher George Santayana's *Egotism in German Philosophy* (1915), which traced the egoistic aggressive subjectivism in German thought historically from its Protestant origins via Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and Nietzsche to the present.

282 Thomas L. Akehurst, "The Nazi Tradition: The Analytic Critique of Continental Philosophy in mid-century Britain," *History of European Ideas* 34:4 (2008), 548–557.

283 Another well-known new liberal, John A. Hobson, criticized German idealism on similar grounds, claiming that Hegel in particular had been responsible for the militant and nationalistic Prussian "absolute" state without any "real obligations either of law or humanity to other States." Hobson also thought that the German theory of the state had influenced British imperialism and warfare through the "misty metaphysics" of the "neo-Hegelians in Oxford and elsewhere." Hobson, *Democracy after the War* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1917), 114, 117, 118, https://archive.org/details/democracyafterwa00hobsuoft.

main villain, since "all the essentials of a brutal, autocratic, militant, un-
scrupulous nationalism" and "the germ of the colossal suffering of Europe"
could be found in his philosophy.[284] British liberals therefore needed to
distance themselves from Hegelian idealism, which had "permeated the
British World, discrediting the principles upon which liberal progress has
been founded" and even managed to "captivate" the thought of a liberal
humanist like Green.[285]

The primary target of Hobhouse's critique was not Hegel, however, but
the "most modern and most faithful exponent" of the Hegelian "metaphys-
ical theory of the state": the British idealist Bernard Bosanquet.[286] Hob-
house claimed that Hegel's metaphysical theory of the state meant to prove
that society, in its actuality and particularity, was exactly what it ideally
should be. The refusal to make a distinction between the ideal and the ac-
tual made Hegelians picture society as "the incarnation of something very
great and glorious indeed, as one expression of that supreme being which
some of these thinkers call the Spirit and others the Absolute." Hobhouse
thought this view unscientific, for it is not clear which methodology is used
to reach these abstract principles, and unethical, since it implies a defense
of the existing evils of society. The metaphysical theory of the state was
furthermore problematic because it rejected individual reason and action,
and made any "efforts to improve life and remedy wrong fade away into a
passive acquiescence in things as they are; or, still worse, into a slavish ad-
ulation of the Absolute in whose hands we are mere pawns."[287]

Hobhouse found "the sum and substance of Idealist Social Philosophy"
in Bosanquet's notion of a common self, which does not refer to a com-
munity of individuals, but "a higher unity" that dissolves any distinction
between individuals, as well as between the state and the individual. The
result of this is that "in conforming to the law, we are submitting ourselves

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284 Leonard T. Hobhouse, *Questions of War and Peace* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1916),
20, https://archive.org/details/questionsofwarpoohobh; idem., *The Metaphysical Theory of
the State: A Criticism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1918), 102.

285 Hobhouse, *The Metaphysical Theory of the State*, 24.

286 Ibid., 18. Hobhouse, however, did not use the term Prussianism, but another related
term, "international anarchy." On the relation between Prussianism, international anar-
chy, and Hitlerism, see Holthaus, "Prussianism, Hitlerism, Realism," 132–133.

287 Hobhouse, *The Metaphysical Theory of the State*, 18–19.

neither to other persons nor to something impersonal. We are conforming to our own real will."[288] Freedom for Hegel and Bosanquet, therefore, is indistinguishable from law and right. Our "real will" is also the "general will," which is embodied in the state; this, according to Hobhouse, is the essence of the metaphysical theory of the state.[289] He believed that in the hands of idealism, liberalism was turned into a conservative defense of the status quo rather than a progressive force.

Bosanquet was surprisingly unwilling to engage in dialogue with Hobhouse or any other critic in later editions of *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, which appeared shortly after World War I and included an expanded introduction under the title "How the Theory Stands in 1919." Nor did Bosanquet address the issue of Prussianism. He did, however, stress that states have moral obligations to each other, and should be thought of as "units in a world-wide co-operation."[290] Like Muirhead, Edward Caird, and other idealists, Bosanquet had opposed the Boer War, and the 1919 edition of his book emphasized that war was nothing but a result of malfunctioning states.[291] Obviously, Bosanquet did not intend to support the warfare and militarism that was said to be the implication of his theory of the state.

In addition to Hobhouse, British philosophers like Bertrand Russell, C. E. M. Joad, and E. F. Carritt also attacked Hegelian idealism. Most of their colleagues followed them but, according to Thomas Akehurst, hardly any of the analysts justified their views since the blameworthiness of the continental thinkers seemed so obvious that "a case did not need to be made. Instead, belief in the crimes of foreign thought passed quietly into orthodoxy."[292] But there were, of course, idealist philosophers who reacted against the anti-idealist trend and the description of Hegel as a national-

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288 Ibid., 41.

289 Ibid., 71.

290 Bernard Bosanquet, *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, 4th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1958 [1923]), xlviii.

291 Ibid., xlvii–l; Den Otter, *British Idealism and Social Explanation*, 174.

292 Akehurst, "The Nazi Tradition," 551.

istic conservative who paved the way for both fascism and Nazism, as well as authoritarian communism via Marx.[293]

In 1940, there was an exchange in *Philosophy* between Collingwood's former student and friend, T. M. Knox, professor of Moral Philosophy at St Andrews University, and Oxford realist E. F. Carritt—Collingwood's former teacher—on the topic of "Hegel and Prussianism." Knox, who initiated the debate, opened his article by complaining that the effort to nuance the debate regarding the connection between Hegelianism and National Socialism by fellow idealists like Muirhead had been largely ignored by Carritt and others.[294] Knox thought the accusations against Hegel as a servant of the Prussian state and an exponent of Prussianism were unjustified, and aimed to show both that Hegel's political philosophy had developed before he moved to Prussia, and that he may have been forced to make some compromises in the *Philosophy of Right* that obscured his views due to Prussian censorship laws. Furthermore, Knox, who had translated the *Philosophy of Right*, criticized readings of Hegel that accused him of defending the suppression of individual freedoms, glorifying war, holding the view that "might is right," and reducing the individual to a means for the ends of the state.[295]

Carritt thought the criticism Knox directed at him and others was fair on a few points, but mostly misdirected. Carritt's article ends in a curious manner by quoting several other philosophers who had associated Hegel with Prussianism. The fact that Hegel previously had been associated with Prussianism was, according Carritt, proof that Hegel was a totalitarian

> in the sense that he thinks might indicates right; that he defends the suppression of free-speech and the subordination of conscience to law and tradition; that he thinks war necessary and the attempt to abolish it silly;

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293 Fascism and Nazism are often referred to interchangeably in this debate, even though it is generally German politics and philosophy that are under discussion; see Akehurst, "The Nazi Tradition," 552. Very little, however, is said about Italy and Italian idealism, although Croce's and (later and to a lesser extent) De Ruggiero's philosophy and liberal political views were known in Britain at the time.

294 T. M. Knox, "Hegel and Prussianism," *Philosophy* 15:57 (January 1940), 51. For J. H. Muirhead's defense of idealism, see his *German Philosophy and the War* (Oxford, 1915).

295 Knox, "Hegel and Prussianism," 59.

> that he believes the state to have some other justification than the welfare
> of its members or the enforcement of justice, but to have no duties to
> other states.[296]

However, the idealists Green, Bosanquet and Ritchie, who are among the
philosophers Carritt builds his interpretation on, would not, as Knox re-
marks in his reply, have agreed with Carritt's characterization of Hegel as
a totalitarian.[297] Most remarkable about the exchange between Knox and
Carritt is, however, that it was ignored by other anti-Hegelian philoso-
phers, who continued to regard him as proto-totalitarian and to read him
without taking Hegel's context of and the inconsistencies in his thought
pointed to by Knox into account.[298]

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The association of idealism, especially in its Hegelian form, with German
militarism and authoritarianism made it harder to defend any aspect of
idealist philosophy, which partly explains Collingwood's hesitant relation
to idealism. In a 1919 address to Belgian students, Collingwood spoke of
World War I, Prussianism, and imperialism. He made a distinction be-
tween two kinds of imperialism: "right" and "false." The former, which
advocated "the rule of the more civilized over the less civilized," was "a
necessary element in the education of mankind," since it was the civilized
nations' task "to civilize the world." Collingwood claimed that it was
through the means of "right imperialism" that Rome had civilized Britain,
which in turn was in the process of civilizing Africa and Asia. A nation was
never justified, however, in imposing its civilization on another civilized
people, as that would be "false and evil imperialism," which was essential-
ly the Prussian theory of the state, and had been the "immediate" cause of

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296 E. F. Carritt, "Hegel and Prussianism," *Philosophy* 15:58 (April 1940), 196.

297 Knox, "Hegel and Prussianism," in *Philosophy* 15:59 (July 1940), 313–317. See also
Carritt's response, which marks the end of the debate in the same number, and the brief
exchange between Knox and J. A. Spender on the same theme in the previous issue of
Philosophy.

298 On this point, see Akehurst, "The Nazi Tradition," 554.

the war.[299] Collingwood, like Hobhouse, thought Prussianism glorified war and made the state a God with absolute rights and power, but no obligations or responsibilities.[300]

While Collingwood agrees that Hegel was first to express the Prussian theory of the state, he also thinks "Hegel was too great a thinker to believe in it entirely, and in his system it appears rather as an irrational excrescence than as an integral part."[301] According to Collingwood, the true exponents of Prussianism are rather to be found in Nietzsche's will to power and, before him, in the pessimistic philosophy of Schopenhauer and von Hartmann (other exponents include Marx, Lenin and Bernhardi).[302]

Collingwood emphasizes that Prussianism lived on in authoritarian ideologies after the end of World War I, but while he continued to battle authoritarian ideologies, I have not found any references to Prussianism in his work after the 1919 address. He did, however, criticize Hegel again for regarding war as "the highest function" and the "true end of the state and the means both of moral regeneration and political progress"; this, Collingwood claimed, was the view that had influenced the preference for class war among revolutionary socialists.[303]

In his last and only book-length work on politics, *The New Leviathan*, written shortly after the outbreak of World War II, Collingwood pictured the war as a battle between civilization and barbarism. We should understand this work in the context of the common belief in 1930s Britain that the natural, social, and human sciences had failed to explain the causes of

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299 R. G. Collingwood, "The Prussian Philosophy," in *Essays in Political Philosophy*, 201. The original title of the address was "The Spiritual Basis of Reconstruction."

300 Collingwood returned to this topic in less imperialistic terms in *The New Leviathan*, where he nonetheless said that those who are "not yet capable of ruling and therefore not yet able to rule themselves … must be ruled without their consent by those who are capable of it" (NL: 27.13). But the rulers must remember that the ruled are "in training to become rulers," and therefore the ruling of non-social communities must not become a form of exploitation (NL: 27.34).

301 Collingwood, "The Prussian Philosophy," 202.

302 Ibid., 203.

303 Collingwood, "Man Goes Mad," in *The Philosophy of Enchantment: Studies in Folktale, Cultural Criticism, and Anthropology*, eds. David Boucher, Wendy James, and Philip Smallwood (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 315–316.

war and its related social problems.[304] An increasing number of scientists rose to the challenge, and their explanations typically related war to capitalism, imperialism, or the primitive sides of human nature—aspects which *The New Leviathan* touches upon. Collingwood's portrayal of Nazi Germany as a new kind of barbarism and a threat to civilization also followed a trope that had been common in Britain since the early 1930s, and was employed by Albert Einstein, among others.[305]

The explicit purpose of *The New Leviathan* was to show the defenders of civilization what they were fighting for and what the barbaric threat of primarily Nazism consisted of (NL: lx). According to Collingwood, the barbarism that threatens civilization is based on herd-worship or state-worship, autocracy, lies, national vanity, envy, greed, and rule by force (NL: 33.35, 33.75, 45.44). He claims that a reason behind the present German barbarism is that Prussians have misunderstood the tradition of "classical politics" established by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, and mistaken the artificial state for a natural fact (NL: 31.2); this led Hegel to regard the state as divine (NL: 33.42). Here Collingwood finds the seed of "herd-worship," which he believes lived on in Marx and, contrary to his intentions, in Nietzsche's will to power (NL: 33.7–33.77). This, then, explains the background to the barbarism of Nazi Germany and its authoritarian anti-liberalism, nationalism, and glorification of violence.

While Collingwood describes the German method of politics as opposite to the liberal and democratic, he nevertheless describes the latter as "dialectical," indicating a relation to Hegel, Plato, and Marx. Collingwood credits Hegel with reviving Plato's notion of dialectics, although he says Hegel failed to understand that while the dialectical method is appropriate in debates, it cannot explain the relation between "things," and is not appropriate for understanding history (NL: 33.83–33.89). Marx, on the other hand, is said to have fundamentally misunderstood the original Platonic

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304 Overy, *The Morbid Age,* 186–187. In addition to the contemporary barbarism of Germany, Collingwood describes historical forms of barbarism represented by the Saracens, the "Albigensian Heresy," and the Turks. Some rather ignorant Islamophobic remarks appear in these sections, although Collingwood claims that the Turks eventually became "friends of civilization" (NL: 44.87).

305 Ibid., 272, 280.

meaning of dialectic as "a peaceful, friendly discussion in which the disputants aim at agreement, as opposed to a discussion embittered or rendered warlike by their aiming at victory" (NL: 33.81). This latter is the "eristical" method, which Collingwood describes as characteristic of anti-civilized barbarism (NL: 36.82–36.94); in contrast, the dialectical method is the method of liberalism, and requires a willingness to adjust and change one's beliefs in the light of new facts and arguments. It demands that the parts in a conflict or debate put their individual goals aside and participate in a discussion regarding the "joint will," common good, and the welfare of society (NL: 28.16–28.18).[306] Here we see how Collingwood's use of the British idealists' notion of the common good helps him reinterpret the dialectics of Plato and Hegel in a liberal and democratic framework. While Collingwood was by no means an uncritical follower of idealism, and apparently thought Hegel had influenced twentieth-century authoritarianism, but was nevertheless able to find seeds of liberalism in Hegel's political philosophy and sought, instead of rejecting it, to revise and develop it in a more democratic and progressive direction.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Like Collingwood, Dewey only refers to Prussianism a few times, mainly around the time of World War I.[307] He describes it as a form of "social absolutism" and, as we know, absolutism and other transcendental aspects of idealism were something Dewey distanced himself from around the turn of the century. In contrast to Hobhouse, for example, Dewey did not accuse the British idealists of being apologists for Prussianism, but argues that they turned idealism into something other than it had been in Germany (he says nothing about their American counterparts). On the positive side, this change made idealism vital and useful; on the negative, it

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306 R. G. Collingwood, "The Breakdown of Liberalism," (n.d. c.1928), Dep. Collingwood, 24/7, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

307 Dewey mainly criticizes the political implications of idealism in *German Philosophy and Politics* (MW 8); but see also, "On Understanding the Mind of Germany" (MW 10: 216–233); "Social Absolutism" (MW 13: 311–316); and Dewey's review of Santayana's *Egotism in German Philosophy*, "The Tragedy of the German Soul" (MW 10: 305–309).

ignored the social context of German idealism and the continuity between early nineteenth-century idealism and early twentieth-century Prussianism. As a consequence, the "German Mind" was misunderstood, and Britain was therefore unprepared for the war (MW 10: 224–225).

Dewey's main attack on *German Philosophy and Politics* (1915) sought to provide an "illustration of the mutual relationship of philosophy and practical social affairs" (MW 8: 144). The chief argument is that when philosophies privilege the absolute, the rational, and transcendental over practice and experience, this could lead to nationalism, the "cult of race" and the notion of the State as a "God on earth" (MW 8: 187, 193).[308] Philosophical absolutism may, in other words, lead to social absolutism.

German Philosophy and Politics is a curious example of anti-German sentiment, as it places the blame for Prussianism on "that notorious warmonger, Immanuel Kant, the author of *Perpetual Peace*," as Robert Westbrook sarcastically remarks.[309] Dewey called out Kant's dualism between the natural world of facts (noumena) and the world of moral duty (phenomena), claiming that by separating these worlds, Kant privileged the abstract world of "pure" thought over the actual and contemporary problems of human life. By making the distinction between the a priori and a posteriori and privileging the former, Kant took the side of rationalism over empiricism (MW 8: 158–159). This, argued Dewey, was dangerous, for unlike empirical truths, what is said to be proved by rationality is not up for revision and discussion, and hence leads to dogmatism. Kantian philosophy made the Germans more anti-pragmatic than any other people (MW 8: 152).

Dewey also accused post-Kantian philosophers—notably Fichte and Hegel—of having turned the German state into a mystical and "supreme moral entity" whose fate was seen as the end of history and a realization of the absolute (MW 8: 172). It was therefore necessary for philosophers to aban-

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308 The problem is absolutism and not the fact that God is brought into the realm of politics. Dewey had previously spoken of the creation of "the kingdom of God on earth" as a social ideal (EW 3: 32), and he was to return to the importance of religion as a social force in *A Common Faith* (1934). The religiosity Dewey defended was, however, a social Christianity independent of religious institutions and freed from (absolutistic) supernaturalism.

309 Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, 198.

don the idea of the absolute, which was not compatible with an experimental and pragmatic approach to philosophy. "The situation," wrote Dewey,

> puts in relief what finally is at issue between a theory which is pinned to a belief in an Absolute beyond history and behind experience, and one which is frankly experimental. For any philosophy which is not consistently experimental will always traffic in absolutes no matter in how disguised a form. In German political philosophy, the traffic is without mask (MW 8: 182).

In reviewing *German Philosophy and Politics*, Frank Thilly of Cornell University remarked that Dewey was unfair to Kant and questioned his simplified historical account, which led from the Kantian dualism between noumena and phenomena to contemporary nationalism. Thilly remarked that idealism could not be blamed for contemporary Germany's "exaggerated nationalism, any more than we can hold Christianity responsible for the notion that God is at heart a German and the faithful assistant of the German war department."[310] And was it, in fact, not Germany that, because of the intimate relation between philosophy and politics that was "the most pragmatist nation in the world today," suggested Thilly.[311]

Dewey ignored such criticisms. In his foreword to the new (unrevised) edition, written after the outbreak of World War II, he claimed that Hitler, without having studied Hegel, Fichte, or Kant, shared their separation of rationality and understanding (*Vernunft* and *Verstand*) and privileged the former, which had led to a belief in the "intrinsic superiority of the German people and its predestined right to determine the destiny of other nations" (MW 8: 421). Once again, Dewey emphasized that the cure consisted of "reflection, inquiry, observation and experimentation to test ideas and theories"—in other words, pragmatism (MW 8: 441).

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310 Frank Thilly, review of *German Philosophy and Politics*, by John Dewey, *The Philosophical Review* 24:5 (September 1915), 544.

311 Ibid., 545.

German Philosophy and Politics strikes one as highly speculative and lacks exactly the kind of empirically and contextually grounded thinking that Dewey himself advises.[312] It provides us, however, with some proof to why Dewey "drifted away" from idealism, as he himself described it (LW 5: 154). The fact that he blames Kant rather than Hegel is probably because Dewey believed that dualisms was the chief problem of modern philosophy, and Hegel was the philosopher who more than anyone had convinced Dewey of the necessity to break down dualisms and provided him with a formula to do so. To the extent that Dewey criticizes Hegel in *German Philosophy and Politics*, it is because of his view of history and his notion of the absolute, which Dewey finds dogmatic.

The Crisis of Liberalism

Idealism helped British and American nineteenth-century philosophers develop a more collectivistic social philosophy than was found in earlier liberal thought. But as we saw in the previous section, it became increasingly difficult to defend social liberalism with idealistic philosophy. British new liberals like J. A. Hobson and L. T Hobhouse and, in the United States, primarily John Dewey, could however continue to build on the liberal tradition of T. H. Green while simultaneously rejecting idealistic political philosophy. This did not, however, solve all problems for liberalism, which was facing great challenges by the outbreak of World War I. Eric Hobsbawm even describes "the fall of liberalism" as one of the characteristics of the period from 1914 to 1945, which he calls the "Age of Catastrophe." "Of all the developments in the Age of Catastrophe," writes Hobsbawm,

> survivors from the nineteenth century were perhaps most shocked by the
> collapse of the values and institutions of the liberal civilization whose

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312 James Good remarks: "Although warmly received at the time, many Dewey scholars are now embarrassed by the book because it seems to fit neatly into the genre of ill-conceived works published by Anglo-American authors who attempted to demonstrate a substantial connection between German militarism and German philosophy." Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity*, 239.

progress their century had taken for granted, at any rate in "advanced" and "advancing" parts of the world. These values were a distrust of dictatorship and absolute rule; a commitment to constitutional government with or under freely elected governments and representative assemblies, which guaranteed the rule of law; and an accepted set of citizens' rights and liberties, including freedom of speech, publication and assembly. State and society should be informed by the values of reason, public debate, education, science and the improvability (though not necessarily the perfectibility) of the human condition. These values, it seemed clear, had made progress throughout the century, and were destined to advance further.[313]

Liberal values and institutions and parliamentary democracy were on the retreat in most European countries during the interwar era. The threat came predominantly from the right, although it was recognized that leftist radicals, who regarded the interwar crisis as a proof of "the final agony of the capitalist system," also posed a threat to the liberal social order.[314] Authoritarians from both the left and right agreed that liberal democracy was an inefficient way of governing in a time of severe crisis. The crisis of liberalism should therefore be understood in relation to the increasing appeal of authoritarian ideologies and the decline of faith in the democratic system, though it also involved tensions between two different factions of liberals— one more progressive, collectivistic, ethical, and organic, and the other more concerned with capitalism, competition, individualism, and economic management. The former faction was comprised by idealist social liberal T. H. Green and his followers (Collingwood, included), later British non-idealistic new liberals, and American progressives like Dewey. This version of liberalism is also represented by the Italian idealist Guido De Ruggiero's *The History of European Liberalism*, which was translated into English by Collingwood in 1927. Significantly, De Ruggiero's book contains a section on "The Crisis of Liberalism," where he claims that "the new imperialistic attitude" of European states poses a threat against the "liberal spirit" and that increasing polarization between classes is threaten-

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313 Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991* (London: Joseph, 1994), 109–110.

314 Ibid., 123, 136.

ing universalism; he therefore rejects class politics. De Ruggiero holds that authoritarianism practiced both by states and in industry is threatening individualism, but rejects laissez-faire capitalism and atomistic individualism, since he finds the tendency among liberals to work for private gain rather than the public good to be a threat to progressivism.[315]

These are fundamental features of the liberal tradition Collingwood and Dewey were a part of. Collingwood wrote to De Ruggiero that he shared his political views, but worried that De Ruggiero's "idealistic liberalism" would find "few favourable readers" in England because of the similarities to T. H. Green, who was out of fashion in the interwar era.[316] This was certainly true. As we have seen, organic and social liberalism was a response to the "social question" and problems that by no means were resolved by the turn of the century. Idealist liberals held that individual self-realization and the realization of the common good were interrelated, but the emphasis on harmony and social unity caused social liberals to downplay conflicts between nations, classes, races, and the sexes, which were conflicts that in retrospect appear hard to overlook in the early twentieth century. Navigating between socialism and individualistic-capitalistic laissez-faire liberalism, while simultaneously having to distance themselves from their idealistic philosophical roots because of associations with Prussianism was the challenge Anglo-American social liberals faced in the early twentieth century.

Collingwood and the Crisis of British New Liberalism

The notion of a crisis in liberalism was a common trope in Britain in the early twentieth century, and can be seen in titles like John Hobson's *The Crisis in Liberalism* (1909), the liberal journalist Elliott Dodds's *Is Liberalism Dead?* (1920), and George Dangerfield's *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1935). The British crisis of liberalism was connected to the fall of the Liberal Party. There has been some disagreement regarding exactly what the causes were behind its fall and exactly when it took place, but the

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315 Guido De Ruggiero, *The History of European Liberalism*, trans. R. G. Collingwood (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1927), 416, 422–423, 425.

316 R. G. Collingwood to Guido De Ruggiero, November 18, 1926, and 4 October, 1927, Dep. Collingwood, 26, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

evidence is clear: 49% of voters supported the Liberal Party in 1906, but only 17.6% in 1924. During the same period, the new social democratic Labour Party attracted an increasing number of voters.[317]

According to J. A. Hobson, British liberals were divided by internal conflicts, especially concerning Irish home rule.[318] William Gladstone, who assumed the leadership of the Liberal Party after Joseph Chamberlain in 1868, supported home rule and called a parliamentary vote on the Government of Ireland Bill (popularly known as the First Home Rule Bill) in 1886. Chamberlain and many Liberals voted against it. The bill was not passed and Gladstone dissolved the government, leading to a split in the Liberal Party as Chamberlain and others left to form the Liberal Unionist Party and join ranks with the Conservatives, who won the following election.[319] Gladstone did, however, draft another Home Rule Bill after he became prime minister again in 1892; this second bill was vetoed by the House of Lords in 1893, and Gladstone resigned shortly thereafter.[320]

Besides home rule and other matters related to imperialism and the status of the British Empire, the problem of British liberalism in the late nineteenth century, according to Hobson, was its failure to "formulate an organic policy of social reform."[321] The dominant laissez-faire doctrines in liberal thought failed to address the problem of poverty and the conflicts between labor and capital. "The real crisis of Liberalism," said Hobson, "lies… in the intellectual and moral ability to accept and execute a positive progressive policy which involves a new conception of the functions of the State."[322] Like previous idealist liberals, Hobson thought the state could facilitate individual freedom. While the Liberal Party did enact several

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317 Keith Laybourn, "The Rise of Labour and the Decline of Liberalism: The State of the Debate," *History* 80:259 (Jun. 1995), 207.

318 John A. Hobson, *The Crisis of Liberalism* (London: P. S. King and Son, 1909), vii, https://archive.org/details/crisisofliberali00hobsuoft.

319 The Unionist Party was dissolved in 1912 when it merged with the conservative Tories.

320 For the history of British liberalism between J. S. Mill's *On Liberty* (1859) and World War II, see Chris Renwick, *Bread for All*. For the idealists' and new liberals' attempt to "reinvent" liberalism and how that effected the Liberal Party and was related to matters such as Irish Home Rule, see especially Chapter 3 "Reinventing Liberalism."

321 Hobson, *The Crisis of Liberalism*, vii.

322 Ibid., xi.

reforms that would shape the British welfare state to come, like the 1908 Old Age Pensions Act and the 1911 National Insurance Act, it has been argued that "the New Liberals ultimately failed to redirect the whole tendency of liberalism away from its traditional channels."[323]

This is a correct description. Keith Laybourn has argued that after 1906, the Liberal Party was no longer regarded as the party of the left. The growing trade unions began to support Labour, which became the party of the working class early in the twentieth century. The process that turned the working class and other progressives from the Liberal Party toward Labour, however, was amplified by internal disputes among the liberal leaders during World War I.[324] After the defeat in the 1914 election, the Liberal Party went into a period of decline, losing its place as the second major party to Labour. According to Michael Freeden, "two decades of ideological crisis for liberalism" followed the war as liberalism in Britain ran "out of intellectual momentum after a long spell of ascendancy."[325] "The Liberal organization has almost ceased to exist. The Liberal attitude, the Liberal habit of mind, has gone out of fashion," stated the progressive newspaper the *Nation* in 1916.[326] This state of affairs was to last throughout the interwar era, which, according to Freeden, was characterized by an "ideological crisis" in British liberalism:

> Political confusion and a crisis of confidence in the national leadership, a social unrest that hinted at a grave underlying malaise, economic instability within two years of the end of the war, and the questioning of moral and ideological principles confronted a liberalism that hardly knew what it was or where it should go. Its organizational vehicle, the Liberal party, had been ravaged by the personal feud between Asquith and Lloyd George, and, for many of its supporters, had irreparably blemished its reputation as the party of peace.[327]

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323 Anthony Arblaster, *The Rise and Decline of Western Liberalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 289.

324 Laybourn, "The Rise of Labour and the Decline of Liberalism," 207–226.

325 Michael Freeden, *Liberalism Divided: A Study in British Political Thought 1914–1939* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 1.

326 Quoted in ibid., 26.

327 Ibid., 1, 45. H. H. Asquith was prime minister from 1908 to 1916. He was succeeded by David Lloyd George, the last Liberal prime minister.

The war and its aftermath changed the problems liberals faced, as optimism about progress and beliefs in human goodness were questioned, and past liberal victories were challenged by authoritarianism. While liberalism and democracy had been thought of as somewhat conflicting ideals for nineteenth-century liberals, "liberal democracy" became a common notion in the interwar era, and for many liberals, it seemed as though liberalism and democracy would stand and fall together.[328] Numerous liberals therefore became equally preoccupied with defending democracy and liberalism. They were also becoming increasingly critical of socialism, which they perceived as dogmatic and authoritarian.

The progressive social liberalism of the idealists and the new liberals had regarded community, welfare, equality, and social justice as it major concerns. In interwar Britain, it lost its place as the dominant form of liberalism to a libertarian or centrist liberalism whose primary concerns included private property, capitalism, security, and individualism. This was a narrower form of liberalism particularly concerned with post-war economic stagnation rather than the social question.[329] Centrist liberalism was more successful in the interwar era, primarily in the 1920s, when the Liberal Summer School was the most important forum for debate. The collectivism and ethical thought of new liberalism was increasingly abandoned as economic management became central. According to Michael Freeden:

> Liberalism appeared to be torn between those who identified themselves with a broad, progressive, communitarian approach and those who were retreating into the more narrow confines of liberal interpretation; but… it was further split—as indeed was the Summer School—between unexciting theorists and capable 'technicians' of liberalism, the latter, [John Maynard] Keynes included, displaying little originality as political thinkers.[330]

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328 In a section named "Liberal Democracy," De Ruggiero speaks of the "synthesis," "original unity," and "the dialectical character" of liberalism and democracy. His must be one of the earliest attempts to define the nowadays common notion of liberal democracy. See De Ruggiero, *History of European Liberalism*, 379.

329 Freeden, *Liberalism Divided*, 12–13.

330 Ibid., 92.

Collingwood clearly belongs to the former group; he sympathizes, as we saw above, with the "idealistic liberalism" of T. H. Green and De Ruggiero, even though he is curiously silent about the new liberals apart from claiming to have supported the "social legislations" of Asquith's Liberal government between 1908 and 1916. While he regarded Asquith as a follower of Green, Collingwood accuses Asquith's successor, Lloyd George, of having had a "corrupting influence" on the public (A: 156). Collingwood was, then, rather critical of the Liberal Party, and regarded himself as a liberal "in the continental sense," which meant something broader than commitment to a specific party.[331] His worry that the idealistic liberalism he supported was in decline can be seen in some of his shorter unpublished manuscripts, one of which is titled "The Breakdown of Liberalism." In these works, Collingwood describes liberalism as an "ethical-political theory" concerned with the common good that rejects the antithesis between state and individual. He also argues against laissez-faire individualism, but for the need to reform the economic system while simultaneously rejecting socialism.[332]

In the 1930s, Collingwood described liberal political life as "one of the greatest achievements of civilization," but claimed the collapse of liberalism was "the plainest political fact of our times."[333] Like many social liberals, he agreed with socialist principles but rejected socialist methods, which he regarded as authoritarian and militaristic, and therefore not very different from the methods of fascism and Nazism. That said, Collinwood believed that a problem facing liberalism was that its method lost validity in the face of war or other emergencies.[334] Liberals are trapped in a paradox, according to Collingwood: pacifism is not a solution so liberals will have to accept going to war, but only to defend civilization and its liberal and democratic

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331 Collingwood, "Man Goes Mad," 318.

332 R. G. Collingwood, "The Breakdown of Liberalism," (n.d. c.1928), Dep. Collingwood, 24/7; idem., "Outlines of a Concept of the State," (n.d) Dep. Collingwood, 24/9; idem., "Money and Morals," (1919) Dep. Collingwood, 6/8. All in Bodleian Library, Oxford.

333 Collingwood, "Man Goes Mad," 318–319.

334 Ibid., 321, 323.

values against its enemies.[335] And defending civilization is the ultimate aim of Collingwood's political thought; in fact, he regards the crisis of liberalism as only one aspect of a larger civilizational crisis. We will return to this below as we take a closer look at Collingwood's crisis imaginary.

Dewey and the Crisis of American Progressivism

Gilded Age America was a nation of big business and laissez-faire, personified by J. D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and J. P. Morgan. Individual liberty was prioritized over social and economic equality in the industrializing nation, which had suffered recurrent economic crises since the end of the Civil War. As in Europe, the social question became increasingly pressing as the United States moved toward the twentieth century. Economic inequality was greater in the 1890s than at any previous time in American history, but the gap between farmers and industrial workers and what Thorstein Veblen famously called *The Leisure Class* (1899) was not merely economic, but cultural as well. The super-rich, who often lived in the Northeast, developed a culture and a set of values that distinguished them, but also made them even more controversial in the eyes of the middle class. Against this background, the progressive movement emerged.[336]

Like the idealistic social liberalism of Green and his followers, American progressivism was a Victorian middle class movement based on Christian values. Much the same as their British equivalents, American progressives argued that a stronger state was necessary to control the increase in private wealth. Another similarity is that American progressives also "used a com-

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335 In *The New Leviathan*, Collingwood makes some surprising remarks about pacifism. He claims that pacifism rewards war-makers and calls it "war-mongery complicated by defeatism." The pacifist is said to be illogical and only interested in his own "clear conscience," not in politics (NL: 29.98). Collingwood's defense of war does, of course, seem very opposite to the "dialectical method" in politics preaches. If war is not an "eristical" method for settling disputes, what is?

336 Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of The Progressive Movement in America* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003), 7–13. The literature on American progressivism is immense; other valuable titles include Shelton Stromquist, *Re-Inventing "The People": The Progressive Movement, the Class Problem, and the Origins of Modern Liberalism* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006); and Lears. *Rebirth of a Nation*.

mon language of personal and social transformation" and founded their social and political visions on the religious morality of "Social Christianity," which was a central feature of progressivism.[337] Consistent with the idealist social liberals and the non-idealistic new liberals in Britain, the American progressives "laid the foundations of the welfare state and vindicated the role of government in protecting the public good from private greed."[338] The public, social, or common good were common catchphrases and, according to the idealistic view, self-realization was a matter of devotion to the common good, as we saw in Chapter 2.[339] Like its British equivalent, the progressive movement avoided class politics and questions regarding material redistribution, emphasizing morality, community, and voluntary social work.

In 1893, the United States was struck by its worst financial depression to date, which lasted four years. According to Jackson Lears, "The collapse of the 1890s had been developing for decades. It expressed the fundamental flaws of an economy based on unregulated capital markets and entrepreneurial frenzy."[340] In the spring and summer of 1894, another important event (encountered briefly in the previous chapter) took place: the Pullman strike in Chicago. The strike began in May, after George Pullman cut his workers' wages during the ongoing depression. The American Railway Union came to the strikers' support and decided to boycott all trains with Pullman cars. In early July, the government called in federal troops and after a short period of violence and many arrests, the strike collapsed and Eugene Debs, the socialist leader of the Railway Union, was imprisoned.[341]

Even though the strike failed, the workers had gained the attention and sympathy of leading figures in the growing progressive movement—notably, Jane Addams and John Dewey. Addams was already a well-known social reformer when the Pullman strike broke out. She had moved to Chicago to start what became the most famous American social settle-

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337 Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation*, 4, 195.

338 Ibid., 169.

339 Other popular notions included "social harmony," "association," and "social solidarity." See, McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent*, 66; Stromquist, *Re-Inventing "The People,"* 2–4.

340 Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation*, 174.

341 McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent*, 56; Stromquist, *Re-Inventing "The People,"* 24–25.

ment, Hull House, in 1889, after visiting Toynbee Hall and similar philanthropic institutions in Europe. Dewey, who moved to Chicago to lead the new department of philosophy during the ongoing strike in the summer of 1894, had already visited Hull House as a lecturer. He admired Addams's social work and took a place on Hull House's board of trustees. Dewey was deeply affected by the strike and fully sympathetic to the workers' cause. So was Addams, who thought the strike revealed how deeply divided American society was, and that individualism was one of the causes of the problems: "A large body of people feel keenly that the present industrial system is in a state of profound disorder, and that there is no guarantee that the pursuit of individual ethics will ever right it."[342]

As in Britain, the purpose of American progressivism was to reconcile the social classes while avoiding class conflict. Community, citizenship, social responsibility, and harmony were key values for the progressives, contrasted against the individualistic laissez-faire liberalism of the Gilded Age. Dewey thought of Hull House as "a place where ideas and beliefs may be exchanged" and where study was undertaken with the purpose "of bringing people together, of doing away with the barriers of caste, or class, or race, or type of experience that keep people from real communion with each other" (MW 2: 91).

While such hopes may seem naive, the progressive movement grew in tandem with labor conflicts. In 1901, 10% of the American workforce (about a million workers) was unionized, which was twice as much as four years prior. The number of strikes and lockouts also continued to increase, reaching a high of 3,648 in 1903. The term "progressive" had become common in the political vocabulary by 1910,[343] and by that time, both Democratic and Republican politicians were keen to present themselves as progressive in one way or another. In 1912, Republican presidential candidate Theodore Roosevelt presented his politics as a "new nationalism" that combined progressivism, imperialism, capitalism, evangelism, and expert rule, inspired by Herbert Croly's influential *The Promise of American Life* (1909).[344]

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342 Jane Addams is quoted in McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent*, 58. For a fuller account of Dewey and the Pullman Strike, see Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, 86–92.

343 McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent*, 32, 145, 280.

344 Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation*, 315–316.

Roosevelt, however, lost the election to the Democratic candidate, Woodrow Wilson, who also embraced progressivism and presented his politics in terms of "new freedom." The Wilson administration regulated big business and carried out reforms that served the interests of the progressive middle class; Wilson was reelected in 1916. Dewey, who had supported the Socialist candidate in the 1912 election, now voted for Wilson as he supported Wilson's vision of a League of Nations and his Fourteen Point Peace Plan.[345] The breakdown of progressivism, however, was just around the corner.

In 1917, the United States entered World War I, an intervention that lasted nineteen months. Wilson hated war and had hoped to avoid it, but felt that intervention was inevitable in the end. This was a matter that divided the progressive movement. Herbert Croly, Walter Weyl, and Walter Lippmann, who regarded themselves as progressive "new nationalists" and had started the influential newspaper the *New Republic* in 1914, supported American intervention, as did Dewey, who thought the war came with the opportunity to reorganize the international political system for the better. He claimed to share this goal with the anti-interventionist Jane Addams, who, according to Dewey, had given the best account of the pacifist position, although ignored the larger aim of international cooperation (MW 10: 265–270).[346] For Dewey, President Wilson's vision of a League of Nations and his Fourteen Points were promises to extend political unity beyond the nation-state.

The war gave the Wilson administration the opportunity to control big business, but it also used it as an opportunity to restrict individual free-

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345 Dewey addresses the League of Nations and American intervention in many shorter articles; see, for example, "What Are We Fighting For?"; "The Approach to a League of Nations"; "The League of Nations and the New Diplomacy"; "The Fourteen Points and the League of Nations," all republished in MW 11.

346 Dewey's attempt to find common ground with the progressive anti-interventionists failed. He was criticized by other progressives, some of whom mistook Dewey for promoting a form of instrumental rationality where aims and ideals had no place. Most critical (and most famous) was the criticism of Dewey's former student and admirer, the young progressive Randolph Bourne. Rather than meeting Bourne's criticism, Dewey ignored it and attempted to silence Bourne by having him dismissed from the editorial board of the *Dial*. See Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, 202–212.

doms and control its critics. The Socialist presidential candidate Eugene Debs was imprisoned, as were close to two hundred members of the radical Industrial Workers of the World union.[347] The "Red Scare" not only affected socialists, however: even middle class peace activist Jane Addams was branded a Bolshevik—along with many others—and considered "dangerous, destructive and anarchistic" by the Military Intelligence Division.[348] Progressivism was no longer respectable, and the utopian faith in progress dressed in the vocabulary of idealistic social Christianity disappeared. Republicans once again supported laissez-faire policies and what they called "new individualism." Their candidate, Warren G. Harding, won the 1921 election, and a Democrat would not be elected again until 1933. The 1920s constituted a backlash against American progressivism.

"We have been living in a fool's paradise, in a dream of automatic uninterrupted progress," wrote Dewey in 1916 (MW 10: 234).[349] The war was an "awakening" from that dream, and although Dewey recognized that it was reasonable to feel "discouragement" and "pessimism," he still thought that a more reflective and less sentimental optimism was possible (MW 10: 234, 238). While science and wealth had contributed to making the war more devastating rather than preventing it, this was because they had not been used intelligently enough (MW 10: 236). The advances in technology and natural science therefore needed to be accompanied by advances in ethics and guided by humanistic values, argued Dewey.

The values that had guided the progressive movement were, however, Victorian and Christian, and these values began to seem unfashionable in the early twentieth century. The progressives' dream of bringing about social harmony and ending class conflict had perhaps been naively idealistic and unsuitable for an increasingly industrialized, urbanized, and secular society. It has been suggested that American progressivism and Victorianism fell together:

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347 McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent*, 289.

348 Ibid., 306–308.

349 Dewey repeated this message in 1939, saying that "the depth of the present crisis is due in considerable part to the fact that for a long period we acted as if our democracy were something that perpetuated itself automatically" (LW 14: 225).

> The fate of the prewar progressive movement provided unmistakable evidence that Victorian authority no longer ran throughout the land. Those elements of progressivism intended by its middle-class leaders largely to preserve Victorianism failed. Progressive measures to inculcate Victorian values, symbolized by prohibition and attacks on prostitution, disappointed their proponents. Giant business corporations… continued to grow almost without public control and to influence the whole society's development. Progressive social welfare measures hardly helped the poor, largely because most progressives placed their faith in moral appeals to adopt Victorian virtues.[350]

The neglect of class politics might be regarded as a failure of American progressivism, as well as for British idealist social liberals in the tradition of T. H. Green.[351] These middle class Victorian liberals were guided by Christian and Victorian values that began to seem outdated in the early twentieth century as religious faith declined, divorce rates increased, and Westerners became increasingly critical of their own culture, with some even turning toward primitivism. The culture of Victorianism was replaced by the culture of modernism, and the Christian and Victorian values and ideals that had guided the idealistic reformers of the late nineteenth century were no longer a vital progressive force, and apparently not sufficient to bring about the social harmony the reformers dreamt of.

Many progressives, even those who had supported American intervention, agreed that the war was a failure. Dewey was among those who had

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350 Stanley Coben, "The Assault on Victorianism in the Twentieth Century," in *Victorian America*, ed. Daniel Walker Howe (Philadelphia, Penn.: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 177.

351 Shelton Stromquist thinks this is the case. He claims that the progressives' failure "to come to terms with the structures of class power and domination" influenced the neglect of class consciousness among twentieth-century liberals. He suggests, in contrast to the conventional narrative, that the decline of the progressive movement had already begun before World War I, as it became evident that "the project of harmonizing class relations and extending democratic citizenship by reforming the worst consequences of capitalist industrialization had foundered on the shoals of renewed class warfare.… The persistence of class conflict in America challenged the defining feature of the Progressive movement—its promise of social harmony through democratic renewal." Stromquist, *Re-Inventing "The People,"* viii, 193.

placed their hopes in Wilson's Fourteen Points and the formation of a League of Nations. Like many other Americans, he was disappointed with the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference and no longer wanted the United States to join the League (which it did not).[352] Nevertheless, this was a blow to the liberal internationalism Dewey supported. Social unity on a global scale seemed like a vain ideal after the war, and progressives became increasingly nationalistic, as was the case, for example, with the trio behind the *New Republic*. In contrast, Dewey remained faithful to internationalism and joined the Chicago lawyer Salmon O. Levinson's campaign for the Outlawry of War. Like Levinson, Dewey was critical of the fact that war was accepted as "a legally authorized mode of settlement of disputes between nations" (LW 5: 349). The problem with the League of Nations was that it did not challenge this notion; making war illegal and creating a supernational organization that helped solve international conflicts through peaceful methods was therefore the aim of Levinson's campaign.[353]

In 1929, Dewey became the chairman of the League for Independent Political Action (LIPA), which aimed to form a new liberal party—an effort that never bore fruit. The economic depression hit the United States only about a week after Dewey presented LIPA to the readers of *Outlook* and the *Independent*,[354] and its causes and consequences became a central part of Dewey's crisis imaginary. In 1931, he became the president of the newly formed People's Lobby, which was formed as a response, first, to the "hysterical propaganda" against Soviet Russia, which the Lobby regarded as "sowing the seeds of international hatred and war," and second, to the "wretched social and economic conditions in this country which are the basic cause of the present widespread misery, unrest and violence" (LW 6:

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352 Americans were particularly critical of the League of Nations' "Article X," which, according to progressives, upheld the status quo in international power relations and, according to conservatives, violated American sovereignty; see Nolan, *The Transatlantic Century*, 71–75.

353 For Dewey's view of the Outlawry of War campaign, see "Morals and the Conduct of States" (MW 11); "Ethics and International Relations" (MW 15); "Apostles of World Unity: XVII—Salmon O. Levinson" (LW 5); and the entry on "Outlawry of War" in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (LW 8: 13–18).

354 See Dewey, "What do Liberals Want?" (LW 5: 346–348); "The Need for a New Party" (LW 6: 156–181); and "Prospects for a Third Party" (LW 6: 246–252).

322). Based on Dewey's writings, it seems that the second cause came to dominate the work of the Lobby, which criticized Republican President Hoover's lack of response to the Great Depression and argued for increased public ownership, the need for a social security system, economic redistribution, and a strategy for tackling unemployment.[355]

Dewey wrote his most important political works in the 1920s and 1930s: *The Public and Its Problems* (1927), *Individualism, Old and New* (1930), *Liberalism and Social Action* (1935), and *Freedom and Culture* (1939). *The Public and Its Problems* was written as a response to the elitist-technocratic conception of democracy advocated by Walter Lippmann in *The Phantom Public* (1925).[356] While Dewey to some extent agreed with Lippmann that ordinary citizens often lacked the necessary competence for political participation, he did not agree that the solution was expert rule, since he feared that the experts would be detached from common interests and might be tempted to rule in the interest of a class or a private interest (LW 2: 285–286, 363–364). Instead, Dewey thought the solution lay in more and better education, cooperation, and communication, which would lead to more intelligent organization. He struggled to add substance to these rather vague catchphrases, however, and as Westbrook notes, *The Public and Its Problems* was not a successful reply to Lippmann, since "too many questions were left unanswered."[357]

The Public and Its Problems and, to greater extent, *Individualism, Old and New* and *Liberalism and Social Action*, directed criticism at the liberal tradition, which Dewey regarded himself to be part of. *Individualism, Old and New* was written as a series of articles for the *New Republic* in 1929 (before and during the financial crisis) and shows that Dewey had a broad

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355 The texts of the People's Lobby were published mainly in their own *People's Lobby Bulletin*, but also in publications such as the *New Republic* and *New York Times*. Dewey's texts have been republished in his *Collected Works* (LW 6: 322, 337–400; LW 9: 249–290).

356 Dewey reviewed Lippmann's book in December 1925 (LW 2: 213–220) and gave the lectures that would be turned into *The Public and Its Problems* in January 1926. While he disagreed with Lippmann's solutions, Dewey was nevertheless influenced by *The Phantom Public*, which he thought a valuable work. For a fuller discussion of Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922) and *The Phantom Public* and Dewey's reply, see Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, 293–318.

357 Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, 318.

notion of politics that encompassed all forms of human experience. In fact, it reads more like a form of cultural criticism than a traditional work on political philosophy. As he often did, Dewey rejected the sharp dualism between the individual and society, viewing their relation as organic. He argued that the kind of individualism that merely "conform[s] to the practices of a pecuniary culture" needed to be rejected in favor of an individualism that aims to develop individuality "through personal participation in the development of a shared culture" (LW 5: 49, 57).

The individualistic heritage of nineteenth-century liberalism was also attacked in *Liberalism and Social Action*, which contains a chapter on "The Crisis in Liberalism." While Dewey recognized that the political philosophy of Jeremy Bentham and J. S. Mill had been valuable, he thought liberalism would stagnate if not renewed in the face of current social problems. Seen in its context, the liberalism of Mill and Bentham had been progressive and radical, but roughly a century later, liberal parties represented "established and vested commercial and financial interests in protest against governmental regulation" (LW 2: 319).

Liberalism was unhistorical, too individualistic, based on a flawed conception of human nature, and too preoccupied with laissez-faire. Their lack of historical sense caused liberals to overlook the fact that their view of liberty was conditioned by their social circumstances, and therefore "relevant only to their own time" (LW 11: 26). Liberalism in the interwar era needed therefore to come to terms with "the notion that organized social control of economic forces lies outside the historic path of liberalism," and understand that a relevant conception of liberty must include "liberation from material insecurity and from the coercions and repressions that prevent multitudes from participation in the vast cultural resources that are at hand" (LW 11: 36, 63). To remain relevant, liberalism needed to formulate new radical ends adapted to the present social context.

Liberals, Dewey argued, also needed to abandon the individualism they had inherited from the Enlightenment—not only because of its view of human rights as natural, but because it regards the individual and society as opposites (LW 2: 357, 361; LW 11: 7). This form of individualism paved the way for the doctrine of laissez-faire and led liberals like Bentham to neglect the importance of "factory laws, laws for the protection of child and

women, prevention of their labor in mines, workmen's compensation acts… reduction of hours of labor" (LW 11: 17). It was as a reaction to the individualism of liberals like Bentham that T. H. Green introduced a "new liberalism" that embraced "the conceptions of a common good as the measure of political organization and policy, of liberty as the most precious trait and the very seal of individuality, of the claim of every individual to the full development of his capacities" (LW 11: 20). As we saw in Chapter 2, Green's notion of self-realization as achieved by working for the common good was an idea that influenced Dewey early in his career. He also continued to embrace the Greenian notion that liberalism not only had a negative aim, in removing obstacles "that stand in the way of individuals coming to consciousness of themselves for what they are," but a positive aim, for example, in promoting public education and "creating institutions under which individuals can effectively realize the potentialities that are theirs" (LW 11: 20–21). Dewey described the kind of liberalism in which the negative aspects "came to full flower" as "laissez-faire liberalism," while the "new" and "humanitarian liberalism" he supported also stressed the positive aspects and was not "averse to employ governmental agencies" in order to better conditions for children, women, workers, and prisoners (LW 11: 282–285).

According to Dewey, liberalism's enduring "values are liberty, the development of the inherent capacities of individuals made possible through liberty, and the central role of free intelligence in inquiry, discussion and expression" (LW 11: 25). To be realized, liberalism needed to "employ the conception of historic relativity" and experimentalism in contrast to "absolutism" (LW 11: 35). Liberalism needed to adapt to the social reality of interwar America and recognize the necessity of such things as economic redistribution and social security; therefore, "liberalism must now become radical" (LW 11: 45). That said, Dewey still held on to the Victorian notion that liberalism's "first object" is education: to produce "habits of mind and character" (LW 11: 44).

There is clearly a continuity between Dewey's interwar era social liberalism and the idealistic liberalism of T. H. Green and Victorian progressivism, but Dewey's liberalism is more radical in its aims, which were sometimes shared with socialists. He emphasizes class conflict and the need for economic redistribution to a much greater extent than the idealists and progressives who preceded and were contemporary to him, Collingwood included.

The Crisis of Idealism

As the previous chapter showed, idealism was the dominant philosophy in Britain and the United States during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, its popularity quickly waned. As we have seen, one reason for idealism's decline was its association with anti-liberal and anti-democratic politics, which forced idealists to reformulate their liberalism and separate it from its idealist background. In this section, we will consider the narrower philosophical criticisms directed at idealism. First, the crisis of idealism will be placed in the context of academic specialization and professionalization.

While German idealists from Kant to Hegel had thought of philosophy as the queen of the sciences and a matter of synthetic system building, philosophy's status, subject matter, and autonomy were challenged by the rapid development of physics, chemistry, and the other empirical and experimental natural sciences in the nineteenth century. This made, for example, the philosophy of nature as practiced by idealists like Schelling seem outdated, and the definitive end of the romantic view of nature came with the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. By this time, it was apparent that Hegel had "placed his bets on almost all the wrong tendencies in the sciences," as Terry Pinkard puts it.[358]

Some of the problems and inadequacies of idealism then, were well known by the time it began to flourish in Anglo-America. But while Anglo-American idealists and contemporary German neo-Kantians continued to insist on the autonomy of philosophy from the dominant natural sciences, these philosophers were less interested in grand systems and had a better understanding of and a more positive attitude toward empiricism and the natural sciences than romantic thinkers and previous idealists.[359] As stated in the previous chapter, Anglo-Americans never aimed to copy German idealism, but instead adapted it and let it hybridize with empiricism, Darwinism, and so on. But idealism, despite significant revisions to

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358 Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760–1860*, 275.

359 For the history of German neo-Kantianism, see Klaus Christian Köhnke, *The Rise of Neo-Kantianism: German Academic Philosophy Between Idealism and Positivism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991).

the doctrines of its German ancestor, seemed exhausted by the turn of the century, just like its main nineteenth-century opponent, positivism.[360] By World War II, philosophy had once again split into two strands—continental and analytic philosophy, the latter being the dominant tradition in Britain and the United States.

Analytical philosophy was able to thrive based on the increasing attractiveness of empiricism, naturalism, and materialism during the first half of the twentieth century, a period characterized by what Peter Burke has called "The Crisis of Knowledge." Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity, Werner Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, Nietzschean perspectivism, Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, and the "crisis in historicism" all seemed to point toward relativism in knowledge.[361] The Cambridge analysts, American proponents of new realism and critical realism, and Viennese logical positivists aimed to meet these challenges by clarifying human thought and reasoning and providing a secure foundation for knowledge. In allying philosophy more closely to the natural sciences, they turned the attention to formal, symbolic, and mathematical logic, language analysis, and epistemology, while avoiding or even rejecting central idealist themes like metaphysics, religion, history, and aesthetics. According to Bruce Kuklick's description:

> Hostile to metaphysics and certainly to the notion that philosophy was a guide to wisdom, analysis rather looked at philosophy as an activity that clarified ordinary talk and the structure of science. The analysts did not try to teach how to live the good life, but to find out how we used a word like "good" or "ought."[362]

The growing influence of analytical philosophy was related to the increase in professionalization and scientific specialization, which promised that

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360 For attempts to conceive new forms of thought beyond positivism and idealism, especially in the 1890s, see Hughes, *Consciousness and Society*.

361 Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge II: From the Encyclopédie to Wikipedia* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012), 260–262. I will elaborate on the crisis of historicism and its relation to relativism in Chapter 5.

362 Kuklick, *A History of Philosophy in America*, 244.

objective and neutral science could build a better world. Since the natural sciences were more obviously able to live up to these standards, a cleavage emerged between these and the "moral sciences," which eventually split into the humanities (or literary sciences) and the social sciences.[363] The idealist ideal of "unity of experience" was synthetic and holistic, while the philosophy that arose in opposition to it was analytic and atomistic. These differences are, perhaps, the most obvious characteristics of the respective thought styles. The turn toward the analytical ideal changed philosophy's identity as well as its audience. Philosophy, like other academic disciplines, was no longer primarily aimed at the educated public, but to other academics "working in the same specialized field to whom they looked for the validation of their own researches."[364] Philosophy increasingly became "a rigorous, even technical, esoteric and professional subject worthy to take its place, if not as one of, at least alongside, the special sciences."[365]

Anglo-American idealists played an ambiguous role in this development. Many idealists were, of course, professional philosophers who were working in the university system and contributed to professional philosophical journals. They were critical, however, of the increasing technicality and difficulty of philosophy, which risked turning it away from engagement in social reality toward the internal interests of academic philosophers.[366] While often critical of the increasing narrowness of philosophy and its disconnectedness from the world outside the university, Dewey and Collingwood also played an ambiguous role in the process of professionalization and specialization. For example, Collingwood insisted on the need for historiography to become a science, though on its own terms, and not by imitating the methods of natural science. Dewey, on the other hand, was a key figure in

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363 Stuart Brown, "The Professionalization of British Philosophy," in *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. W. J. Mander (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2014), 625, Oxford Handbooks Online.

364 Ibid., 628.

365 Ibid., 637.

366 It should be noted, however, that the professionalization of philosophy was by no means a linear process. For example, the seventeenth century break with scholastic philosophy and the turn to philosophizing in vernacular language made philosophy accessible to amateurs outside academia; see Brown, "The Professionalization of British Philosophy," 620, 628n48, 636.

the development of American social science. He often spoke of the benefits of the experimental scientific method and wanted to see it applied in all fields of knowledge, but his "scientific method" was closer to a hermeneutic approach than the methods commonly applied by natural scientists. To clarify what the conflict between what might be called an idealistic and an analytical thought style consisted in, we shall look at some examples of the criticism directed at idealism from the analytical camp.

Analysts Against Idealism

One of the major reasons for the decline of idealism was that the Cambridge philosophers Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore made it their primary target of attack as they launched a new kind of realist philosophy influenced by the logic of George Boole and Gottlob Frege.[367] "Logical atomism" might be the best label for their kind of philosophy, which insisted on the separateness of things—in contrast to the idealist notion of interrelatedness and interdependence—and on the need for analysis in contrast to the idealist emphasis on synthesis and unity.[368]

The target of Russell's and Moore's critique was F. H. Bradley, who was the most influential living idealist in Britain by the turn of the century. It was primarily Russell who led the attack on Bradley's idealism and eventually emerged victorious from the debate. Russell's characterization of (Bradley's) idealism has in a sense become one of analytical philosophy's

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367 The logic of Boole (and other British nineteenth-century mathematicians) was for many decades shadowed by J. S. Mill's *System of Logic* (1843). The breakthrough for symbolic logic had to wait until Russell's and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica* (1910–1913); see Daniel J. Cohen, "Reasoning and Belief in Victorian Mathematics," in *The Organisation of Knowledge in Victorian Britain*, ed. M. J. Daunton (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press), 2005.

368 "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" was the theme of a series of four articles Russell published in *The Monist* in 1918 and 1919. Russell used the term "atomism" as opposed to the logical "monism" of Hegel and his followers. It should be noted, however, that few idealists thought of themselves as monists. Bertrand Russell, "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism," *The Monist* 28:4 (October 1918), 495–96.

foundational myths.[369] To avoid reproducing this myth one must resist the temptation to view the debate between Bradley and Russell as a struggle between Oxford and Cambridge, conservatism and liberalism, metaphysics and logic, Victorian and Edwardian ideals, German and British or literary and scientific thought styles.[370] Such characterizations would be flawed and simplistic, for idealists did not reject logic, but proposed a different conception of it; additionally, as the previous chapter showed, most idealists were convinced liberals. There were also idealist philosophers active in the Edwardian era and later—notably Muirhead, Collingwood, and Oakeshott, the latter being just one example of a Cambridge idealist, along with, for example, J. M. E. McTaggart, who was an important influence on the early careers of Russell and Moore. Furthermore, idealism's German origins and the Anglo-American idealists' debt to Hegel have perhaps been overemphasized, for the Anglo-American idealists did not see themselves as mere followers of German idealism. Bradley himself rejected being labelled "Hegelian," and it has been argued that the differences between anglophone idealism and British empiricism in the tradition of Mill and Locke have been overemphasized.[371] The hybridization of idealism with other philosophies, however, tended to be ignored by its opponents.

The relation between the competing philosophical schools is complex, and there were often disagreements among proponents belonging to the same tradition. Nevertheless, one must generalize in order to bring to light some of the central philosophical conflicts and show what the main charges against idealism were. The early analytical tradition was, in Peter Hylton's words, characterized by "its employment of mathematical logic as a tool, or method, of philosophy; its emphasis on language and meaning; its generally atomistic and empiricist assumptions; and the fact that many of its practitioners have viewed science, especially physics, as a paradigm of

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369 Stewart Candlish recurringly uses the work "myth" when describing the position ascribed to Bradley by Russell; see especially the chapter titled "Truth" in *The Russell/Bradley Dispute and its Significance for Twentieth-Century Philosophy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 78–105.

370 Ibid., xi, 79.

371 F. H. Bradley, *The Principles of Logic*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1922), x; Den Otter, *British Idealism and Social Explanation*, 8–9.

human knowledge."[372] Moore, Russell, Frege, and Carnap agreed that philosophy should strive to achieve the status of a science, while the idealists were critical of strong naturalism[373]—that is, the idea that all modes of knowledge are to be modelled on the methods of the natural sciences, a belief often found in nineteenth-century positivism. This is not to say that the idealists were *against* science—many Anglo-American idealists considered Hegel and Darwin, for example, to be perfectly compatible.[374] Nevertheless, they worried that philosophy might become reduced to a natural science, and defended the autonomy of philosophy against the narrow, specialized, and analytical ideal promoted by their opponents.

G. E. Moore's most famous attack on idealism, "The Refutation of Idealism," was intended to prove the essential idealist belief—*esse* is *percipi*—false, which in turn undermined the idealist notion of the universe as spiritual. If all that exists is that which is experienced, reality is fundamentally mental, says Moore, who claims that this is a premise of idealism that remains to be proven.[375] Behind this premise lay the doctrine that it is impossible to separate external experienced objects from the mind of the experiencing subject. For example, idealists believe the experience of yellow to be inseparable from yellow, which, according to Moore, is a contradictory view. He also rejected monism and the idealist notion of organic unity, according to which "two distinct things both are and are not distinct" simultaneously (in other words, no object exists independently from its relation to other objects).[376]

Although he refuted idealism because it failed to prove its fundamental doctrines, Moore himself does not give any reasons as to why one should accept his view of object and subject as separate rather than interdepend-

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372 Peter Hylton, *Russell, Idealism, and the Emergence of Analytic Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 14.

373 I return to naturalism in Chapter 5, where I show that idealism can be compatible with *weak* but not *strong* naturalism.

374 As I showed in Chapter 2, bringing Hegel into conversation with the latest results in the natural sciences was one of Dewey's primary concerns in his early career. It was a concern he shared with idealists like David Ritchie and William Wallace.

375 G. E. Moore, "The Refutation of Idealism," *Mind* 12:48 (October 1903), 436–437.

376 Ibid., 441–442.

ent.[377] His criticism of idealism was also somewhat misdirected, since its target was the subjective idealism of George Berkeley (1685–1753), which had little influence on later idealists. In *An Autobiography*, Collingwood describes Moore's article as an example of the realist philosophers' "historical blunders" and claims that Berkeley never expressed the views ascribed to him (A: 23–24). Nevertheless, Moore's article is illuminating, not only because it illustrates some of the major charges against idealism, but because both Dewey and Collingwood defended the anti-dualistic doctrines Moore attacked, although without reference to his article.

The views expressed by Moore in "The Refutation of Idealism" were to a large extent shared by Russell, who, looking back on his and Moore's attack on idealism, says that they, among other things, argued for the independence of fact from experience. In opposition to the idealists, Russell argued that the truth of a proposition depends only on its relation to fact.[378] He was altogether skeptical of the concept of "experience" which he felt had "been very much over-emphasized, especially in the Idealist philosophy."[379] Russell also turned against what he called the idealist "doctrine of internal relations" and "the monistic theory of truth." The latter, says Russell, "defines 'truth' by means of coherence. It maintains that no one truth is independent of any other, but each, stated in all its fullness and without illegitimate abstraction, turns out to be the whole truth about the whole universe."[380] His main target was H. H. Joachim's *The Nature of Truth*, but another opponent was the "socially disastrous" pragmatist theory of truth, especially as formulated by William James.[381] In contrast to coherentism and the pragmatist theory of truth, Russell argued for the correspondence theory of truth. This is a particularly important point, since Dewey was influenced by James, and Collingwood by Joachim. Neither Collingwood nor Dewey accepted the correspondence theory of truth or the view that truth was simply a matter of verifying isolated proposi-

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377 This is pointed out by Hylton, *Russell, Idealism, and the Emergence of Analytic Philosophy*, 174.

378 Bertrand Russell, *My Philosophical Development* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1959), 54.

379 Ibid., 131.

380 Ibid., 54, 175.

381 Ibid., 179.

tions. Nor did they accept the dualism between subject and object or between experience and reality, as promoted by the analytical realists. In contrast, Dewey and Collingwood embraced the notion of organic unity, and placed experience at the center of their philosophies.

Russell and Moore were to find allies in the Vienna Circle of logical positivism founded in 1925 by Moritz Schlick. According to one of the proponents of logical positivism, Otto Neurath, it was a philosophy that replaced speculation with verification and rejected "anything that smacks of the 'absolute.'"[382] The "scientific world-conception" of the Vienna Circle relied instead on "a sense for earthly things, the call for empirical control, and the systematic application of logic and mathematics," and discarded the "idealistic-metaphysical current" and hermeneutics.[383] One of the most powerful and comprehensive statements of logical positivism was, however, the young Oxford philosopher A. J. Ayer's *Language, Truth, and Logic* (1936).

Ayer brought together the philosophies of Moore, Russell, and the Vienna Circle and presented a view of philosophy in which metaphysics was "eliminated."[384] In Ayer's view, there was no room or need for "knowledge of a reality transcending the world of science and common sense."[385] He was only willing to talk about "experience" in terms of sensory data, and proposed that philosophy was a matter of analyzing and assuring the verifiability of propositional statements. Essentially, Ayer's theory of truth comes down to showing "how propositions are validated."[386] Since metaphysical statements appeal to a world beyond sensory experience, they are non-verifiable and hence nonsensical and therefore have no place in a philosophy whose primary concern is "purely logical questions" and the analysis of language.[387] From Ayer's conception of philosophy, it follows

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382 Otto Neurath, "Physicalism: The Philosophy of the Viennese Circle," in *Philosophical Papers, 1913–1946: With a Bibliography of Neurath in English*, ed. Robert S. Cohen and Marie Neurath (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing, 1983), 48.

383 Otto Neurath, "Ways of the Scientific World-Conception," in *Philosophical Papers*, 32, 40, 44.

384 Ayer, "The Elimination of Metaphysics," *Language, Truth and Logic*. Bradley is one of very few named targets of Ayer's critique.

385 Ibid., 15.

386 Ibid., 119.

387 Ibid., 209.

that "ethical judgements are merely subjective expressions of feeling," but disputes regarding value can only concern matters of fact.[388] Because they lacked verifiability, metaphysics, aesthetics, theology, and ethics, all of which had been central concerns in idealist thought, were said to not belong to philosophy proper.

The philosophical ideals promoted by Ayer, the logical positivists, Moore, and Russell were also present in the United States, which is to be expected considering that the philosophical conversation often took place in transatlantic journals written in English. "The Program and First Platform of Six Realists" was published in the *Journal of Philosophy* in 1910, and two years later developed in *The New Realism* (1912), which, along with *Essays in Critical Realism* (1920), was the most important early contribution to American analytical philosophy.[389]

Like the Cambridge analysts and later logical positivists, the American realists sought to model philosophy after natural science. Although there are few references to individual idealists in either *The New Realism* or *Essays in Critical Realism*, idealism was the main opponent.[390] This can be seen in the rejection of the idealist notion of experience, the theory of internal relations, and the "organic" theory of knowledge, which I understand to be synonymous with what Russell called the "monistic theory" and is also known as "coherentism." The realists held that things exist independently of being known, and that the object of philosophy therefore is not "mental." There is a clear distinction between the experiencing subject and external

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388 Ibid., 165, 168.

389 The six new realists were Edwin B. Holt, Walter T. Marvin, William Pepperrell Montague, Ralph Barton Perry, Walter B. Pitkin, and Edward Gleason Spaulding. Pitkin and Montague were Dewey's colleagues at Columbia University at the time. The critical realists were Durant Drake, George Santayana, Arthur O. Lovejoy, James Bissett Pratt, Arthur K. Rogers, Roy Wood Sellars, and C. A. Strong. Holt et. al., *The New Realism: Coöperative Studies in Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), https://archive.org/details/newrealismcooper00marviala/mode/2up; Drake, et. al., *Essays in Critical Realism: A Co-operative Study of the Problem of Knowledge* (London: Macmillan, 1920), https://archive.org/details/essayscritical00unknuoft. For a fuller discussion of these books, see Kuklick, *A History of Philosophy in America*, 201–224.

390 Clendenning claims that Josiah Royce was the realists primary target, which is likely considering that Royce was the most influential American idealist of the time. See, *The Life and Thought of Josiah Royce*, 347.

objects. The realists also claimed that propositions are *either* true or false, but never partly both, which is what a dialectician like Collingwood would argue.[391] Furthermore, they were critical of the idealist notion of "unity":

> The logical categories of unity, such as homogeneity, consistency, coherence, interrelation, etc., do not in any case imply a determinate degree of unity. Hence the degree of unity which the world possesses can not be determined logically, but only by assembling the results of the special branches of knowledge. On the basis of such evidence, there is a present presumption in favor of the hypothesis that the world as a whole is less unified than are certain of its parts.
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> In its historical application, this implies that the great speculative monisms, such as those of Plato, Spinoza, and certain modern idealists, are both dogmatic and contrary to evidence.[392]

As we will see in the following chapter, unity was a favorite notion of Dewey and Collingwood, and most idealists. Dewey was also one of the targets of the American realists' criticism because of his pragmatic theory of experience, which did not regard objects to exist independent of experience, and therefore revealed that Dewey was not a "thorough-going realist."[393]

The doctrines of new and critical realism were similar in many ways to the philosophical positions referred to above, and they eventually blended with logical positivism and Cambridge realism into analytical philosophy. The realists held object and fact to be independent from experience, while idealists, as well as Collingwood and Dewey, rejected the sharp dualism between subject and object. Most fundamentally, the proponents of analytical philosophy wanted to provide a secure foundation for knowledge by making philosophy more like a natural science. Philosophy should ver-

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391 Holt et. al., "The Program and First Platform of Six Realists," in *The New Realism*, 472–473. Collingwood's views on this topic will be revisited in later chapters.

392 Ibid., 476–477.

393 R. B. Perry, "A Realistic Theory of Independence," in *The New Realism*, 149–150. The criticism was directed at Dewey's "Reality as Experience" (MW 3) and "Brief Studies in Realism" (MW 6). See also Arthur Lovejoy, "Pragmatism *Versus* the Pragmatist," in *Essays in Critical Realism*, 35–85.

ify propositions and reject speculative forms of thought associated with metaphysics and theology.

Neither Collingwood nor Dewey could accept this ideal, although they agreed with realist philosophers on certain points and even came to reject much of the absolutistic and metaphysical content of idealism. Both Dewey and Collingwood, however, wanted philosophy to be something much broader than the analysts imagined: they wanted it to be practical and existential, and a form of cultural criticism aimed at improving society. In the following two chapters, we shall see how their notion of philosophy remained close to the idealist thought style. First, we will see what problems they wanted philosophy to solve.

Collingwood's Crisis Imaginary

David Boucher has correctly noted that civilization, liberalism, society, and freedom are "inextricably related" notions in Collingwood's thought.[394] To this list, one could also add democracy. As we saw above, Collingwood was convinced that liberalism was in a state of crisis, and he thought the problems facing liberalism were interconnected with other crises, together making up his crisis imaginary. Usually, he speaks in terms of a crisis of civilization. One aspect of this crisis, and a reason for the decline of liberalism—which Collingwood believed nineteenth-century liberals working in the tradition of the Enlightenment together with realist philosophy and natural science shared the blame for—was the decline of religion.

We have already encountered Collingwood's criticism of Prussianism in his 1919 address to Belgian students. Twenty years later, in *An Autobiography*, he discussed authoritarian right-wing ideologies primarily in terms of class, but shortly after returned to analyze authoritarianism in spiritual and

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394 Boucher, "Introduction," in *Essays in Political Philosophy*, 15.

emotional terms in "Nazism and Fascism" (1940).[395] Here Collingwood argues that authoritarianism has an "emotional force" that liberalism lacks. The reason is that Christianity—"the only known explosive in the economy of… the human mind"—provided liberalism and democracy with a necessary emotional force that became "exhausted" because of "Illuminism and other anti-religious movements" (Collingwood does not specify which).[396] Religion, says Collingwood, is the "vital warmth at the heart of a civilization" and "the passion which inspires a society to persevere in a certain way of life and to obey the rules which define it."[397] Furthermore, love for the Christian God is "the real ground for the 'liberal' or 'democratic' devotion to freedom."[398] Collingwood therefore finds a downside to the success of rational, utilitarian, and positivistic thinking, which he claims has led to a suppression of all irrational and emotional elements in life. He claims that the "thick-skinned rationalism" of utilitarianism paved the way for Nazism and fascism, because they possess an emotional force that the rationalistic liberal democratic tradition has lost.[399] Collingwood therefore rejects the opposition between faith and reason and emotion and reason, for without the force of faith and emotion, we have no reason to act in the first place. Here Collingwood sees a possible antidote in religiosity, art, and what he

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395 This is also noted by James Connelly, "Collingwood Controversies," in *R. G Collingwood: An Autobiography and Other Writings*, 418. Collingwood's "Fascism and Nazism" was first published in *Philosophy* (1940); my references are to the republication in *Essays in Political Philosophy*. Collingwood's article was inspired by C. E. M. Joad's "Appeal to Philosophers," which urged philosophers to leave the ivory tower and put philosophy into practice; in it, he quoted approvingly from Collingwood's *An Autobiography*; Joad, "Appeal to Philosophers," *Philosophy* 15:60 (October 1940), 400–416.

396 Collingwood, "Fascism and Nazism," 194, 196.

397 Ibid., 187.

398 Ibid., 190.

399 Ibid., 197–198. In a reply to Collingwood's article, H. D. Oakeley questioned the idea that the passions which drive Nazism should be regarded as religious in character. Oakeley also doubted that Christianity alone had inspired the liberal devotion to freedom. Collingwood did not reply. See Oakeley, "Fascism and Nazism," *Philosophy* 15:59 (July 1940), 318–320.

calls magic[400]—albeit with the reservation that only "art proper," and not what he refers to as "amusement art," such as crime fiction or pornography, serves civilization. In fact, amusement art is seen as a threat to civilization, and Collingwood argues that this was the kind of art Plato, with good reason, wanted to banish from his republic (PA: 48–49).[401]

In addition to its neglect of religion, Collingwood also argues that nineteenth-century liberalism suffered from a false conception of human nature that led to individualism, laissez-faire policies, and the "mysterious" and "half-divine" notion of natural rights (NL: 23.91). In fact, to regard the individual as a unit separate from, or in opposition to society, would lead liberalism into a pre-social state, in which life was "nasty, brutish, and short," as Hobbes had imagined in his *Leviathan*.[402] When Collingwood sat down to write his final book after the outbreak of World War II, the debt to Hobbes was already visible in the title: *The New Leviathan*. This was Collingwood's great defense of civilization against German "barbarism." In this work, Collingwood describes civilization as an ideal state that can be approximated but never reached (NL: 34.52). It is a process that leads to wealth, education, "law and order," and "peace and plenty," and barbarism is the attempt to reverse this process (NL: 39.2). While Collingwood claims that civilization includes both a material and an "inner" side, he emphasizes the importance of the latter. Civilization is primarily "a thing of the mind" and it is therefore a problem when the "inner side" of civilization is neglected: when emotions, aesthetics, and intellect become

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400 "Magic," like art, is a matter of expressing emotions and a necessary part of "every healthy society." The difference is that magic is representational and evokes emotions as an end in themselves. Examples of magic include folk art and ceremonies like weddings and funerals, as well as dinner parties, dancing and sports. These activities may be mediocre "from the strictly aesthetic point of view," but are a necessary element in any civilization (PA: 57, 69, 76).

401 The reason we turn to amusement "is that everyday life in the present world is so dull and drab that emotional stimulation has become a commodity on sale in the market." Rather than mobilizing and changing reality, we try to find ways to escape it while also getting a "kick." Amusement, Collingwood might as well have said, has become the opium of the people. He views this as a consequence of industrialization but thinks that better (aesthetic) education rather than deindustrialization is the solution. Collingwood, "Art and the Machine," in *The Philosophy of Enchantment*, 298, 300, 303.

402 R. G. Collingwood, "Man Goes Mad," 327.

regarded as less important than material progress and economic profit (NL: 34.14).[403] It is bad thinking rather than material and social factors that caused the civilizational crisis. Collingwood's crisis imaginary, then, had more in common with contemporary continental European notions of the crisis as a *Kulturkrise*.

Another threat to civilization comes from technology and natural science, and World War I, according to Collingwood, was proof of their "unprecedented triumph." New technological innovations came with the "power to destroy the bodies and souls of men more rapidly than had ever been done by human agency before" (A: 90). This is not to say that Collingwood viewed technology or natural science as inherently evil; he regarded science and wealth as necessary parts of civilization and rejected Rousseau and Ruskin's romantic longings for primitivism. The problem, according to Collingwood, is that the development of what we may call the "hard" or outward side of modernity has not been accompanied by a corresponding development of its "soft" or inward side.[404] We should understand Collingwood as criticizing what has been called instrumental rationality and the attempt to separate science from questions of value.[405] What is needed to save civilization, then, is a better "understanding of human affairs," which—if practiced correctly—is provided by history, art, and philosophy (A: 92).

Collingwood's tendency to regard everything he is against—utilitarianism, amusement art, anti-religiosity, positivism, and realism—as threats to civilization, while defining civilization as an ideal consisting of everything

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403 Collingwood also discusses the "inner" and "outer" aspects of civilization in "Science, Religion and Civilisation" (1930) Dep. Collingwood, 1/7, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

404 Ibid., 7–8.

405 Collingwood says that we seem to be moving forward for the sake of moving, but without an aim or an ideal; see ibid., 12. He also addresses this theme in "Man Goes Mad," where he claims that the principle "take care of the means, and the ends will take care of themselves" has "been adopted throughout our civilization as the first maxim of wisdom.… Obedience to this rule is the method in the madness of modern civilization. We take infinite pains to provide ourselves with means by which all sorts of ends might be achieved. We then omit to consider what ends we shall achieve by their help; and treat the mere utilization of the means, no matter what result comes of it, as if that were a sufficient end and the reward of our labours." Collingwood, "Man Goes Mad," 312.

he likes—liberalism, democracy, Christianity, history, happiness, wealth, education—makes his analysis rather shallow. He portrays Britain and its allies as the good guys and their enemies as barbarians without much nuance. Regardless, understanding how Collingwood interpreted the threats is necessary for understanding his solutions. While he argues against laissez-faire economics and holds economic redistribution to be necessary, since economic inequality is "an offence against the ideal of civility" (NL: 38.74, 39.19), Collingwood's concern is not mainly economic, social, or material matters, but intellectual matters. As an idealist, he regards material and social problems as an effect of thought and places his hopes in art, religion, and the human sciences.

Because Collingwood regards social, cultural, and political problems as products of the mind, he believes that a better philosophy would not only solve contemporary problems, but would stop them from emerging in the first place. This also means that he finds questionable connections between philosophical positions and political views. For example, in his 1916 lecture on "Ruskin's Philosophy" he argues that positivism ("logicism") leads to "habitual intolerance," because a positivist society may take its political system to be based on natural and eternal rights, and will therefore oppose all political systems except its own. In contrast, a historically-minded society would reject the notion of natural rights and the belief in a universal political system.[406] In *An Autobiography*, Collingwood claimed that realist philosophers, "for all their profession of a purely scientific detachment from practical affairs, were the propagandists of a coming Fascism" (A: 167). This is, of course, an outrageous statement. Bertrand Russell—one of Collingwood's primary examples of a realist—and many other realists and analysts were liberals or socialists. Collingwood offers no evidence that their philosophical doctrines necessarily lead, against the realists' inten-

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406 R. G. Collingwood, "Ruskin's Philosophy," in *Essays in the Philosophy of Art*, 13.

tions, to fascism.[407] Clearly, his reasoning is as unconvincing as the realist philosophers' attempts to blame Prussian authoritarianism on idealism.

"Ruskin's Philosophy" expressed a belief in the power of historical, synthetic, and dialectical thinking as antidotes to positivism and realism; this idea was developed further in *Speculum Mentis*, which was written shortly after the end of World War I and is a product of the *maladie du siècle*. Here Collingwood complains that the "chief forms of human experience"—art, religion, science, history, and philosophy—have become separated from one another and lost their appeal for most people, who turn their attention instead to amusement, business, politics, and sports (SM: 9, 19). This has led to a "morbid" condition, a modern "sickness" or "disease" in which "modern man is unhappy" (SM: 22, 26). The modern human has become fragmented and the ideal of the unity of experience forsaken as the forms of experience are pursued in isolation from one another.

> In the middle ages the artist was perhaps not much of an artist, the philosopher was by our standards only mildly philosophical, and the religious man not extremely religious; but they were all men, whole of heart and secure in their grasp on life. To-day we can be as artistic, we can be as philosophical, we can be as religious as we please, but we cannot ever be men 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 (SM: 35).

Here Collingwood directs our attention to the downsides of the professionalization and specialization that lead to the separation of the forms of experience, which are basic and necessary in human life. The cure is to

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407 Furthermore, if one's politics were derived from one's philosophy, should not Giovanni Gentile, whose idealistic philosophy was very similar to Collingwood's, necessarily have been a liberal? Of course, Gentile was a fascist, which Collingwood recognizes (A: 158). Here the logic is completely reversed: it is the conversion to fascism that suddenly makes Gentile a bad philosopher. Again, Collingwood provides no evidence of a change in Gentile's philosophy that corresponds to his conversion to fascism. Clearly, Collingwood overemphasizes the connection between philosophy and politics, very much like the critics of "Prussianism" (Dewey included).

bring the various forms of experience into a unity (SM: 36). The argument Collingwood makes in *Speculum Mentis* is that not only do we need a correct understanding of art, religion, science, history, and philosophy separately but, more importantly, we must understand that they are interrelated and how so. While he did not again elaborate on the interrelatedness of the five forms of experience, Collingwood was to return to them individually, and his writings after *Speculum Mentis* show that he continued to think that a correct understanding of art, religion, science, history, and philosophy was necessary to tackle the civilizational crisis.

When Collingwood wrote *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, about a decade after *Speculum Mentis*, he regarded philosophy to be in state of "crisis and chaos" (EPM: 6). His charges against contemporary philosophy were even harsher a few years later in *An Autobiography*. Unlike in the rather abstract *Speculum Mentis*, Collingwood's enemies appear more clearly in his later books. In *An Autobiography*, it is twentieth-century realism—"the undischarged bankrupt of modern philosophy" (A: 45)—rather than "logicism" or positivism that is the target of the attack. Realism and analytical philosophy, however, had inherited much from nineteenth-century positivism and empiricism, which Collingwood recognizes (EPM: 7). The realists Collingwood attacks are all British: Cook Wilson, H. A. Prichard, H. W. B. Joseph, G. E. Moore, and Bertrand Russell. He claims that they "undertook the task of discrediting the entire work of Green's school, which they described comprehensively as 'idealism'" (A: 18–19). In its place, they proposed a purely theoretical mode of thought that relied on propositional logic and the correspondence theory of truth (A: 36, 47–48).

One of Collingwood's major issues with the realists was their lack of historical thinking and their belief in eternal philosophical problems. He claims that this led realists to ascribe views to philosophers of the past which they did not hold. A realist, for example, would think that Plato and Hobbes were discussing the same thing in discussing the state (A: 62). Realists make this mistake because they do not read texts to understand what question the author is trying to address.

Because the realists insisted on retaining the dualism between the knowing subject and the known object, their central doctrine must, according to Collingwood, lead them to hold that "knowing makes no difference to

what is known" (A: 45). This led to a theoretical and academic ideal of philosophy in which ethics and politics were rejected. The realists, says Collingwood, made "philosophy a preserve for professional philosophers, and were loud in their contempt of philosophical utterances by historians, natural scientists, theologians, and other amateurs" (A: 50). Collingwood thought this disastrous. He regarded realism to be an effect of specialization and professionalization, and thought its turn from practical and social concerns toward the theoretical concerns of the philosophy department made it elitist. Philosophy, says Collingwood, became "so scientific that no one whose life was not a life of pure research could appreciate it, and so abstruse that only a whole-time student, and a very clever man at that, could understand it" (A: 51).

Realist philosophers were too preoccupied with language, symbolic logic, and epistemology and—like the positivists of the nineteenth century—followed the natural sciences too closely and uncritically. This was problematic, according to Collingwood, since World War I proved that technology and the natural sciences could be put to destructive uses. Therefore, philosophy needed to retain its autonomy and must neither become "enemy" nor "slave" to science, but should aim "in some way to help our generation in its moral, social, and political troubles."[408] Philosophy needed to develop its own method and its own vocabulary, and not let the symbolic and technical vocabulary of mathematics and natural science take over (EPM: 205). For Collingwood, it is even a philosopher's "duty" to avoid technical language, for philosophy requires "that flexibility, that dependence upon context, which are the hall-marks of a literary use of words as opposed to a technical use of symbols" (EPM: 207). This would be the opposite of the analytical philosopher's standpoint, since the mathematical and symbolic logic of a thinker like Russell, for example, was meant to provide a universal language with which to analyze propositions. In Collingwood's view, no such transhistorical language is possible. Collingwood also thinks that philosophers like Moore and Russell turn philosophy into an entirely negative and destructive business, and leave it to

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408 Collingwood, "The Present Need of a Philosophy," in *Essays in Political Philosophy*, 166, 169.

natural science and common sense to provide answers and constructive thinking (EPM: 142–147).

In addition to rejecting ethics, political philosophy, and history, the realists also rejected metaphysics. In Collingwood's view, this was because they failed to understand that metaphysics is a historical science. This was the central argument of *An Essay on Metaphysics*, in which Collingwood argues that the business of metaphysics is the discovery of "absolute pre-suppositions"; that is, the assumptions that a person or a society's thought at a particular time—unconsciously or half-consciously—is based upon. Since realism, in Collingwood's view, was primarily an unhistorical theory of knowledge, it left no room for metaphysics. Although he recognized Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* as a fine philosophical work, Colling-wood's *Essay on Metaphysics* should, above all, be seen as a reply to Ayer.[409] While Collingwood agrees with Ayer that metaphysical statements lack truth-value, he does not agree that they are therefore nonsensical. For Collingwood, metaphysical statements are not propositions, but absolute presuppositions—they are the unverifiable and often unconscious back-ground of human thought and knowledge. Absolute presuppositions change over time and differ culturally, but there will always be implicit norms and ideas that form how we perceive and interpret reality. This, says Collingwood, is denied by a realist like Russell, a logical positivist like Ayer, and a nineteenth-century positivist like J. S. Mill (EM: 143–149, 259–260). Therefore, the realists fail to understand the basis of natural science and, in extent, civilization. "Metaphysics," says Collingwood,

> is habitually frowned upon and the existence of absolute presuppositions denied. 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. If a sufficient number of Europeans want to destroy science and

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409 Collingwood, having heard Prichard and Joseph criticizing *Language, Truth, and Logic*, is supposed to have told them: "Gentlemen, this book will be read when your names are forgotten." See A. J. Ayer, *Part of My Life* (London: Collins, 1977), 166. This anecdote reveals that not all realist philosophers agreed or shared the same doctrines.

thus accomplish the suicide of civilization, nothing I can do will stop them; but at present, in England, they have not the power to prevent me from warning those who neither share nor suspect their design (EM: 46–47).

Here Collingwood once again claims that positivism and other anti-metaphysical philosophies jeopardize Western civilization, and again regards humanistic modes of thought to be the solution, since only they can provide the self-knowledge needed to understand the actual purpose of science and civilization. Clearly, Collingwood is prone to rhetorical excesses. Taken literally, his description of the crises that plague civilization would be rather hard to swallow for most of us. Do civilization and science stand and fall with the existence of metaphysics? Is amusement really a serious threat to civilization? Does realism lead to fascism? None of this seems likely, which, of course, does not disprove Collingwood's conception of art, metaphysics, and so on, although these subjects might not solve the problems Collingwood hoped they would.

Dewey's Crisis Imaginary

Dewey was thirty years Collingwood's senior and of a different temperament. For Collingwood, civilization is under constant threat and there is always a crisis or two around the corner. For Dewey, there are problems, challenges, and even crises, but he is generally optimistic that solutions are near, although never fully satisfied with the solutions the political establishment offers to social problems.[410] Dewey's crisis imaginary was shaped by the fact that he lived through the financial crises of the Gilded Age, the major crash in 1929 and the subsequent Depression, and the American Civil War, World War I and II. Even so, his pre-World War I writings are

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410 As we saw above, Dewey was discontented with the existing political parties. There are good reasons to regard him as having become a democratic socialist after the Depression began in 1929. He regarded the New Deal, for example, as merely a halfway reform that sided with the interests of big business rather than those of workers and consumers. He and the People's Lobby had a much more aggressive social deal in mind; see "Socialization of Ground Rent" (LW 11: 256–257) and "The Economic Basis of the New Society" (LW 13: 316–322). See also Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, 440–441.

generally optimistic, and while his faith in humanity never ceased and he continued to see possibilities rather than difficulties, there is a darker tone and an increased awareness of the challenges facing humanity in the texts written after the outbreak of World War I. It is also evident that the religious language present in Dewey's early political texts—notably "The Ethics of Democracy" and "Christianity and Democracy"—does not appear in his post-war writings, although he continued to insist on having "faith" in democracy (LW 14: 226–229). As previously noted, progressivism built on the ideal of social Christianity and Victorian values, which seemed outdated to many, since the political conflicts to a larger degree concerned unemployment, the material conditions of the laboring class, and industrial democracy. Dewey began to identify as a liberal and a radical democrat from the 1920s onward more often than calling himself a progressive. He also recognized that there was an affinity between his aims and the aims of socialist radicals, although he became increasingly careful to distance himself from communism.[411] His opposition to Stalinism was most obvious and public in his role as chairman of the Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Made against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials in Mexico in 1937, which absolved Trotsky of the charges leveled against him by Stalin's regime. This made Dewey a target of the American communist press, which described him as a "fascist."[412]

As we have already seen, Dewey became increasingly active in social and political matters after the war, realizing that progress does not come about automatically and change is not always for the better. That said, Dewey

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411 See "Why I Am Not a Communist" (LW 9: 91–96), where Dewey argues that communism tends to ignore social and historical circumstances, and that Russian communism, for example, cannot be applied to American conditions. He also rejects dialectical materialism and Marx's philosophy of history. While recognizing class conflicts, he rejects violence, revolution, and class war as political methods. Dewey also complains about the "emotional tone and methods of discussion" among communists.

412 The Commission included notable intellectuals such as Lionel Trilling, John Dos Passos, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Dewey's "bulldog" Sidney Hook. Unlike some of the members of the Commission, Dewey did not sympathize with Trotsky's ideology, and only defended his right to a fair trial; see Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, 480–481. For Dewey's views on the results of the trial, see "The Moscow Trial" (LW 11: 326–329), and "Significance of the Trotsky Inquiry" (LW 11: 330–336).

was initially hopeful that World War I would mark a positive turning point in human history. Even though he recognized that "a long period of social drifting and social unrest" might follow, Dewey hoped that the war experience would teach societies to "utilize… intelligence, the insight and foresight which are available" (MW 11: 82). But for "Internal Social Reorganization After the War" (1918) to become reality, Dewey thought it necessary to raise the standard of living for the poorer classes, socialize private profit, and help make people—both the unemployed and the "social slackers" of the upper classes—"useful to society" (MW 11: 76). If this were done,

> the future historian may say… that this war represents the period when mankind realized how largely its forces had been left to drift at the mercy of accident, and so decided to bring to bear upon the conduct of public affairs, upon the conduct of the common interests of mankind the same kind of intelligence, the same kind of forethought, the same kind of organized control that up to the time of the war had been devoted to private affairs (MW 11: 86).

Apparently, the resources and "intelligence" were available; it was merely a matter of having the political will to apply them—something easier said than done, Dewey realized. In 1923, he referred to the world as "sick" and complained about the "unwillingness to deal with the causes of its sickness" (MW 15: 43). His texts became less optimistic, and from about 1925 the notion of "crisis," which he rarely used before World War I, is more frequent in his works. Following the economic depression of October 1929, Dewey began to regard the current crisis as the third and greatest crisis in American history (LW 9: 77).[413] Most commonly, he talks of the crisis in social and political terms. In the latter case, sometimes referring to "the crisis in democracy" or "the crisis in liberalism," as we have seen. He writes that the present "social crisis" is caused by the fact that "coercive and violent force" has become the strongest guiding force in society (LW 11: 379). This is an important point because it indicates the reason Dewey, like Collingwood,

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413 Dewey says that the first crisis followed the American Revolution and the second, the Civil War.

was preoccupied with liberalism (and democracy) as *method*. Liberalism is supposed to represent the opposite of the violent and militaristic methods found among authoritarians and revolutionaries on both the left and the right. For Dewey, liberalism rely on cooperation, intelligence, and experimentalism, in contrast to the "social absolutism" of authoritarianism.

However, Dewey says that the "revolt against democracy" is but one aspect of a worldwide "crisis in human affairs" (LW 16: 358), and hence his crisis imaginary includes much more than social and political issues, and he often connects material problems to intellectual and cultural concerns. This is evident, for example, in "The Crisis in Human History: The Danger of the Retreat to Individualism." Written after the outbreak of World War II, this text emphasizes the danger of regarding individual and society as opposed rather than interdependent. "Individual," says Dewey, must be treated as an adjective rather than as a noun. A human being is not abstract, but always exists "in some 'social' context and functional relationship—parent, citizen, employer, wage-earner, farmer, merchant, teacher, lawyer, good citizen, criminal—and so on" (LW 15: 211). Dewey complains that freedom tends to be "regarded largely as the cutting loose of 'the individual' from the 'social'" (LW 15: 213), and claims that this division can be traced to religious notions of the human as essentially spiritual—"an entity whose connections with other human beings exist only in the medium of connection with a supreme over-natural Being, God" (LW 15: 216).[414] The required rejection of the dualism between the individual and society is therefore connected to the rejection of the dualism between the secular and the sacred, the material and the spiritual, the ideal and the actual, economics and ethics, means and ends, noumena and phenomena (LW 15: 217–218). This sort of separation, "goes so far back in human history, that any explanation which passes over this fact is sure to err radically in diagnosis of the present crisis" (LW 15: 218).

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414 Dewey not only finds this tendency among British nineteenth-century liberals, but also contemporary Americans, notably Walter Lippmann, who Dewey criticizes for merely regarding freedom as restricted by governmental intervention and related to the enterprise of business. If liberalism ignores participation in culture and the problem of the "lack of freedom now suffered by the great mass of workers," it will be "bankrupt and doomed," says Dewey (LW 11: 258–259).

While Dewey claims that any false dualism can lead to "disastrous logical, psychological, social and moral consequences," he views the dualism between individual and society as the main obstacle to a proper diagnosis of the present crisis (LW 15: 222). A philosophy that does not take social context into account will become "an escapist intellectual gymnastic" (LW 1: 359). To avoid this, the social and economic matters that constitutes the "hard" or "outer" aspects of the crisis must be connected to its "soft" and "inner" sides. Dewey regards the very dualism between inner and outer, or spiritual and material values, as "the great contradiction in our lives," and thinks the material aspects of civilization have become too dominant in the modern era due to the rapid developments in science and technology (EW 5: 20; LW 6: 53; LW 15: 262). He was by no means opposed to science, which he thought was neutral and a "potential tool" for spiritual liberty (LW 5: 107); but science must be guided by human values and "social effects," rather than physical effects and economic profit (LW 6: 57). Dewey therefore also criticized the conservative humanism advanced by Paul Elmer More and Irving Babbitt, which was dualistic, anti-naturalistic, and identified "the humane with the linguistic and literary" and spiritual, and attacked the "materialistic" natural sciences, as if technology was bad per se (LW 5: 265; LW 15: 188). This, Dewey thought, was basically a new but intensified manifestation of the old conflict between science and religion—a dualism he rejected as much as he rejected the dualism between naturalism and humanism.[415]

Bringing about a unity between humanistic and naturalistic education was therefore a central aspect in Dewey's pedagogy, most prevalent in *De-*

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415 I will return to Dewey's naturalistic humanism in Chapter 5. Here note that Dewey addressed the "present crisis in religion" in *A Common Faith*, where he argued that this crisis was caused by the fact that religion, like modern philosophy, had become too preoccupied with truth-claims. This, he thought, neglected the moral, practical, and "mystical" sides of faith, and reproduced the problematic opposition between religion and science and the secular and the sacred (LW 9: 15, 21, 326).

mocracy and Education.[416] Here Dewey also addressed the related problem of specialization,[417] claiming that even though a person might train to become an expert in philosophy, finance, engineering, or what have you, he may nonetheless "be inept and ill-advised in his action and judgement outside his specialty" (MW 9: 72). Education therefore needs to connect the subject matter of different fields with one another and, most importantly, with "human activities having social breadth," as the "isolation of subject matter from a social context is the chief obstruction in current practice to securing a general training of the mind" (MW 9: 73).

Dewey thought the essence of the problem of specialization could be traced to the dualism between theory and practice and the contempt for the latter. This dualism had only come into existence, however, because of the dualism between the mind and body. Because the body, throughout the history of philosophy, has been regarded as an "intruder" or a "distrac-

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416 When Dewey spoke of a "crisis in education" in the 1930s, he regarded it as caused by the socioeconomic crisis that had led to "reduced appropriations at the time when the schools have increased responsibilities put upon them by increased number of pupils and other factors due to the economic collapse… [such as] closed schools, reduced school years, enlarged classes; failure to build and equip to keep up with increase in population and obsolescence of old equipment; the closing of kindergartens; elimination of manual training, art work, music, physical training, domestic arts; abolition of special classes for the backward and handicapped; scores of thousands of graduates of normal schools and training colleges added to the unemployed; salaries cut and unpaid; night and continuation schools abandoned" (LW 9: 129). Because Dewey thought education was necessary in a liberal and democratic society, solving the social and economic crises was of the utmost importance. The educational and social crises were also intertwined, however, in the sense that education, if it was "progressive" in the sense of teaching students to examine and confront social problems, was necessary to solve the social crisis, and therefore education must not merely be conservative and aim to defend the status quo. See "Education for a Changing Social Order" (LW 9: 158–168); "Education and the Social Order" (LW 9: 175–185); "Can Education Share in Social Reconstruction?" (LW 9: 205–209).

417 This issue is also addressed in *The Public and Its Problems*, where Dewey writes: "The backwardness of social knowledge is marked in its division into independent and insulated branches of learning. Anthropology, history, sociology, morals, economics, political science, go their own ways without constant and systematized fruitful interaction." He goes on to say: "The isolation of the humane subjects from one another is connected with their aloofness from physical knowledge. The mind still draws a sharp separation between the world in which man lives and the life of man in and by that world" (LW 2: 342).

tion" from meaning and experience, practice has been seen as inferior to theory (MW 9: 148–149). This separation can be detected in the division between the labor class and the leisure class, the fine arts and industrial art, elementary education and higher education, and furthermore: "It accounts for the tendency to isolate intellectual matters till knowledge is scholastic, academic, and professionally technical" (MW 9: 143).

The historical preference for theory, mind, and intellect, which have regarded as eternal and superior to the material, practical, and external world in flux explains, according to Dewey, why reason has been privileged over experience: "Contemplation of supreme reality was the ultimate end of man to which action is subordinate. Experience had to do with mundane, profane, and secular affairs, practically necessary indeed, but of little import in comparison with supernatural objects of knowledge" (MW 9: 275). Dewey seems undecided, however, as to whether all these unwanted separations are caused by a philosophical ideal, as implied in the quotation above, or if it originates from "the hard and fast walls which mark off social groups and classes within a group: like those between rich and poor, men and women, noble and baseborn, ruler and ruled" (MW 9: 343). In "Philosophy and American National Life" (1905), Dewey claimed that the opposition of mind and matter "haunting the footsteps of historic philosophy" should be regarded as an "expression of non-democratic societies in which the 'higher' and spiritual life of the few was built upon and conditioned by the 'lower' and economic life of the many" (MW 3: 76). Apparently, Dewey thinks a connection exists between social class divisions and philosophical dualisms, and although he does not make the connection entirely clear, he seems to think they reinforce one another.

A similar analysis was offered in *Individualism, Old and New*, where Dewey wrote: "The philosopher's idea of a complete separation of mind and body is realized in thousands of industrial workers, and the result is a depressed body and an empty and distorted mind" (LW 5: 104). "The crisis in culture"—the name of one of the chapters—was said to be caused by separating not only mind and body, but the individual and society, and industry and culture. The coexistence of the mechanistic, material, scientific, and industrial aspects of society, and the cultural and humanistic, was regarded by Dewey as "the deepest and most urgent problem of our day"

(LW 5: 101). Here, Dewey emphasizes that the solution is not merely theoretical and philosophical, but material and scientific.

After World War II, Dewey addressed the conflict between science and humanism with growing urgency. His "Introduction" to the 1946 edition of *The Public and Its Problems* claimed that physical science no longer raised merely moral problems, but also political.

> The enormously increased destructiveness of war … is the immediate outcome of modern technological developments. And the frictions and conflicts which are the immediate occasion of wars are due to the infinitely multiplied and more intricate points of contact between peoples which in turn are the direct result of technological developments (LW 2: 378).

Dewey repeated, however, that physical science could be used both for bad and good, and was not to blame "as if it were a causal entity *per se*, and not a human product which does what prevailing human institutions exact of it" (LW 2: 380). What was needed, said Dewey, was "the promotion of effective foresight of the consequences of social policies and institutional arrangements" (LW 2: 381). Once again, education, intelligence, organization, cooperation, and a scientific attitude were Dewey's solutions. He regarded the "Lessons from the War—in Philosophy" to be that the division between material and spiritual values was untenable. While he rejected absolutism, Dewey was also critical of the reaction against it from analytic philosophy, which he thought suffered from "an immense emphasis upon purely formal aspects of philosophy." He described analytic philosophy as holding

> that the main connection of valid philosophy is with mathematics and that mathematics is the science that has nothing to do with anything which actually exists either in man or nature. This self-denying ordinance of philosophers is in part by way of doing penance for exaggerated claims previous philosophers have put forth. But it is also in effect if not in intention a way of evading contact with social issues (LW 14: 324).

This is followed by a quote from Collingwood's *An Autobiography*, in which he indicates that the increasing specialization, professionalization, and at-

tempt to turn philosophy into a natural science have turned philosophy further away from social life and the practical problems of common people. This, Collingwood and Dewey agreed, was a task philosophy must face.

Summary: The Persistence of Idealism

The notion that the Western world was going through a crisis was widespread in the early twentieth century, especially in the interwar era. Idealism and positivism, the two dominant philosophies of the nineteenth century, seemed outdated, or at least in need of revision in light of increasing secularization, urbanization, and industrialization. Modernity brought with it new values and cultural expressions that put a definitive end to the Victorian era. The world was moving faster and becoming increasingly interconnected due to technological innovations like cars, airplanes, and the telephone. But technology also had a destructive potential, as became painfully clear in World War I.

Political and philosophical matters were often closely bound together in the crisis imaginary. Beliefs in progress, science, rationality, humanism, objectivity, and universality were questioned alongside beliefs in democracy and liberalism. While there was widespread disagreement among intellectuals regarding the causes of and solutions to the contemporary crisis, many at least agreed upon the necessity of developing new forms of thought and practices. The main aim of this chapter has been to show what the crisis of idealism consisted of in order to better understand Collingwood's and Dewey's changing relation to that tradition.

After having been the dominant philosophical tradition in Anglo-America for about thirty years, idealism's popularity began to decline by the turn of the century, and by the interwar era, idealism was in a state of crisis. The success of evolutionary biology and increasing secularization were hard to square with the idealist interest in religion, and increasing academic specialization and professionalization did not agree with the broad approach to philosophy and the attempt to bring all aspects of experience together in a unified whole, which were chief characteristics of the idealist thought style.

In this chapter, I have argued that the increasingly critical attitudes toward idealism should be regarded as part of a broader anti-German senti-

ment that was common by the time of the outbreak of World War I. Many German philosophers were suspected of promoting Prussian authoritarianism and militarism, Hegel being one of the main targets. His political philosophy was described as holding that "might is right," and was characterized as a conservative defense of the status quo and authoritarianism. Even though Anglo-American idealists were generally liberals and had turned to Hegel and other idealists to rework their political philosophy in a more communitarian direction that inspired later British new liberals, we nevertheless find some of the harshest attacks on idealism coming from the new liberals. Most notable is the critique L. T. Hobhouse directed at British idealist Bernard Bosanquet. As we saw, attempts to nuance such interpretations of idealism were generally ignored.

Dewey and Collingwood were, or course, affected by anti-Germanism, and both distanced themselves from idealist political thought to some extent. Collingwood adopted the common trope of regarding Germans as modern barbarians and thought Hegel's philosophy was partly to blame for the sins of contemporary German politics, although he also believed the dialectical method of Hegel (and Plato) to represent an essentially liberal and democratic political methodology. Dewey, on the other hand, provided a curious and unconvincing argument in blaming German militarism on Kant's dualism of phenomena and noumena. Like Collingwood, Dewey found some dogmatic and authoritarian seeds in Hegel's thought, which he referred to as "social absolutism." He did not, however, think the criticism of the political philosophy of German idealism was applicable to later Anglo-American idealists. As we have seen, Dewey's and Collingwood's political thought was a continuation of the social liberal tradition established by T. H. Green; so too were American progressivism and British new liberalism, but because of the idealist background, social liberals in this tradition had to distance themselves from its philosophical roots.

The British new liberals and American progressives, however, had more pressing problems than distancing themselves from idealism. As we have seen, both movements collapsed around the time of World War I. British liberals had quarreled over the fate of the British Empire and became torn by internal disagreements, but were also pressured by the growing appeal of socialism and the Labour Party, which took over the role of the progres-

sive party as the Liberal Party became more centrist and primarily focused on economic management and the like. According to Collingwood, this was in fact part of the cause of liberalism's "breakdown"; liberalism's preoccupation with laissez-faire individualism and loss of emotional force paved the way for authoritarianism, both on the left and right. Saving civilization from such barbarism was, according to Collingwood, dependent on showing that civilization was a "thing of the mind." Civilization was both an ideal and the process of striving towards that ideal. For Collingwood, art, metaphysics, religion, and history, were necessary and fundamental parts of civilization. He therefore worried about the increasing popularity of analytical philosophy, which turned away from these forms of experience and knowledge toward a much narrower scientific ideal.

A difference between Collingwood and Dewey is that the former regards social and material problems to be caused by bad philosophy. Dewey would not go so far, although he agrees that philosophy should deal with such problems rather than internal academic issues. He would also agree with Collingwood that philosophy would be much poorer and less meaningful if it turned away from religion and aesthetics and became too technical and theoretical. In defending a broad notion of philosophy as a form of cultural criticism, Dewey and Collingwood in a sense remained faithful to the idealist thought style as opposed to the emerging analytical tradition in philosophy. The latter was launched around the turn of the century in Cambridge, found American representatives in the "new" and "critical realism" of the 1910s, and was subsequently promoted in 1920s Vienna. The analysts regarded idealism to be their main opponent and wanted philosophy to follow the methods of natural science, which would provide a secure ground for knowledge. The analysts turned away from metaphysics, aesthetics, history, and theology, and held that propositions that could not be verified must be regarded as meaningless. Truth, according to the analysts, was an all-or-nothing affair. They embraced the correspondence theory of truth and retained a sharp dualism between subject and object. The analytical thought style was indeed very different from the idealistic.

In addition to the success of natural science and analytical philosophy, another reason for idealism's decline was the death of leading idealists such as Harris (1909), Royce (1916), Caird (1908), Jones (1922), Bradley (1924),

and Bosanquet (1923). Recent studies have argued, however, that we should not be misled and think of idealism as being extinct after World War I. Both William Mander and Admir Skodo have used the notion of an idealist "afterlife" to underscore the continuing influence of idealism long after it had lost its place as the dominant philosophical tradition in Britain—a notion that should be equally applicable in the United States and other nations.[418] Mander regards the interwar era as the period of idealist afterlife, and points to the fact that analytical philosophers still argued against idealism—testifying to its lasting importance—as well as to republications and posthumous publications such as Bradley's *Collected Essays*. New idealist works were also being published, notably Muirhead's *The Platonic Tradition* (1931) and, from a younger generation, Michael Oakeshott's *Experience and its Modes* (1933), not to mention, of course, Collingwood's *Speculum Mentis* (1924).

Skodo's use of the notion of an idealist afterlife is slightly different from Mander's. Rather than applying the concept to a period, Skodo uses it to show how idealist themes, formulations of problems, and concepts continued to live on, even among thinkers who did not identify as idealists.[419] Understood in this sense, idealist afterlife is, for example, represented by the British new liberals working in the tradition of T. H. Green. Another representative is Dewey, who stopped identifying as an idealist in the early twentieth century but remained under idealisms influence throughout his life. As stated previously, however, we should keep in mind that the tradition of idealism was under constant revision, and hybridized with other philosophies. Both Collingwood and Dewey, for instance, revised and rejected certain aspects common to previous idealists, most notably the transcendental and absolute elements. That said, I do claim that their

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418 Mander, *British Idealism*, 526–556; Skodo, *The Afterlife of Idealism*. While one might argue that we are still in the era of idealism's afterlife, I merely use this notion to point to idealist influences in early twentieth-century Britain and the United States (especially the interwar era), when idealism was no longer the dominant philosophical tradition and was in steady decline.

419 Skodo shows that the "neo-idealist" philosophy of history promoted by Collingwood, Oakeshott, and Croce influenced perspectivism, pluralism, humanist historicism, and the idea of historical imagination among non-idealist British historians after World War II.

style of thought remained essentially idealistic, and that they therefore provide us with two examples of idealism's persistence—or afterlife—in the interwar era.

4. The Quest for Unity

Collingwood's and Dewey's quests for unity are but two examples of a widespread preoccupation with "wholeness," "holism," "synthesis," "one-ness," and "organicism" during the decades around the turn of the century. What I tentatively call "the holistic turn" was inspired by romanticism and post-Kantian idealism, and should be understood as a reaction against positivism, mechanism, materialism, atomism, individualism, utilitarianism, and the negative effects of modernity and industrial society, such as scientific specialization, and the exploitation of nature. As we have seen, these were among the problems Anglo-American idealists addressed, and it is not controversial to regard unity as a central idealist concern. In fact, I claim that the preoccupation with unity is one of the most characteristic features of the idealist thought style, and one of the aspects that most clearly separates idealists from analytical philosophers.

The aim of this chapter is to analyze the notion of unity. It is, however, important to stress that unity was not merely an idealist and philosophical concern, but a much broader cultural issue. The first section of this chapter therefore provides a brief synchronic conceptual history of unity and its partner concepts during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As we will see, terms like synthesis, holism, and organicism were sometimes, but not necessarily, synonymous, and can mean slightly different things in different contexts. Unity was promoted by proponents of different political ideologies, in different religious faiths, and in different scientific fields. I will not, of course, attempt to cover all the various meanings that have been given to these interrelated concepts; I will merely provide enough examples to illustrate what was at stake in the debate between holism and mechanism (and their partner concepts). This will help us understand why Anglo-American idealists, as well as Dewey and Collingwood, found the notion of unity appealing.

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide evidence and arguments for my interpretation of the overarching aim of Collingwood's and Dewey's thought: a quest for unity. I will show the role unity and its partner concepts played in Dewey's and Collingwood's thought, and will argue that their quests should be regarded as a continuation of Hegelianism and Anglo-American idealism. My main analytical contribution consists of identifying four interrelated types of unity in idealist thought: *unity of opposites*, *unity in diversity*, *unity of experience,* and *social unity*.

I claim that Dewey and Collingwood shared the idealist notion of unity of opposites, according to which central philosophical dualisms such as subject and object, mind and matter, the knower and the known, the real and the ideal, theory and practice, and the individual and society must be rejected. The rejection of the latter dualism was especially important, for it helped them dismiss the atomistic individualism found in early nineteenth-century liberalism and replace it with a liberalism aimed at the common good or social unity.

Unlike some idealists, Collingwood and Dewey did not embrace monism. They did not regard wholes (such as a society) to be greater than their parts. As they see it, human nature is social, and individuality is impossible without a society or community of some sorts. But neither is society possible without individuals, who should not be reduced to mere tools for the state. Hence the relation between the individual members of society and the whole of that society is the organic relation of unity in diversity.

Dewey's and Collingwood's preoccupation with wholeness must also be understood in relation to the Hegelian notion of unity of experience. This view led the idealists to favor a coherentist view of truth over the classical correspondence theory, which was regarded as atomistic. It also led the idealists to see politics, art, religion, philosophy, history, and the natural sciences as interdependent modes of thought and practice that are equally important if we are to experience life in its fullest, most authentic, and meaningful way. It is important to remember that for Dewey and Collingwood, philosophical reflection was always meant to have a practical impact and to address specific problems, which is why their preoccupation with unity must not only be understood in relation to their shared idealist

background, but in the context of the broader social and cultural concerns of the time, as covered in the previous chapter.

The Holistic Turn

The longing for wholeness, synthesis, and organic unity was a reaction to nineteenth-century positivism and materialism, which, according to the critics, led to individualistic atomism, scientific specialization, and a mechanistic world view. Visions of wholeness were formulated by early nineteenth-century romantics and post-Kantian idealists, among them Hegel, Schlegel, Fichte, Schelling, Schiller and Goethe. Among these thinkers, the "absolute" came to stand for the ultimate reality, a philosophical equivalent of God. They did, however, not always agree on the meaning of the absolute. Hegel famously criticized Schelling for being a formalist who failed to give content to the absolute and treated it as "the shapeless repetition of one and the same idea, which is applied in an external fashion to different material." The result was, according to Hegel, an abstract idea of oneness which he compared to "the night in which, as we say, all cows are black—that is the very *naïveté* of emptiness of knowledge."[420]

In contrast, Hegel suggested that the absolute was not something we reach immediate or intuitive knowledge of. Rather, it is interdependent with its phenomenal manifestations and our knowledge of the absolute is part of the absolute itself. It is therefore not independent from our concepts. Furthermore, the absolute is not static but dynamic and developing.[421] While, for example, Dewey and Collingwood navigated away from the notion of the absolute they nevertheless kept the idea of constant development of becoming which also influenced their view that science and

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420 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, transl. J. B. Baillie (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2003), 8–9.

421 See "absolute" and "being, nothing and becoming," in Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 27–29, 45. Besides from the absolute, Hegel also used the notion "the whole" (*das Ganze*), which could refer both to an entity consisting of parts existing prior to it, or an entity existing prior to its parts, which is not to say that the whole is static. While a whole, such as a person, may be part of a larger whole, a family or community, a "totality" (*Totalität*) is not part of a larger totality. See "whole and parts, totality and moments," in ibid., 309–310.

philosophy was not a body of knowledge but rather the process of reaching that knowledge.

The "quest for unity" became widespread and was sometimes detached from its idealist roots. D. H. Meyer remarks that this was "an important feature of Victorian thinking" in both Britain and America that could be found, for example, both among idealists and non-idealist followers of Herbert Spencer.[422] In Britain, we also find visions of unity in a socialist like Robert Owen, a conservative like Edmund Burke, and a romanticist like John Ruskin. Their organic visions of society were a reaction to the fragmentation of society associated with industrialization and capitalism. According to Ruskin, the society needed to create conditions for organic experience "wholeness of being."[423] At the end of the nineteenth century, this ideal emerged in new guises among proponents of *Lebensphilosophie*, vitalism, neo-idealism, and pragmatism. It was also central to the German *Gestalt* school of psychology that emerged between 1890 and 1920 and was embraced by certain biologists and other natural scientists.

Holistic thinkers and scientists rejected the narrow empiricist view of experience as sensory data. Like Kant, they rejected the view of the self as a passive registrant of external sense impressions, and gave the self an active and synthesizing role. Importantly, holism was not only a narrow philosophical or scientific stance, but had political, social, and even existential implications. It was a reaction against certain features of modernity which seemed to lead to mechanization and fragmentation of life, and disconnected man from society and nature.[424] The worry that humans might turn into an anonymous mass and become reduced to mere cogs in the machine of society was widespread in culture, and portrayed in movies like Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) and Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936).

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422 D. H. Meyer, "American Intellectuals and the Victorian Crisis of Faith," in *Victorian America*, 75.

423 Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (London: Vintage, 2017 [1958]), 186–187. Williams notes that the "common enemy" of both Marxist and conservative organicism was liberalism. Ibid., 189. But, as we shall see, some (idealist) liberals were indeed very keen to defend an organic and holistic notion of society and human nature.

424 Anne Harrington, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1996), 3.

The search for an organic and holistic philosophy that could tackle the perceived fragmentation and mechanization of life intensified in the years following World War I. In Germany, the notion of holism was politicized as it became important to the vision of the nation's future. Wholeness and *Gestalt* were central concepts in the construction of the mythologies of National Socialism, which often regarded the German people as a mystical whole. The state was thought of as an organic entity that was greater than the individuals it comprised.

Although not exclusively German, holism was particularly prominent in the Weimar Republic, which, in Peter Gay's words, suffered from a "hunger for wholeness." This hunger was reinforced by a fear of modernity, and was shared by people of different political, scientific and religious orientations.[425] The meaning given to wholeness in the Weimar Republic differed slightly from the meaning ascribed to it a century earlier: "For the first time, it also began to privilege the growth and cultivation of the 'whole' *self*—body and mind—as a necessary foundation for collective wholeness."[426] The Weimar conception of holism was organic and emphasized the relation between humans and nature; furthermore, the concept gained meanings that had social repercussions:

> These were the years when, in the universities, academics first began to turn urgent calls for professional and national "wholeness," "oneness," and the "whole" into slogans for their fight against the fragmentation of knowledge, the shallowness of modern individualism, and the loss of community values.[427]

The German preoccupation with wholeness can also be seen in what Fritz Ringer has called a "movement for synthesis," which aimed to turn the

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425 Peter Gay, "The Hunger for Wholeness: Trials of Modernity", in *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), see, especially, 100–101.
426 Harrington, *Reenchanted Science*, 24.
427 Ibid.

compartmentalized realms of knowledge into a meaningful whole.[428] The synthesis movement was critical of the universities' learning ideals and proposed that neo-Romantic and neo-Hegelian notions of wholeness should replace them.[429] According to Ringer, these ideals were widespread and could be found in a variety of disciplines:

> Synthesis, the whole, understanding, viewing: the slogans were always the same. Biologists and physicians meant to study the whole organism; pedagogues and psychologists, the whole man. In sociology and economics, it was the whole community. In every discipline, scholars made war upon individualism, naturalism, mechanism, and the like.[430]

Although the slogans were the same, their meanings differed. In early twentieth-century Germany, synthesis could signify: (1) the opposite of overspecialization or generalization; (2) "the converse of analysis in the vague and far-reaching sense of intuition, viewing, wholeness"; (3) a cultural synthesis, or fusion of the German and Western European traditions; or (4) a path toward "a yet undefined set of social and cultural values and conditions."[431]

Like synthesis, holism could stand for a variety of slightly different views: "Some holism was concerned with finding alternatives to the view of the organism as a mere sum of its elementary parts and processes (what was often denounced as atomism)."[432] Such holism aimed to understand processes through their function in the organism as a whole. For others, holism went further than seeing individual organisms as wholes, for even individual wholes needed to be approached as parts of a bigger system, such as nature as a whole. In psychosomatic medicine, holism meant a rejection of treating the body and mind as separate entities.[433]

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428 Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890–1933* (Hanover: Univ. Press of New England, 1990), 280–282, 350–351. See also, Gay, *Weimar Culture*, 80–81.

429 Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins*, 393–394.

430 Ibid., 387.

431 Ibid., 401–402.

432 Harrington, *Reenchanted Science*, xvii.

433 Ibid.

The central claim of holism is that the parts of a whole are interconnected, and that wholes have certain properties their parts lack. It is also a methodological stance that stands in opposition to methodological individualism.[434] According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the South African botanist and statesman general Jan Christian Smuts coined the term in *Holism and Evolution* (1926).[435] Smuts's holism was indebted to the Hegelian notion of *Ganzheit* and the idea that the internal spiritual world and the external material world are part of an indivisible unity often referred to as "the whole."[436] Smuts also drew upon the poetry of Walt Whitman and the concluding sections of *On the Origin of Species*, where Darwin claims that everything in nature is interconnected.[437] Hence, like many late nineteenth and early twentieth-century idealists, Smuts regarded Hegel and Darwin to be compatible. He must, however, have been pretty much alone among idealists in defending a kind of naturalism.[438]

The British idealists invited Smuts to lecture at Oxford in 1929, and the manuscript to *Holism and Evolution* was favorably reviewed by Colling-

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434 "Holism," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Robert Audi and Paul Audi, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2015), 470.

435 The entry in the OED mentions that organicism can be used synonymously with holism, but organicism also refers to the fundamental interconnectedness of everything, which was a common notion in some versions of idealism. Two definitions given to wholeness by the OED are of relevance here: (1) "The quality, state, or condition of being undivided, or of having all parts or elements properly combined or connected; unity, completeness, fullness, perfection"; and (2) "An instance of this; a thing made up of combined or connected parts; a complex unity or system; a thing complete in itself." It is mentioned that wholeness often has spiritual or religious connotations, while unity and synthesis have wider ranges of use and definitions. The OED mentions both Hegelian dialectics and Kant's idea of "unifying the isolated data of sensation into a cognizable whole" in relation to "synthesis." See "holism," "wholeness," "synthesis," and "unity," in the OED Online. June 2019. Oxford Univ. Press. https://www.oed.com. Accessed July 10, 2019.

436 Jan Christian Smuts, *Holism and Evolution* (London: Macmillan, 1927), https://archive.org/details/holismandevoluti032439mbp. The German term *Holismus* was coined in 1932, as Smuts' work was first translated according to Peder Anker, *Imperial Ecology: Environmental Order in the British Empire, 1895–1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2001), 46, 180.

437 Anker, *Imperial Ecology*, 69.

438 Only, however, if naturalism was freed from materialistic connotations and reinterpreted in somewhat spiritual terms. Smuts, *Holism and Evolution*, 338–339.

wood's teacher J. A. Smith and his friend, Alexander Lindsay. J. S. Haldane wrote approvingly about Smuts's book in *The Sciences and Philosophy* (1929), where he compared Smuts with Samuel Alexander, Alfred North Whitehead, Henri Bergson, and Lloyd Morgan. Collingwood also saw an affinity among these thinkers, who he regarded as modern followers of Hegel.[439]

Smuts's Oxford lecture was followed by "the most important ecological debate of the interwar period."[440] The debate between holism and mechanism was related to the ongoing debate between idealism and realism, and neither debate was narrowly scientific or philosophical, as social and even existential issues were at stake.[441] Analytical philosophers did not generally approve of holism.[442] When Bertrand Russell criticized holism in *A History of Western Philosophy* (1945), he regarded Smuts and Hegel as its main proponents. Russell argued that the idea that parts only can be understood in relation to wholes led Hegel to the stance that individuals exist for the sake of the state, and not the other (liberal) way around.[443] As we saw in the previous chapter, this is the view that led L. T. Hobhouse to criticize Bosanquet's Hegelian theory of the state, according to which the state, "the whole," preceded and was greater than the individual. Here we should note that other idealist liberals like Green and Caird promoted a weaker kind of holism; they viewed individuals as interrelated and thought there was a

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439 Anker, *Imperial Ecology*, 118, 124; John Scott Haldane, *The Sciences and Philosophy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1929), 136–138, https://archive.org/details/in.ernet. dli.2015.77566. Collingwood's *The Idea of Nature* was based on lectures at Magdalen in the early 1930s and posthumously published. It is not known if Collingwood attended Smuts's Oxford lectures, but he wrote appreciatively of Hegel, Smuts, and the process metaphysics of Whitehead and Alexander, between which he saw an affinity (IN: 159).

440 Anker, *Imperial Ecology*, 118.

441 Ibid., 119, 136.

442 When holism became a respectable standpoint in analytical philosophy in the 1950s it was in the sense of "meaning holism," a doctrine attributed to W. V. O. Quine.

443 Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, (London: Routledge, 2004 [1946]), 671–674.

mutual and organic interdependence between the state or society and its citizens.[444]

Russell's critique of holism also stressed that all knowing starts with parts (methodological individualism), and that the consequence of a holistic approach to knowledge therefore is that no knowledge exists at all. It was the combined influence of Hegel and biology, according to Russell, that shaped Dewey's "love" for organicism, and the idea that inquiry was aimed toward "unified wholes."[445] Like Russell, Karl Popper also associated holism with methodological collectivism, which he, like Russell, rejected in favor of methodological individualism. Popper also associated holism with romanticism and socialism and Hegel and Marx, and worried that holism might lead to totalitarianism.[446]

Analytic philosophers supported unity in different senses than the idealists, however. A. J. Ayer, for example, argued against the notion of "organic wholes" and "monism" (understood as interconnectedness of facts or events), but was for the "unity of science" in the sense that he rejected "the unnecessary multiplicity of current scientific terminologies." That said, Ayer thought that the importance was "not so much the unity of

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444 Avital Simhony has argued that Hegel and Bosanquet present a holistic organicism according to which the state is everything, the individual nothing. The whole precedes and is more real than its parts, which are determined by the whole. In contrast, T. H. Green and Edward Caird present a non-holistic organicism according to which there is a mutual dependence between the parts (individuals) and the whole (the state), and an interdependence between the parts. If we follow this distinction, the latter view, which is compatible with liberalism, is clearly shared by Dewey and Collingwood. See Simhony, "Idealist Organicism: Beyond Holism and Individualism," *History of Political Thought* 12:3 (Autumn, 1991), 515–535.

445 Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 734. Holism and organicism share the idea that the parts of an entity can only be understood in relation to the entity in its entirety, and that there is a mutual dependence between parts and whole. Organicism also holds that certain entities, such as the universe, the state, or works of art are analogous to biological organisms. See, Audi and Audi, eds., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 746–747.

446 Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. 2, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 1966), 91; Idem., *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: Ark, 1986), 17–19, 76–93; Harrington, *Reenchanted Science,* 191–92. Popper was correct in noting that holistic ideas could be found among socialists; "totality," for example, was a central Marxist notion. On this, see Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

science as the unity of philosophy with science."[447] The impetus behind Otto Neurath's famous *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science* was similar, the idea being to find a universal language of observation modeled on the natural sciences. Hence, this is very different from the common idealist attempt to bring about unity of experience. Nevertheless, Dewey was persuaded to contribute to the project. He initially hesitated because, unlike the logical positivists, he did not believe in atomic facts and propositions. According to Ernest Nagel, Neurath, standing in Dewey's home, is supposed to have "raised his right hand as if he were taking an oath in a court of law… and solemnly declared, 'I *swear* we don't believe in atomic propositions.'"[448] That settled it: Dewey contributed *Theory of Valuation* (1939), even though his vision of unity was rather different from that of the logical positivists. When Dewey addressed "Unity of Science as a Social Problem" in an article for the *Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, he regarded science as an intelligent and experimental attitude for dealing with problems, in contrast to habit, routine, prejudice, and dogmatism. Bringing about a unity of science was therefore a question of cultivating this attitude in all aspects of life and making specialists in the different sciences cooperate with one another, while resisting the urge to define "the terms of all the sciences in terms of some one science" and without laying "down in advance a platform to be accepted" (LW 13: 275–276). Dewey recognized that the rapid increase in scientific knowledge resisted the idea of "any complete synthesis." "Nevertheless," he added, "the [practical] need for integration of specialized results of science remains, and philosophy should contribute to the satisfaction of the need" (LW 4: 249). Bringing about a unity of science was therefore an important philosophical task that could

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447 Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, 61, 243–245.
448 Ernest Nagel quoted by Steven M. Cahn, "Introduction" (LW 13: x–xi).

provide a counterweight to the tendency of scientific specialization.[449]

What this brief overview aims to highlight is the fact that notions like unity, holism, organicism, and so on can be found in many different fields of science, among proponents of all political ideologies, and in different philosophies. The meaning of these abstract concepts varies somewhat,. The the debates are, however, seldom merely linguistic, but have broad cultural and existential significance; this is why the idealists were reluctant to abandon these notions, even when they became associated with authoritarianism.

The Idealist Quest for Unity

It is often recognized that unity was a major concern for idealist philosophers, and the most common description of what this idea meant to them is unity of experience.[450] According to Boucher and Vincent,

> one may say that the problem of philosophy in Idealism is to identify and interrogate the different forms or modes of experience; account for how they emerge out of the undifferentiated whole of experience; and, reconcile their differences into a unity. This entails exploring the internal relations of the forms; the relations between each of the forms; and that between the forms and the whole.[451]

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449 To my knowledge, Collingwood did not comment on the logical positivists attempt to bring about unity of science, but he would, of course, reject the positivist idea that philosophy should adopt the methodology and vocabulary of the natural sciences. To the extent that there exists a unity of science, this is a historical unity: "The history of science can show how the various sciences have grown up one out of another, and can make intelligible their inter-relations. Here again, history solves the question which science asks but cannot answer: the unity of history at once annuls and makes intelligible the pluralism of science" (SM: 193). Hence, all sciences are interconnected but their unity is a unity in diversity.

450 Mander prefers the term "unity of knowledge," however, and describes it as one of the most common themes among idealists; see Mander, *British Idealism*, 3. In fact, the idealists were at times notoriously vague as to what they wanted to unify; mind, knowledge, science, and experience are sometimes used interchangeably.

451 Boucher and Vincent, *British Idealism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 61.

This is an accurate description, although it must be emphasized that idealists gave experience a rather different meaning than positivists and empiricists. For the latter, experience meant sensory data, which was regarded as that which led to knowledge. Idealists rejected this passive view of experience and argued that it required the active involvement of the human mind—for example, in the process of interpretation. For idealists, experience was generally something larger and more desirable than knowledge, and all individual forms of experience formed an interconnected whole, as did the different aspects of philosophy—ethics, aesthetics, epistemology, logic, and metaphysics.

Because the notion of unity tends to be rather abstract in idealist philosophy, the purpose of this section is to provide analytical clarification and show what types of unity preoccupied the idealists. I claim that at least four similar and interconnected kinds of unity can be identified among Anglo-American idealists: unity of experience, unity in diversity, unity of opposites, and social unity.[452] These were also embraced by Dewey and Collingwood, and their lasting preoccupation with these notions proves that idealism had a lifelong impact on their thought.

Most idealists would agree with F. H. Bradley that the task of philosophy is "the effort to comprehend the universe, not simply piecemeal or by fragments, but somehow as a whole."[453] Bernhard Bosanquet expressed a similar idea: "The essence of philosophy lies in the connected vision of the totality of things, maintaining in every point the subordination of every element and factor to every other element and factor as conditioned by the totality."[454] We also find these views on the other side of the Atlantic. For example, George Sylvester Morris claimed that "mind … must reduce its conception of the universe, given first in the form of isolated, unexplained impressions, to the order and harmony of a rational, and hence explicable,

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452 The focus on American and, mainly, British idealists in this section is a necessary limitation. We would, however, find similar ideas among idealists of other nationalities.

453 F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1908), 1.

454 Bernard Bosanquet, "Science and Philosophy," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. 15 (1914–1915), 13.

apprehensible whole."[455] According to Josiah Royce, individual experiences must be related to "some more organised whole" or "Absolute Experience, for which the conception of an absolute reality … is fulfilled by the very contents that get presented to this Experience. This Absolute Experience is related to our experience as an organic whole to its own fragments."[456] These statements suggest that the idealists had a broad conception of philosophy and that they placed metaphysics at its center. They also point to one of the most prevalent themes in idealist thinking: the preoccupation with unity of experience and its connection to coherentism and organicism.

To get an idea of the meaning and relation of "the absolute" and experience we may turn to Bradley, who described "the absolute" as an individual system consisting of experience. "Experience," he said, "is the same as reality." "Everything is experience, and experience is one."[457] He regarded experience to include perception, thought, will, feeling, and desire, but also spoke of theoretical, practical, and aesthetic "modes" of experience. None of these modes does, however, have "supremacy" over the others. They are all part of the unity of experience, but how they "come together into a single unity must remain unintelligible". Hence, the absolute, as "a whole of experience," remains unexplained.[458] While most idealists agreed with Bradley's broad notion of experience and his idea that experience consisted of different "modes," there were disagreement regarding what the modes were. Neither would all idealists agree with Bradley that "the Absolute has no history."[459] More historically minded "neo-idealists" like Collingwood and Croce would not accept this doctrine, neither would, of course, Dewey.

For the idealists, all modes of experience were interrelated: knowledge and truth could only be reached by taking the whole of experience into account. The kind of idealism referred to here is absolute idealism (primarily influenced by Hegel), and it seeks a principle that will bring unity to

455 Morris, *British Thought and Thinkers*, 13.

456 Josiah Royce, *The Conception of God* (New York: Macmillan, 1897), 42–44, https://archive.org/details/conceptionofgodp00royc/mode/2up.

457 Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, 145, 457.

458 Ibid., 547–548.

459 Ibid., 499.

the multiple manifestations and particulars of the universe. T. H. Green tackled this problem in his *Prolegomena to Ethics* where he argued that the "common being" of "a plurality of things" does not eliminate their diversity. But neither do their unity come about by itself but through "some unifying principle analogous to that of our understanding."[460] The "unifying principle" was mind or experience but, according to Green, not merely the individual human mind, but what he calls the "eternal consciousness," which is his version of Hegel's absolute.[461]

Eternal consciousness, the absolute, God, spirit, unity of experience, and the whole are, then, related and sometimes synonymous idealist concepts. There was no definite agreement regarding the meaning of these terms, although idealists did agree that individual facts or persons cannot be treated without reference to the whole of which they are part. They therefore rejected individualism and empiricism, as well as the correspondence theory of truth—the preferred epistemology of realism—because of its allegedly naive view of the subject-object relation. Realists viewed subject and object as distinct entities, and held that the knowing subject had direct access to objective reality. Idealists opposed this view because they did not accept that the mind was a passive recipient of outside reality, but believed it had an active and creative role in constituting it. Many idealists therefore preferred a coherentist view of truth, according to which a particular truth is interconnected with all other truths and dependent on its place in the whole.[462] Hence the idealist epistemology was contextualist rather than atomist; it held synthesis to be a necessary complement to analysis.

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460 T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, 31–32.

461 Green describes the "eternal consciousness" as "independent of time". Ibid., 72. Neither Dewey nor Collingwood would agree. They both reject the notion of "eternity" and has a historical view of reality and experience.

462 The best idealist account of the coherentist view of truth is Harold H. Joachim, "Truth as Coherence," *The Nature of Truth*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1939). Joachim's definition of the coherence-theory is: "Truth in its essential nature is that systematic coherence which is the character of a significant whole. A 'significant whole' is an organized individual experience, self-fulfilling and self-fulfilled. Its organization *is* the process of its self-fulfillment." Ibid., 76. The processual, holistic, and experiential aspects of truth are shared by both Dewey and Collingwood, although none of them accepted the coherence-theory.

The idealists agreed that insights into the nature of the absolute—that is, ultimate reality—could be reached through poetry and religion as well as philosophy, and the boundaries between these forms of knowledge were rather fluid. "Morality, Philosophy, Art and Religion are illustrating the same principle," said Henry Jones. But his unity of experience was a unity in diversity, for the different forms of experience have their own tasks and methods: "if their voices are distinct they make the richer harmony," and "[t]here is no meaning in unity except amongst differences."[463]

The doctrines of unity of experience and unity in diversity were also connected to the idealist insistence on the unity of opposites, such as between subject and object, inner and outer, nature and spirit, mind and matter, the individual and the community. It should therefore be no surprise to find that Edward Caird identified dualism as the real enemy of idealism.[464] His concern for unity, harmony, the whole and synthesis is prevalent in his 1881 address on "The Problem of Philosophy at the Present Time," in which he mentions these concepts more than forty times. The "all-embracing whole"; the "principle of unity" and "the unity of all things with each other and with the mind that knows them"; and the "ultimate," "universal," and "absolute" "synthesis of life" are suggested as answers to problems caused by fragmentation due to increasing knowledge and prevailing philosophical dualisms.[465] "The need for philosophy," said Caird,

> arises out of the broken harmony of a spiritual life, in which the different elements or factors seem to be set in irreconcilable opposition to each other; in which, for example, the religious consciousness, the consciousness of the infinite, is at war with the secular consciousness, the consciousness of the finite; or again, the consciousness of the self, with the consciousness of the external world.[466]

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463 Henry Jones, *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, 130, 207.

464 According to his pupil J. S. Mackenzie, "Edward Caird as a Philosophical Teacher," *Mind* 18:72 (October 1909), 515.

465 Edward Caird, "The Problem of Philosophy at the Present Time," 195–96, 204, 206, 219, 222.

466 Ibid., 191–192.

Here Caird brings our attention to dualisms—such as the secular and the sacred, the self and world, the infinite and the finite—which he finds it necessary to unify. Other problematic dualisms Caird attacks include those between religion and science (or faith and reason), idealism and materialism, and mind and matter.[467] He criticizes Herbert Spencer and T. H. Huxley for upholding these dichotomies, but spends the most space discussing Auguste Comte's notion of the positive, or scientific, stage of life, which Caird thinks fails to provide the necessary tools for synthesis because Comte rejects the need for God or "an Absolute."[468] This is not to say, however, that Caird rejected science. While admitting the difficulty of the task, he suggests that philosophy should provide a "higher interpretation" of scientific facts and "show itself able to deal with the manifold results of empirical science, giving to each of them its proper place and value."[469] To "give up the idea of a universal synthesis"—that is, the unity of experience—would mean "practically giving up philosophy altogether," says Caird, while recognizing that the rapidly expanding body of knowledge increases the difficulty of the task.[470]

Over three decades later, we find similar views expressed by Bernard Bosanquet. In a paper for the Aristotelian Society that was an explicit reply to a lecture by Bertrand Russell, Bosanquet argues that philosophy should be something much broader than what Russell suggested. Metaphysics has a central place in Bosanquet's conception of philosophy, which concerns "the whole body of experience" and "the whole complex of being."[471] This is meant as a contrast to Russell and others who, in Bosanquet's view, reduce philosophy to logic and the methods of the special sciences: "The more an enquiry burrows into its own hole, neither depending on a general view of what we experience, nor contributing to one, the more nearly

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467 Ibid., 192–193. The fact that Caird not merely rejects materialism, but wishes to unify it with idealism is another example of the Anglo-American idealists' attempt to hybridize the insights they found in Kant and Hegel with other philosophical doctrines and traditions.

468 Ibid., 200.

469 Ibid., 226.

470 Ibid.

471 Bosanquet, "Science and Philosophy," 8, 12. Dewey's opinion of this paper was discussed in Chapter 2.

it is a special science and the less it belongs to philosophy."[472] Here we again see the importance of wholeness, interrelatedness, and unity of experience as opposed to scientific specialization. While Bosanquet and other idealists agree that the special sciences are needed, they stress that philosophy must retain its role as a synthetic endeavor without which the meaning of the special sciences would become obscured.

The insistence on bringing about a unity of opposites between dualisms should not, however, be thought of as an attempt to eradicate all differences and distinctions. Idealists instead followed the Hegelian principle of unity in diversity, or identity in difference.[473] It was, for example, the inclination for unity in diversity that made Edward Caird prefer Hegel over Fichte and Schelling. The latter two, like Hegel, realized that Kant failed to synthesize the most important of dualisms—that between subject and object, from which followed the dualisms of phenomena and noumena, experience and reason, thought and sense, nature and spirit, faith and knowledge—but neither Fichte nor Schelling endorsed unity in diversity, according to Caird. Only Hegel's organic notion of unity did.[474]

Since analysis was not regarded as opposed to or in conflict with synthesis, but a part of it,[475] one should be careful when attributing monism to the idealists, which is the view Russell attributed to Bradley, against his intentions.[476] Josiah Royce also held unity to exist in diversity and Bradley was his main inspiration. Royce does, however, recognize that Bradley fails

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472 Ibid., 4.

473 To exclude difference from identity turns it into an abstract notion, warns Hegel. Identity and difference are not independent but co-exists. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel's Logic: Being Part one of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, transl. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 167–168. Mander claims that according to Wallace, the task of Hegel's *Logic* was "to demonstrate the identity (in difference) of subject and object, to discover the underlying 'primeval unity' which manifests itself in the duality of mind and matter." Mander, *British Idealism*, 41.

474 Edward Caird, *Hegel* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1883), 122–129, https://archive.org/details/hegelcairo0cairuoft/.

475 See Mander, *British Idealism*, 120–123.

476 Ibid., 111. This is not to say that monism (in some sense) could not be attributed to some of the idealists. I do, however, believe that it is best to avoid the term, since it often is understood as it was by Russell and, as we will see below, by some of the idealists themselves, who therefore rejected monism.

to show how unity is brought about. It remains a mysterious presupposition. While Royce agrees that the unity is "self-evident," he argues that Bradley's problem is that he regards diversity as something wholly external to thought, when it should be recognized that the intellect not only unifies but also has the capacity to diversify.[477] It is, however, hard to see that this adjustment would have changed, for example, Russell's view of idealism.

The abstract relation between unity and diversity may, however, become clearer when illustrated by how the Anglo-American idealists, under the influence of Hegel, came to stress the importance of unifying individual and society. This was the major concern in Bradley's *Ethical Studies*. Bradley held that the whole self was more than its parts, and to be fully realized—which he claimed was the aim of ethics—the self must embrace its place as "a member in a whole," as "an organ in the social organism."[478] Hence individuality requires community, for without social ties humans are nothing but abstractions. We only exist "as the specification or particularization of that which is common, which is the same amid diversity."[479] Therefore, says Bradley, "identity and diversity, sameness and difference, imply one another, and depend for their meaning on one another."[480] It is only by living for something more than ourselves that we develop individuality; we only realize ourselves as social beings as we seek that "unity—on the one side of the being for another… and on the other side of the being for oneself."[481] It is therefore false to regard the welfare of a community, state, or society as separate from the welfare of its members: "The community is moral, because it realizes personal morality; personal morality is moral, because and in so far as it realizes the moral whole."[482]

A person's place in the whole of the social organism to which that person belongs also determines what constitutes an ethically correct action. We should act, says Bradley, in accordance with our "station and its duties"

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477 Josiah Royce, *The World and the Individual* (New York: Macmillan, 1900), 482–494, https://archive.org/details/worldindividualooroyciala/.

478 Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, 79, 163.

479 Ibid., 171.

480 Ibid., 167.

481 Ibid., 186.

482 Ibid., 188.

("My Station and Its Duties" is the title of the most famous—and contro-versial— chapter of *Ethical Studies*). Bradley argues that ethics change historically and differ among communities, but still insists on the univer-sal nature of morality. Even though he asserted that "morality is an endless process" that "feels the impulse to transcend its existing reality," [483] Bradley's ethics were sometimes interpreted as a conservative defense of tradition, but nonetheless influenced the more liberal-minded idealists in both their ethical and political thought. For example, T. H. Green agreed that self-re-alization is the aim of ethics and that this idea meant working for the common good, or social unity. Freedom therefore is not the pursuit mere-ly of individual goals, but "the true end of all our efforts as citizens"; it is "the liberation of the powers of all men equally for contributions to a common good."[484] In other words, Green agreed that we are social by na-ture, and therefore thought the dualism between individual and society should be abandoned. This was also the view of Caird, who claimed that it was their dualistic view of self and society that led the Sceptics, Epicu-reans and Stoics to "[give] up the hope of organising their own social re-lations" and therefore "[fall] back upon the idea of an inner life, which might maintain harmony with itself in the face even of an outward chaos." Caird argued that such a view was mistaken, for we only know ourselves as parts of something bigger outside ourselves. Like Green and Bradley, Caird thought that we only realize ourselves "by becoming the servants of an end which is being realized in the world."[485]

The idealist preoccupation with unity and organicism had practical, eth-ical, and political implications. The rejection of a sharp dichotomy between the individual and society brought citizenship to the center of idealist social thought and was key in the attempt to respond to the challenges of the social question and bring about social unity. The latter was, in fact, a major

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483 Ibid., 313.

484 T. H. Green, "Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract," 370, 372. See also the discussion of this text in Chapter 2. Green develops his notion of the common good in book 3 and 4 of *Prolegomena to Ethics*.

485 Caird, "The Problems of Philosophy," 200, 202. This was also the view articulated in Edward Caird's pupil Henry Jones's "The Social Organism," which we encountered in Chapter 2.

concern in the American *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. In its first number, published just after the Civil War in 1867, the editor stated:

> The idea underlying our form of government had hitherto developed only one of its essential phases—that of brittle individualism—in which national unity seemed an external mechanism, soon to be entirely dispensed with, and the enterprise of the private man or of the corporation substituted for it. Now we have arrived at the consciousness of the other essential phase, and each individual recognizes his substantial side to be the State as such.[486]

Just as Hegel wanted idealist philosophy to contribute to a unified Germany, the St. Louis Hegelian W. T. Harris wanted it to help unify a post-Civil War United States.[487] The notion of community and social work, in contrast to "brittle individualism," was important for the St. Louis Hegelians, as it was for their British equivalents, and for the conservative idealist Josiah Royce, who stressed the importance of community and, like Dewey and Bosanquet, spoke of the need to realize "the kingdom of God on earth."[488]

I will end this section by turning to the British idealist who provided the most well-developed typology of unity: J. S. Mackenzie. In what was among the earliest contributions to social philosophy as a subdiscipline, Mackenzie claimed that the primary concern of this branch of philosophy was social unity, a standpoint that presupposes the impossibility of regarding individuals in isolation from social life. The state, says Mackenzie, is "one of those modes of social unity by which the idea of a common good is made effective."[489] Other modes of social unity Mackenzie identified were the family, the workshop, the trades, the church, the civic communi-

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486 William Torrey Harris, "To the Reader," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 1:1 (1867), 1.
487 Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity*, 66–70.
488 Clendenning, *The Life and Thought of Josiah Royce*, 347.
489 J. S. Mackenzie, *Outlines of Social Philosophy* (1918), 152–153, https://archive.org/details/cu31924030225977; idem., *Elements of Constructive Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1917), 241–242, https://archive.org/details/constructivephil00mackuoft.

ty, the nation, and international organizations.[490] While Mackenzie thought of himself as a follower of Green and, to lesser extent, Bosanquet, his social philosophy and typology of kinds of unity are more elaborated than those of his forerunners. The social unity of a community or society, says Mackenzie, is better described as organic than mechanic, although he emphasizes that a social organism differs from a natural organism in being a "spiritual unity." A spiritual unity, according to Mackenzie, is inhabited by persons ("spiritual beings") capable of self-conscious thought, whose "consciousness of their relation to a larger whole enables them to realize more fully their own individual nature."[491]

In relation to the notion of social organicism, Mackenzie distinguishes between three kinds of social unity: monadism, which regards "the world as a collection of mutually independent parts, each possessing a separate nature of its own"; monism, which is "a view of the world as a single system, in which the nature of every part is predetermined by the whole"; and a combination of the previous two, favored by Mackenzie, which regards "the world as a systematic unity, in which neither the parts exist independently of the whole nor the whole independently of its parts."[492] The parts must not, however, be viewed as pre-existing the unity, for that would be mechanical. Nor do the parts surrender their individual nature because of their place in the whole, as that would create a chemical notion of unity. Rather, "the parts become what they are by virtue of their relations to the whole, and in which yet the parts retain a certain relative independence." This is organic unity, "a unity which expresses itself through differ-

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490 J. S. Mackenzie, "The Elements of Social Progress," in *An Introduction to Social Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1895), 362–409, https://archive.org/details/cu31924030226058.

491 Mackenzie, *Outlines of Social Philosophy*, 49–50, 58–59; idem, *Elements of Constructive Philosophy*, 242.

492 Mackenzie, *An Introduction to Social Philosophy*, 142–143. Here we see once more a reason to avoid the complicated subject of monism, which was often attributed to the idealists (as we saw in Russell's critique of Bradley in the previous chapter). In Mackenzie's terms, monism conflicts with an organicism that embraces unity in diversity. In Avital Simhony's terms, the contrast is rather between a holistic and a non-holistic organicism; see Simhony, "Idealist Organicism."

ence."[493] As in a plant, reproduction and growth are typical characteristics of an organic unity that cannot be explained merely by reference to its parts.[494] Hence Mackenzie rejects methodological individualism (although he does not use the term), and his most elaborate discussion of social unity begins, in fact, with a dismissal of the individualism of Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.[495] Mackenzie follows the common idealist rejection of the antithesis between individual and society, and regards human nature as essentially social. In their interdependence upon each other and society, individuals ideally cooperate in the pursuit of social unity and the common good. This close connection between individual self-realization, organic social unity, and the common good is the reason citizenship and community were central idealist concerns.[496]

The absolute and transcendent aspects of idealist thought appealed to both Dewey and Collingwood in the early stages of their philosophical careers, but they increasingly turned away from such notions while holding on to the ideals of unity of opposites, unity in experience, social unity, and unity in diversity. Neither Collingwood nor Dewey identified as monists. They agreed that parts and whole, such as individual and society, were interdependent and organic, but did not believe the parts were determined or became liquidated by the whole. I will clarify the meanings they gave to unity (and its partner concepts) in the following two sections, and show that their preoccupation with unity was a result of their idealist inheritance.

Collingwood's Quest for Unity

In his first book, *Religion and Philosophy*, Collingwood asserted "that everything in the universe stands in some relation to everything else," in the sense of "an organised and coherent whole" (RP: 137). This is not to

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493 Mackenzie, *An Introduction to Social Philosophy*, 143.

494 Mackenzie credits Kant with being the first to distinguish organic from mechanical unity saying that a blade of grass cannot be dealt with through merely mechanical principles in *Critique of Judgement*; see *Elements of Constructive Philosophy*, 238–239.

495 Ibid., 263–276.

496 However, not all idealists agreed on the organic nature of society. Mander points to the personalist J. M. E. McTaggart, as one exception. See Mander, *British Idealism*, 255–256.

say that the world is free from error or "stationary," but rather that it is a "totality in the making… that never is and never will be attained for good and all, but one which is always being attained" (RP: 140–141). The reason we should hold this view, says Collingwood, is that the alternative—that there are no relations between objects—is implausible. This explanation may not convince everyone, but it shows that for Collingwood, as for many idealists before him, unity was a presupposition, a starting point of inquiry. He compares this coherentist view of the universe to a scientific treatise, which he claims would not be scientific if it were a mere collection and juxtaposition of facts and opinions. Rather, to achieve unity or totality, one must play out different facts and opinions against each other, "correcting the false by the true, and presenting a body of statements which is, so far as I can make it so, absolutely true." Only this latter view takes continuity, historical development, and the relation between facts and opinions sufficiently into account; it is the method of "the true historian of thought" (RP: 138).[497] In *Religion and Philosophy*, therefore, Collingwood was already embracing the processual and historical view of reality that was to inform all of his later writings. From his first book to his last, Collingwood insisted on a close relationship between history and philosophy.[498] Furthermore, *Religion and Philosophy* provides an early statement of the dialectical method Collingwood would develop in *An Essay on Philosophical Method* under the name "scale of forms." According to the early formulation, this method

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497 The conception of progress and historical development already present in *Religion and Philosophy* was further developed in *The Idea of History*, where Collingwood also ties the notion of development to his conception of unity in diversity (or plurality): "Development is only possible where there is unity: there must be one thing that develops, and when it changes into something that is not recognizably the same, it cannot any longer be said to be developing. Development also implies a plurality of phases within the process; and it further implies that the process brings out by degrees some characteristic of the one thing which at first was not clear. Development is an ideal process, not an actual process: it consists in something's becoming more and more intelligible" (IH: 478–479).

498 In *Religion and Philosophy*, Collingwood even claims that history and philosophy are "the same thing" (RP: 51). In *An Autobiography*, he instead speaks of the need "to bring about a *rapprochement* between philosophy and history" (A: 77).

> found that even where one opinion contradicts another there is the closest
> of relations between them; that they are successive attempts to reach the
> truth on this subject, and that each statement sums up in itself the truth
> expressed by previous statements and is itself the starting-point for further
> research. This way of putting it is not affected by the breaks and disconti-
> nuities which there must be in any tradition. We are not arguing that there
> is a steady and continual progress towards truth, independent, as it were,
> of intellectual effort; but that every truth takes its form by correcting some
> error and that therefore in the totality of the science the error does not stand
> alongside the truth, but is corrected by it and disappears (RP: 138).

While Collingwood does not use the term dialectics here, he did so in the
1917 manuscript *Truth and Contradiction*, where he argues that thought
develops by incorporating contradicting opinions. Interestingly, Colling-
wood here rejects the coherentist theory of truth held by many of the
British idealists, for he believes only dialectics can incorporate conflicting
points of view and account for both sameness and change; that is, for
identity and difference, or unity in diversity.[499] Henry Jones, who wrote a
report on the book for the publishing company Macmillan, thought it
provided a "clear, frank, interesting" and "fresh" version of dialectics in the
tradition of Plato and Hegel by showing how thought proceeds through
"movement, activity, [and] process" by incorporating "half truths or sheer
errors" into "a wider truth."[500]

Further proof of Collingwood's early fondness for dialectics can be
found in his 1916 lecture on John Ruskin's philosophy. Here Collingwood
makes a Hegelian reading of Ruskin and claims that like Hegel, Ruskin
was a synthetic thinker. Collingwood contrasts Hegel and Ruskin with the
more common analytical thinkers and their "logicism," a term that possi-

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499 Collingwood, *Truth and Contradiction*, 7–11. In *Religion and Philosophy*, Colling-
wood explicitly stated that "every whole must be a whole of parts, and … all identity must
therefore be an identity of differences" (RP: 104). The same message was repeated in 1929:
"… there can be no plurality which is not a unity, and no unity which is not a plurality."
Collingwood, "Politics," in *Essays in Political Philosophy*, 112.

500 Macmillan eventually decided not to publish the book, despite Henry Jones's
recommendation. His report on *Truth and Contradiction* is published in Appendix 1 of
Collingwood's *Essays in Political Philosophy*, 230–231.

bly refers to Bertrand Russell's philosophy, which Russell at that point in time called "logical atomism," and had developed in response to the idealist view that parts cannot be understood without relation to a whole.[501] Collingwood sided with Hegel and Ruskin against the analytical logicists, describing the former's philosophical method as dialectical, historicist, and contingent. Ruskin, Collingwood said, refused "to separate any one aspect of life from any other" and, like Hegel, aimed to achieve "unity of mind."[502] This is synonymous with what I have previously referred to as unity of experience—in fact, it is a term Collingwood also used, although he spoke of "unity of knowledge" as well. Since "experience" signifies something broader than "knowledge," and since "mind" signifies something internal, I believe unity of experience to be the most appropriate term.

Experience: Indivisible, Processual, Reflective

Especially in his early writings in the 1910s and 1920s, Collingwood is rather unclear about his definition of experience. Like Kant, Hegel, Dewey, and all the Anglo-American idealists, Collingwood rejected the narrow positivist view of experience as merely sensory data. According to the definition in *Speculum Mentis*:

> Experience is an indivisible whole in which two sides can always be distinguished: an immediate, intuitive or questioning side… and a mediating, reflective, logical or assertive side, which is called thought.… What characterizes the intuitive or sensuous side of experience is just its manyness or perpetual difference from itself, flux, novelty or creation. What characterizes the logical or reflective side is its self-identity, permanence, unity (SM: 188).

Here the immediate side of experience—which involves, for example, sensory impressions—is claimed to be unified by the reflective side of experience; thought. The point is that sense and thought are interdependent;

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501 While the term logical atomism had been coined a few years prior, it did not become widely known until the publication of Russell's 1918 essay, "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism."

502 Collingwood, "Ruskin's Philosophy," 41.

while they can be distinguished functionally, they cannot be ontologically separated. This was a message Collingwood repeated in *The Principles of Art*, where experience is defined as sensory impulses raised to the level of consciousness, but is also related to thought of the first and second order, where the former is empirical and scientific, the latter reflective and philosophical. Here Collingwood criticizes Kant for his dichotomous view of the two and for not having been able to explain the relation between them (PA: 159, 167–168, 306). Collingwood's own solution is a broader definition of experience as an "open" and dialectical process (PA: 311). This view is close to the characterization of experience in *Speculum Mentis* as a matter of continuous creation and growth. The function given to experience here is also close to the function Collingwood gives to mind and consciousness, without bothering to distinguish them from experience.[503]

An Essay on Philosophical Method contains Collingwood's most clear definition of experience. He rejects the view that it is irrational, and once again emphasizes the continuity between theory and experience; for philosophical thinking never starts from scratch, but is intended to clarify that which we already to some extent know or are aware of through experience. The experience upon which one philosophizes is always already "itself an experience of rational living, theorizing, philosophizing" (EPM: 174). That is not to say that philosophy needs to be "checked" against experience, since that would be "like saying that the more rational must prove its rationality by conforming to the less rational, which seems like appealing from Philip sober to Philip drunk" (EPM: 172). Hence the relationship between experience and theory or philosophy is not dichotomous, but dialectical: experience and theory shape one another and change over time as we gradually become aware of the theory that experience already carries with it. Theory is "experience itself, with its universality further insisted upon, its latent connexions and contradictions brought into the light of consciousness" (EPM: 171).

Viewed in this way "the past history of philosophical thought no longer appears as irrational; it is a body of experience to which we can appeal with

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503 Louis Mink has also noted Collingwood's tendency to use these notions interchangeably; see *History, Mind, and Dialectic*, 271.

confidence, because we understand the principles at work in it, and in the light of those principles find it intelligible" (EPM: 224). Experience is collective, social, historical, and processual, as well as individual. The theoretical content always present in experience is brought to light by a historically-aware philosophy, which at the same time changes that content. This is how philosophy progresses dialectically, according to Collingwood. The past is "an integral part of experience itself" that is brought to life in the mind of the historian through reexperiencing, or "re-enactment" (IH: 158).[504] The historical perspective on experience is further important because history is what determines our contemporary experiences, but only if we allow ourselves to reflect upon how our present experience is connected to the past instead of treating history as a subject concerned with a past disconnected from the contemporary world. Reexperiencing is not possible if we think of experience in terms of immediate experience, as consciousness, sensations, and feelings—it must also involve an act of thought and reflection upon those immediate experiences (IH: 287).

As we see, Collingwood regards experience as the starting point and end of philosophy. It is a dialectical process involving reflection and therefore more inclusive than mere fact, knowledge, or science. The "forms of experience" referred to in *Speculum Mentis* are not merely academic disciplines but activities and ways of life. They have an existential dimension that we may not ordinarily associate with knowledge or science. The separation of the five "chief forms of human experience"—art, religion, science, history, and philosophy—is, as we have seen, perceived by Collingwood as a threat to civilization, and causes an existential crisis that could only be overcome by "their reunion in a complete and undivided life" (SM: 36). He aims to achieve this reunion by demonstrating the interrelatedness and dialectical relationship between the forms of experience. He even goes so far as to say that each form of experience "is at bottom identical with all the others" (SM: 308) It is, however, hard to believe that he really thinks so, for in

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504 Collingwood replied to the question Of what can there be historical knowledge? as follows: "Of that which can be re-enacted in the historian's mind. In the first place, this must be experience. Of that which is not experience but the mere object of experience, there can be no history" (IH: 302). Hence there can be no history of earthquakes *as such*, but only of earthquakes as they have affected experiencing human subjects.

Speculum Mentis there seems to be a hierarchy between the forms of experience, which proceed from art through religion, science, and history, and culminate in philosophy. As Collingwood himself says: "every phase… grows out of the preceding" (SM: 56). This hierarchical view of the relationship between the different forms of experience disappears, however, in Collingwood's later thought, even though the idealistic unity in experience remained important to him. Collingwood always insisted that the practical, social, political, and ethical were interconnected with aesthetics, history, religion, science, and philosophy, which all had their different characteristics and tasks, but also overlapped. None of them could be understood or approached in isolation from the others.[505]

Collingwood's aim to unify experience can also be seen in the 1928 pamphlet *Faith and Reason*, where he builds on Kant to bring about a "rapprochement" between religion and science, faith and reason.[506] While reason and science can give us insight into the finite and particular, "there is always something that holds good of this conscious life *as a whole*." This unity is the "foundation on which all scientific inquiry rests."[507] Collingwood makes a comparison to an orchestra, in which the musicians represent the particulars, the symphony the whole. This example also shows that the whole is embodied rather than an everlasting transcendental substance. "The infinite is nothing but the unity," he writes, "or as we sometimes say, the 'meaning,' of finite things in their diversity and their mutual connec-

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505 To briefly repeat what has been said in previous chapters: *An Essay on Philosophical Method* should be read as an attempt to make the method of *Speculum Mentis* explicit. The same method was practiced in *The Principles of Art*, where Collingwood shows how "art proper" overlaps with craft, representation, and what he calls "magic." *An Essay on Philosophical Method* ends with a discussion of the relation between history, philosophy, and poetry, which are all said to be interrelated but also possess distinct identities. In *An Autobiography*, Collingwood insists on the importance of bringing about a "rapprochement" between theory and practice, and history and philosophy, insisting on the importance of philosophy for social and political purposes—a task he also set out to demonstrate in his last work, *The New Leviathan*. Hence unity in experience always accompanies unity in diversity, for even though there is a unity between, say, history, art, science and philosophy, in the sense that they "overlap," each form also has a particular identity.

506 Collingwood, *Faith and Reason*, in *Faith and Reason*, 145.

507 Ibid., 138.

tions."[508] Here we see that Collingwood emphasizes the interconnection between the whole and its particulars, or between religious faith and scientific reasoning, without privileging one over the other. His notion of unity is organic, not monistic.

Opposites, Unities, Differences

Another kind of unity Collingwood addresses (mostly in his early writings) is the unity of opposites. He is not nearly as preoccupied as Dewey with attacking dualisms, and when he does, it is often while attacking different philosophical schools. He criticizes, for example, Plato and Descartes for maintaining a dualism between objective and phenomenal reality, and realist philosophers for separating the self from the world, subject from object, the knower from the known, the particular from the universal, and history from philosophy.[509] Nor does Collingwood accept a dualistic view of the state and individual, thought and action, theory and practice, or fact and value.[510] To illustrate the impossibility of separating fact from value, he says that all historical research necessarily involves selection and emphasis on different aspects of the past, which is a matter of evaluation rather than fact, and since there is no possibility that the interpretations of different historians would be exactly the same, no objective—in the sense of "value-free"—account of history is possible. This, according to Collingwood, does not lead to relativism in the sense that "anything goes," but should rather be seen as an attack on any strict antithesis between the objective and the subjective and truth and error.[511]

While he rejects dualisms such as those just mentioned, Collingwood does not want to come to "the nihilistic conclusion that there are no differences." His solution is to view the world as *processual*—in a state of ever becoming—which is not to say that distinctions are not real, but rather that they are not *fixed*, as they are in "the world of being." For in "the world

508 Ibid., 143.

509 Collingwood, "A Footnote to Future History"; *An Autobiography*, 30, 148.

510 Collingwood, "Outlines of a Concept of the State"; *An Autobiography*, 149–150.

511 Collingwood, "Outlines of a Concept of the State"; "An illustration from historical thought" (c.1920–1921). Dep. Collingwood, 16/6, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

of becoming," identity can both change and remain—it is a processual, dialectical, and synthetic world in which identity means that "the present affirms the past," and difference means that "the present negates the past." The world constantly changes, yet remains the same; for that which persists does so in changing. Hence, the unity of opposites is also a unity in diversity. But Collingwood's world of becoming is also connected to unity of experience, for thought and reality are also unified, since reality is experience. Therefore, "there is no distinction between philosophy and science, art, religion or moral activity. For all these things are becoming, and becoming is an identity in difference, not a diversity with a unity superimposed on it by a transcendent universal from the world of being."[512]

This is Collingwood during his most idealistic phase. In his published works, these ideas are most present in *Speculum Mentis*, where in typically dramatic fashion he states that "the only life worth living is the life of the whole man, every faculty of body and soul unified into a single organic system" (SM: 36). Collingwood rejects the dualism between body and soul, the secular and the sacred, faith and reason, the universal and the particular, because achieving a "synthesis" and "unity of opposites" is the "characteristic of reason" (SM: 196–197). However, this is "not a bare indistinguishable identity but a union in which the two sides can be distinguished but not separated" (SM: 197). The "differences are supported by unity, not swamped and lost in that unity," says Collingwood. He continues:

> That which is subject is also object: it is only the one because it is the other; but the two terms retain, and indeed now for the first time acquire, really distinct meanings. For it is only in the synthesis of opposites that these opposites can be distinguished. It is only by comparing and contrasting A with not-A, which means holding them together in a single unity, that one can see the difference between them (SM: 249).

Collingwood's unity of opposites is a unity in diversity, not a monism or holism in the sense that the whole is somehow larger than its parts or determines their nature or purpose. In fact, Collingwood avoids the contest-

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512 Collingwood, *Libellus de Generatione*, 78.

ed subject of monism and urges philosophers to abandon the "old dilemmas" of "monism and pluralism, objective and subjective, appearance and reality, perception and conception," and rationalism and sensationalism, which he blames realist philosophers for upholding. Collingwood credits Kant with having understood the necessity of unifying dualisms and thinks, like Anglo-American idealists before him, that Hegel continued this work, which in his mind is yet to be completed (SM: 285–286). In *An Essay on Philosophical Method* (which will be returned to in Chapter 5), Collingwood was to distinguish between opposites, which "overlap," and "distincts," which do not. Concern with the former, says Collingwood, is characteristic of philosophy (EPM: 63–68).

Social Unity and Liberal Method

While references to the common good and social unity are not frequent in Collingwood's work, they do recur. In *An Autobiography*, he accuses realist philosophers like Russell and Pritchard of believing that all goods are private (A: 49); this is an unjust charge, but it highlights that Collingwood thought the notion of a common good and the rejection of atomistic individualism and the dualism between individual and society were necessary in moral and political philosophy. Like the idealists of the previous generation, Collingwood rejects both socialism and individualism. Individuals should not be viewed as separate atoms, for their relations are "organic… the welfare of each is necessary to that of the other."[513] "No good," says Collingwood, "is really common which is the good of one group as against another; but such a competitive good symbolizes something beyond itself, namely the harmonious life of an organic whole which includes all reality" (SM: 137). This is the reason Collingwood rejects socialist class politics, for it pits the interests of social groups against one other instead of taking "the common good, the welfare of society" as its primary concern (which, according to Collingwood, is characteristic of liberalism).[514]

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513 Collingwood, "Man Goes Mad," 326.
514 Collingwood, "The Breakdown of Liberalism."

Our individual experiences and private goods are, then, interconnected with the whole experience of community and the common good. Finding a way to participate and contribute to the common good and reconciling individual wills into something beyond themselves that benefits everyone and brings about harmony and social unity in society and between societies (or nations) is the aim of Collingwood's political philosophy. According to him, the dialectical method is the way to achieve this, and liberalism is its "true heir."[515] Collingwood claims that the essence of liberalism is not the individual, but "the idea of a community as governing itself by fostering the free expression of all political opinions that take shape within it, and finding some means of reducing this multiplicity of opinions to a unity."[516] The purpose of the dialectical liberal method, therefore, is to bring about social unity, which is a unity in diversity (of opinions). Here we see a close affinity between Collingwood's views on method in philosophy and politics: the central idea is that the political process in a liberal and democratic society, as in philosophy, proceeds by incorporating different opinions to form an agreement about "a joint aim" (NL: 30.23).

Collingwood developed his dialectical political method most thoroughly in *The New Leviathan*, which seeks to show why a liberal and democratic society ("civilization") is preferable to authoritarian "barbarism." An interesting feature of Collingwood's political thought is that he connects the notion of a common good to the idea of a social contract. The latter is an idea that is generally rejected among idealists, and by Dewey.[517] In contrast, Collingwood reinterprets the notion of the social contract and argues that the common good implies an obligation on behalf of a society's citizens to participate, contribute, and share both the society's profits and losses (NL: 19.55). Citizenship should be voluntary, but accepting the role of citizen is to accept the social contract. In fact, it is the initiation of a social contract that forms societies, and "every party, by making the contract, declares his will to pursue the common aim of the society," and the only "claim" a society has on its members is to purse these "common aims"

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515 Collingwood, "Man Goes Mad," 325.

516 Ibid., 318.

517 Dewey rejects the notion of a social contract because he believes it regards humans as non-social beings who only become related to others when they form a contract (EW 1: 232).

(NL: 20.65–20.66). Collingwood compares entering the social contract and becoming a member of society to a marriage. A marriage is voluntary and is thought to benefit both parties, but it also implies that the spouses agree to give up certain individual freedoms and prioritize the common good of the family (NL: 23.45). Similarly, the citizen recognizes that in the long run he or she benefits from pursuing the common aims of society rather than individual interests, although these two goals often intersect.

Collingwood distinguishes (not always successfully) between society, community, civilization, and the "body politic." A community, he says, can be both social and non-social, while a society is a community "and something more" (NL: 20.3). Non-social communities are not capable of self-rule, but are ruled externally by force, while a society rules itself through joint will (NL: 20.63). Society is, however, a never-completed process of transforming non-social communities into social communities; that is, society turns the uncivilized into civilized and "mentally adult" persons through the never-ending process of education (NL: 20.23, 20.33).

By body politic, Collingwood means the "kind of community of which political theory hopes to offer a scientific account" (NL: 24.1). He follows Hobbes in regarding the body politic as a non-social community transforming itself into a self-ruling society; hence it is the *process* of socializing and civilizing that is the focus of political theory (NL: 24.71). According to what Collingwood calls "the law of primitive survivals," non-social elements can never be completely abolished, which means that savagery is at some level always implicit—even in the most civilized society (NL: 9.5, 21.51). All humans have savagery within them, and there will always be non-social elements—predominantly children—who are members of the body politic before they become civilized enough to participate in social and political life. A key element of political life is therefore the dialectical conversion of the non-social into society. This, Collingwood says, is not an automatic process, but requires hard work by members of society who are "mature in mind" and possesses free will (NL: 32.32).

Civilization is sometimes treated as synonymous to society by Collingwood. He speaks of both as processes of converting the non-social—children and "savages"—into mentally adult, participating members who voluntary accept the social contract. This involves the practical act of "de-

ciding to become a member and to go on being a member" and the "will to assume the function of partnership with others in a common undertaking" (NL: 20.21). Society, then, can only be established between agents with free will, which requires a certain (unspecified) level of education. All members of society are therefore equal in terms of membership, although they may be unequal in other senses, only some of which are compensated for. Other inequalities and differences should be regarded as assets, for they will improve a society's "chance of success in pursuing its common end" (NL: 21.63). The unity is strengthened by diversity.

What the ideal, joint aim, or common good of a society consists of is always up for revision. The important thing, in Collingwood's view, is not agreement on the goal, but agreement on the method, which in a liberal and democratic society is the dialectical method. This method in *The New Leviathan* has clear similarities to Collingwood's other works. I argued in Chapter 2 that *Speculum Mentis* might be read as a *Bildungsroman* because it proposes a theory of learning based on how the different forms of experience are interconnected and develop through different phases of human life. In *The New Leviathan*, we see again that education is a central theme, but in contrast to *Speculum Mentis*, Collingwood now draws out the political importance of education and socialization, which he regards as the fundamental features of a civilized society. Here we may note that Collingwood differed from the idealists of the previous generation in being critical of the 1870 Education Act.[518] While he supported access to education for all, of course, Collingwood worried that a public education would force all humans into the same shape and hence reduce the diversity in the unity of a society.

A Note on Vocabulary

Unity in diversity was always an important theme for Collingwood and, as we have seen, it was related to his notions of unity of opposites, unity in

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518 While T. H. Green would have liked the 1870 Education Act to go further, Collingwood was against it. He thought it was anti-pluralistic and imposed "on the countryman an education modelled on town-dwellers' standards" and therefore threatened the survival of folk art and such (PA: 102). See also David Boucher, "R. G. Collingwood: The Enemy Within and the Crisis of Civilization," in *British Idealism and Political Theory*, 196.

experience, and social unity. He does not regard theory and practice, individual and society, or history, science, art, religion, and philosophy as "distincts" but as "overlapping," and seeks to bring about a rapprochement between them and to illustrate the existence and manner of their interconnection. Collingwood prefers the terms unity and "the whole," although he often speaks of "totality" in *Religion and Philosophy*, and sometimes (mostly in passing) uses the term "harmony," for example in relation to social unity (NL: 30.23). Unlike many other idealists and unlike Dewey, Collingwood is reluctant to speak of organicism, although he did, as I have shown, use it with reference to the relation between mind and body and between individuals in relation to the common good. He also referred to an artwork as an "organic whole" (RP: 113). In *The Idea of Nature*, he referred to Hegel's *Naturphilosophie* as anti-mechanistic and organic (IN: 128). Collingwood, like most idealists and like Dewey, saw a proximity of organicism and unity in diversity, for example in saying that a "philosophical judgement must be an organic whole in which affirmation and negation, universality, particularity, and singularity are all present" (EPM: 222).[519]

Rather than speaking of a unity of opposites or dialectics, as in his earliest writings, Collingwood used the terms "overlap" and "scale of forms" in *An Essay on Philosophical Method*. In *An Autobiography*, he changes the terminology again, speaking of the need to bring about a rapprochement between history and philosophy, and theory and practice. Although his vocabulary changes, Collingwood held on to the dialectical method throughout his career. According to this method, progress is achieved by incorporating different facts, views, and opinions into experience. Politics, philosophy, and science proceed in similar ways; therefore one must not separate them and other basic forms of experience, such as religion, art, and history, for they are all interconnected and necessary parts of a full human life. This notion of unity of experience needs to be understood in relation to Collingwood's historical and processual view of reality, which

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[519] In "Method and Metaphysics," Collingwood expresses some reservations concerning organicism, and even says that the organic vocabulary "when used of the general nature of reality, it is very misleading" (EPM: 332). His reason for saying this is that it may lead one to think of part and whole as inseparable, and Collingwood does not want to eradicate differences, but embraces unity in diversity.

he takes from Hegel. According to this perspective, the world, the self, and the universe are not fixed entities, but always in a state of becoming. The world is contingent, temporal, and in constant flux.

Dewey's Quest for Unity

Dewey's quest for unity was a lifelong endeavor shaped by the Hegelian tradition in philosophy, which had become a major influence on American intellectual life by the time Dewey began studying philosophy. We saw in Chapter 2 that Dewey's earliest preoccupation as a philosopher involved an attempt to bring about a unity between logic, psychology, and ethics by turning Hegelianism in a more scientific direction. Hegel and the new psychology provided Dewey with the tools to unite theory and practice, idea and reality, thought and fact, mind and body, subject and object. Here, we shall see how Dewey's attempt to bring about a unity of opposites is related to his notion of the human being as embodied, situated, and unified, which is fundamental for understanding his notion of experience and his conception of philosophy. We will also see that Dewey's social view of human nature is related to his vision of bringing about social unity.

In one of his earliest texts, Dewey agrees with T. H. Green that the nature and constitution of experience is one of philosophy's main questions, and the answer is to regard experience as "a connected whole" (EW 3: 22). But while they agreed on the need for unity of experience, Dewey rejected Green's notion of the transcendental absolute—or "eternal consciousness"—and grounded unity in the continuity of everyday life. Unity, according to Dewey, was something that was present only in human experience, and not something that ontologically existed outside us. Nor was unity a preconceived starting point, but the end toward which we strive and the anticipation "of the answers to all the questions," in the words of William Shea.[520] Here we see that Dewey's conception of unity differs somewhat from the idealists, who generally regarded unity to be "out

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[520] William M. Shea, "Qualitative Wholes: Aesthetic and Religious Experience in the Work of John Dewey," *The Journal of Religion* 60:1 (January 1980), 41, 42n.

there." So did, according to Dewey, Herbert Spencer, whom he criticizes on this point (MW 3: 194–195).

As for terminology, Dewey prefers the term unity to represent that which is opposed to dualism, but also refers to harmony, continuity, synthesis, wholeness and the whole.[521] He seldom uses the terms complete, coherence, integration, interdependence, or holism.[522] While he rarely uses the term totality, he accepts it so long as it means continuity rather than completeness and "the hopeless task of a quantitative summation" (MW 9: 334–335). Because he associates "One" with Neoplatonism and other ancient philosophical schools, Dewey reserves that term for historical purposes, but also says it has undesirable ontological connotations that unity lacks (MW 2: 166–167). Nor would Dewey describe himself as a monist, which he thought of as a philosophical stance that reduces reality to a single substance (MW 7: 284–285). Monism is therefore incompatible with Dewey's pluralistic and organic notion of unity, "which is constituted in and through diversity, since it requires a manifold of parts or members which are mutually dependent upon one another" (MW 2: 262–263). Ac-

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521 It has been argued that focusing too much on the presence of concepts like synthesis, harmony, wholeness, and unity in Dewey's vocabulary may mislead one to think of him as more of an idealist than he actually was; see Lewis E. Hahn, "Dewey's Philosophy and Philosophic Method," in *Guide to the Works of John Dewey*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1970) 24–25. In fact, toward the end of his life, Dewey himself said: "I do not believe that any school of philosophy has a monopolistic hold upon the interpretation of such words as 'whole, complete, coherence, integration,' etc." (LW 14: 39); this is, of course, true. Nevertheless, I do think that Dewey's quest for unity was heavily influenced by idealism, which he himself admitted in *From Absolutism to Experimentalism*, as we will see below. Focusing on his holistic vocabulary will help us unveil the lasting influence of idealism on his thought long after he had stopped identifying as an idealist.

522 We saw above that Russell ascribed "holism" to Dewey when he criticized him in his *History of Western Philosophy*. He had previously done so in his contribution to the volume on Dewey's for Paul Arthur Schilpp's Library of Living Philosophers. See, Bertrand Russell, "Dewey's New *Logic*," 137–156. Dewey was not happy having "holism," in an absolutistic, monistic, and Hegelian sense, ascribed to him. He argued that his naturalism and notion of experience sought a middle way between Russell's "extreme atomistic pluralism" that denies connections and "block universe monisms." Neither was Dewey happy to have his theory of inquiry identified with Bradley's. While Bradley aimed at "unification at large," Dewey merely aimed to unify individual situations. See Dewey, "Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder" (LW 14: 29, 33).

cording to this definition, taken from his contributions to the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, Dewey distinguishes between different meanings of unity and refers to a distinction made by Aristotle between unity in the sense of absolute or indivisible as opposed to the sense of relative or diversified. Dewey embraced the latter notion, of unity in diversity, and insisted that "all philosophy is a search for unity" (MW 2: 262–263). He also defined philosophy as "an attempt to comprehend—that is, to gather together the varied details of the world and of life into a single inclusive whole," and spoke of "the wholeness characteristic of philosophy," which is the "power to learn, or to extract meaning, from even the unpleasant vicissitudes of experience and to embody what is learned in an ability to go on learning" (MW 9: 334–335). Here in *Democracy and Education*, philosophy is defined as a dynamic and continuous process of education through the growth of experience that is similar to the notion of *Bildung*.

Education is, in fact, not only essential for growth of experience, but is also the primary unifier of experience, according to Dewey. Education has the power and capacity to unify people by cultivating "imagination for what men have in common" and rebel against "whatever unnecessarily divides them" (MW 9: 128). It is also the purpose of education to unify experience by coordinating the various and sometimes conflicting interests of the groups and environments to which a person belongs (MW 9: 26). By the same token, education should help us make politics, art, and science "reenforce one another in an enriched temper of mind instead of constituting ends pursued at one another's expense" (MW 9: 257). The same logic applies to various branches of education that are traditionally separated: theoretical and practical education, and physical and humanistic studies.[523] Dewey rejects these distinctions because he believes they separate man from nature and the working class from the leisure class, and such divisions are not compatible with a democratic society (MW 9: 143, 293).

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523 We will return to Dewey's rejection of the antithetical view of humanism and naturalism and theory and practice in the following chapter.

Education, then, can both unify and enrich experience, as social, cultural, religious, and other boundaries are surpassed and their purposes become united.[524] This is what Dewey means by unity of experience.

"A Demand for Unification"

In the autobiographical *From Absolutism to Experimentalism*, Dewey writes that the "sense of interdependence and interrelated unity" that early came to guide his thought was nourished by a combination of romantic poetry, American transcendentalism, idealist philosophy, new psychology, and evolutionary biology (LW 5: 147). But it was predominantly Hegel, says Dewey, who supplied him with

> a demand for unification … Hegel's synthesis of subject and object, matter and spirit, the divine and the human, was, however, no mere intellectual formula; it operated as an immense release, a liberation. Hegel's treatment of human culture, of institutions and the arts, involved the same dissolution of hard-and-fast dividing walls, and had a special attraction for me (LW 5: 153).

When Dewey speaks of unity it is most commonly in this sense, as a unity of opposites. Like the Anglo-American idealists before him, Dewey regarded Hegel as a contrast to modern philosophy as it had been practiced since Locke, Bacon and Descartes, who had laid the foundation for philosophy as an epistemological "a quest for certainty," in contrast to Dewey's existential quest for unity. Dewey had already criticized Locke and Des-

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524 Here Dewey was likely inspired by his studies at the University of Vermont, where the transcendentalist James Marsh had transformed the pedagogy in accordance with the idealism he learned through Coleridge. A pamphlet explaining the pedagogical ideas of Marsh stated: "If this course of study is carefully examined, it will be found to contain what no other collegiate study in the United States has so fully attempted. It seeks to give a coherence to the various studies in each department so that the several parts shall present, more or less, the unity, not of an aggregation nor of a juxtaposition, not of a merely logical arrangement, but of a *development and a growth*, and therefore, the study in it, rightly pursued, should be a growing and enlarging process to the mind of the student." James Marsh quoted in Nicolson, "James Marsh and the Vermont Transcendentalists," 35.

cartes for separating mind and matter, or soul and body, in his first book, *Leibniz's New Essays Concerning the Human Understanding*. In contrast, Leibniz, who Dewey read as a forerunner to Kant and Hegel, held mind and matter to exist in cooperative and "harmonious activity," since he viewed reality as "an organic whole" (EW 1: 320–321). Four years later, in an outline of the historical development of philosophy, Dewey claimed that medieval Christian thought turned the "dualistic tendency of Greek thought into a fixed and rigid separation." The dichotomies between spiritual and natural, God and world, theory and practice, subjective and objective, philosophy (theology included) and science became set, and in the modern period this led to the separation of materialism and idealism, mind and matter, and sense and reason (EW 3: 227).[525] These are examples of dualisms Dewey attacked throughout his philosophical career, alongside dichotomies such as the knower and the known, the ideal and the actual, theory and practice, the individual and society, naturalism and humanism, art and science, fact and value, means and ends, and experience and nature. Dewey held that the opposites were not ontologically separate but interconnected, without denying that one might distinguish between them functionally or analytically. The problem occurs when either side of a dichotomy is privileged or isolated from the other; for example, if the individual is removed from its natural and social context, if ends are pursued without consideration of the means, or if scientific analysis is separated from philosophical synthesis. Regarding the latter dualism, Dewey writes:

> The partial thing may be broken off from the whole and then described with comparative ease. But this process of multiplying pieces seems to leave the generic, the whole beyond and out of sight. It makes the whole remote, and capable of description only in unnatural ("metaphysical," "transcendental") terms. Thus science, as relating to the part, and philosophy as referring to the whole, fall apart. Philosophy suffers by being made vague and unreal; science in becoming partial and thus rigid.

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525 The simplistic view of the history of philosophy may be excused, since this is merely the outline of a syllabus for an introductory course to philosophy. Dewey developed his historical critique of philosophy in *Reconstruction of Philosophy* and *The Quest for Certainty*.

> The search for philosophy is not a peculiar or technical search; it is objective and general; it is the search for the real whole. Just so far as this whole is really attained in experience, it becomes possible to treat it in a direct, natural way, but only in so far (EW 3: 211–212).[526]

Here Dewey emphasizes the unity and synthesis only philosophy can offer, and insists that it is necessary to ground the philosophical quest for unity of experience and making it concrete. He differs, however, from idealists like F. H. Bradley and T. H. Green in rejecting the notion of experience as transcendental, eternal, or "absolute," but agrees with them that human nature is social.[527] While many idealists accepted Darwinian biology, few became naturalists to the same extent as Dewey. This can be seen as early as 1884 in his article on "The New Psychology," in which Dewey rejects the atomistic view of the human psyche as consisting "of independent autonomous faculties," and refuses to regard the human organism isolated from its environment (EW 1: 56). The human being itself was a unity, but also a natural and social being.

The Unity of the Human Being

I have already mentioned many examples of dualisms Dewey rejected, and his attacks on dualisms continued throughout his entire career. It is not always easy to understand, however, how the different dualisms hang together, not least because Dewey's terminology is inconsistent. One of the central dualisms he rejects is that between mind and body, tracing it, in the influential "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology" (1896), to Plato and claiming that this scientifically unjustifiable dualism formed the mod-

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526 In *How We Think* (1910), Dewey again insists on the "intimate interaction" between analysis and synthesis (MW 6: 269–270). He also describes analysis as related to the past and the real, whereas synthesis is directed toward the future and the ideal (MW 14: 128–129; LW 17: 158). See also Dewey's entry on "analysis and synthesis" in *A Cyclopedia of Education*, which describes both aspects as being coexisting and of equal importance (MW 6: 370–375).

527 See "Green's Theory of the Moral Motive" (EW 3) and "The Metaphysical Method in Ethics" (EW 5). These were discussed in Chapter 2. I shall also return to Dewey's relation to Green below.

ern "reflex arc theory" and its subsequent dualisms between stimulus and response, or sensation and idea (EW 5: 96, 104). Influenced by William James, Dewey claims that by freeing psychology from these dualisms and from the idea that human experience can be divided into self-sufficient fragments, we can regard experience not as an "arc," but a "circuit" and "organic unity" consisting of interrelated and coordinated functions (EW 5: 97, 109). While one may make functional distinctions between stimulus and response, mind and body, or sensation and idea, these dualisms are not "separate existences" (EW 5: 109): their functions are integrated in the organic experience of the human being.

In the late 1910s, Dewey's rejection of mind-body dualism became personal. Plagued by depression and fatigue, he sought out a novel method of psychophysical therapy practiced by former actor F. Matthias Alexander, who Dewey had met at a Columbia Philosophy Department dinner in 1916. Alexander approached his patients as unified living organisms, without distinguishing between psychology and physiology. His method, "the Alexander technique," was supposed to bring unconscious bodily activity into the patient's awareness through simple exercises that corrected posture and integrated the patient's body parts. The sessions with Alexander improved Dewey's well-being, and he claimed to have "verified in personal experience all that Mr. Alexander says about the unity of the physical and psychical," as he wrote in one of his three introductions to Alexander's books (LW 6: 318).[528]

Dewey shared Alexander's view that the human body was not yet adapted to the changes imposed on it by modern civilization, and thought the separation of mind and body and neglect of the latter had caused "the larger number of physical disorders which inflict themselves exclusively

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[528] Dewey wrote introductions to the following books by Alexander: *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (1918), *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* (1923), and *The Use of the Self: Its Conscious-Direction in Relation to Diagnosis, Functioning and the Control of Reaction* (1932). Dewey's introductions are republished in MW 11, MW 15, and LW 6. Not everyone was as convinced as Dewey of the scientific validity of the "Alexander technique." Dewey responded to a very negative review of the first of Alexander's books by Randolph Bourne in an exchange that took place in the *New Republic*; Dewey's reply is republished in MW 11. For a fuller account of Dewey's relation to Alexander, see Rockefeller, *John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism*, 333–344.

upon civilized man, and the large number of neuroses which express themselves in intellectual and moral maladies" (MW 11: 354). The "growth and happiness" Dewey held to result from treatment was evidence enough that the "Alexander technique" verified practically the necessity of rejecting the mind-body dualism and conceiving of the human as a "unity" and "whole being" (MW 15: 310, 314).

Dewey continued to insist upon "The Unity of the Human Being," which is the title of a text he wrote in 1939. Here he says that unity can be understood negatively, as a rejection of dualistic views of mind and body, spirit and matter, the psychical and the physical, but that instead, the human being should be conceived positively as consisting of interconnected parts that "work together toward a common end" (LW 13: 325) This end is not fixed, however, nor will it ever be ultimately reached. The unity of the human being is a continuous process that must be understood in relation to what exists outside it: its environment and associations. As we saw in the previous chapter, Dewey regarded individualism as one of the main obstacles to progress, and he believed that the dualism between individual and society resulted from the notion of humans as spiritual rather than material. For him, it was essential that we understand humans as a natural, social, and historical beings. Because humans must be regarded as situated and must be understood in relation to their context, this is also the case with knowing and inquiry, which is a topic that will be returned to in the following chapter as we investigate Dewey's conception of philosophy. Here we will turn to the place where unification happens: in experience.

Experience: Common, Situated, Processual, and Unifying

According to Dewey's naturalistic metaphysics of becoming, as described in his primary work on metaphysics, *Experience and Nature*, philosophy must abandon the eternal and transcendent realm and address human problems in their natural and social environment and "historical-cultural context" (LW 1: 333). Process is the only thing that is universal; therefore, ideals and ends are continuous with reality and method and always shifting. An important "starting point" of the book is the explicit rejection of the "traditional philosophic preference for unity, permanence, universals,

over plurality, change and particulars" (LW 1: 5). The unity Dewey aims for is not fixed and should not be regarded as being opposed to diversity. Continuity and process are key to the worldview described in *Experience and Nature*, where Dewey emphasizes the role of experience as the unifier of opposites "in a moving, growing never finished process" (LW 1: 224).[529]

Dewey regards his processual view of the universe to be incompatible with modern epistemology—which is concerned with being, the fixed, the certain, the stable, and, primarily, knowledge. In contrast, Dewey is concerned with experience. In *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, he complains that philosophers traditionally have tried to transcend experience and search for the nature of reality beyond it. In ancient philosophy, he says, there was an agreement on the contingency, probability, and particularity of experience that made experience seem unreliable, since the goal of inquiry was to reach the universal and necessary (MW 12: 124). For Plato, experience meant enslavement to the customs of the past, from which we are liberated by reason alone. In contrast, empiricism regards reason as conservative and sees experience as the "liberating power" (MW 12: 132–133). But the problem with empiricism is that it does not think (sensory) experience can be transcended. While the rationalists "clamped down" all experience, the empiricists viewed experience as atomistic sense elements, leading to unfortunate dichotomies between sense and thought and experience and reason (MW 12: 137). Dewey believes that Kant corrected these mistakes and made it "possible to make claims for experience as a guide in science and moral life which the older empiricists did not and could not make for it" (MW 12: 125).

As we know, Dewey thought Hegel developed Kant's philosophy by grounding it in practical reality and rejecting the "thing-in-itself" and dualisms like that between phenomena and noumena. Dewey agreed with this approach, but came to discard Hegelian notions like spirit and the absolute from his vocabulary, and instead regarded experience as grounded in everyday life. According to Dewey, experience is neither purely subjective nor

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529 For a more extensive analysis of the role on unity of opposites in *Experience and Nature*, see James W. Garrison, "Dewey Empirical Unity of Opposites," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 21 (1985), 549–561.

objective, but the interaction between a human organism and its social environment. It is a dynamic "active-passive affair" involving knowing, doing, and "undergoing" (MW 9: 147). If we view humans as active organisms and not just passive receptors of external reality, experience becomes the consequence of the living creature's involvement with the world. While experience is connected to prior activity, it also involves a process of learning "by which it directs itself in its own betterment" (MW 12: 134); hence experience is temporal. It is also "common" in the sense of being communal and shared, and in the sense of belonging to everyday life (MW 9: 257).

Experience, then, is both the starting point and the end of philosophy. In Dewey's philosophy of education, the goal is growth of experience—not just individually but collectively. This democratic view of experience led Dewey to think that religious experience must not be isolated in religious institutions and aesthetic experience must not only be available in "fine art" museums (LW 10: 12): growth of experience must be widely accessible. Here it should also be noted that while Dewey speaks of different modes of experience—religious and aesthetic—he rejects any ontological difference between them. In doing so, Dewey, like post-Kantian idealists, discards Kant's "method of partition" (LW 4: 50). Both religious and aesthetic experience are, according to Dewey, organic and formed by historical and social circumstance. While they represent refined, intensified or heightened experience, religious and aesthetic experiences are not detached from everyday life; rather, they can provide us with a clarity and sense of wholeness that also can be found in other types of experience, and in a way provide role models of experience at its best (LW 9: 17–18). The religious and aesthetic experience can also make us sense wholeness, a "deeper reality," and make us realize that "we are citizens of this vast world beyond ourselves" (LW 10: 199). In the promise of unity of experience and social unity, Dewey sees the possibility of transcendence without supernaturalism; in religious and aesthetic experience, he finds the best illustrations of these principles.[530]

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530 While he rejected transcendence as in the notion of something beyond the human organism, Dewey nevertheless held experience to transcend cognitive knowledge in the sense that one can experience things both "practically" and "aesthetically." See, John Dewey to Charles Augustus Strong, April 28, 1905, in *The Correspondence of John Dewey*.

Dewey develops this line of thought in *Art as Experience* (1934), where he says that aesthetic experience provides a model for the moments in which the human being "is both most alive and most composed and concentrated," as well as in the "fullest intercourse with the environment" (LW 10: 109); art is hence the primary way of "bringing to consciousness an experience that is unified and total" (LW 10: 21). Aesthetic experience is a question of adaptation of the past and anticipation of the future; it connects the human organism to its environment and leads to a particular "intensity" of heightened vitality and "a transformation of interaction into participation and communication" (LW 10: 28). For Dewey, art is not contemplative, but active. The aesthetic experience is something that one creates rather than merely perceives (LW 10: 60). Art promises enrichment of experience and has communal, practical, and social functions: according to Dewey, art has great potential for unifying people and making "sects, races, nations, classes and cliques" communicate, since it is the most "universal mode of language" (LW 10: 338–339). While he stresses that experience is a continual interaction with the environment, Dewey also believes that it is necessary to separate experiences from one another so they can be "integrated within and demarcated in the general stream of experience from other experiences" (LW 10: 42). This process happens, for example, when we solve a problem or finish a piece of work, or when a situation comes to its close; we then have "*an* experience," which is not a matter of fixation, but maturation (LW 10: 43, 47).

Dewey had an extremely broad notion of experience that often confused his readers. When he revised *Experience and Nature* in 1951, he regretted not having titled it *Culture and Nature*, "because of my growing realization that the historical obstacles which prevented understanding of my use of 'experience' are, for all practical purposes, insurmountable" (LW 1: 361). That said, Dewey still claimed that experience was an appropriate term for "the inclusive subject-matter" of a philosophy that resisted the dualisms between "subject and object, mind and the world, psychological and physical" (LW 1: 361–362). While it is hard to see how substituting "culture" in place of "experience" would have made Dewey's message any clearer, it is noteworthy that he considered doing so because he believed the latter term better designated the interconnectedness of the "human affairs, interests,

concerns, values which compartmentalists pigeonhole under 'religion' 'morals' 'aesthetics' 'politics' 'economics' etc." (LW 1: 363). Hence, "culture" was even more unifying than experience.

> Instead of separating, isolating and insulating the many aspects of a common life, "culture" holds them together in their human and humanistic unity—a service which "experience" has ceased to render. What "experience" now fails to do and "culture" can successfully do for philosophy is of utmost importance if philosophy is to be comprehensive without becoming stagnant (LW 1: 363).

Unity of experience had become unity of culture, but Dewey's concern was essentially the same as before: he sought a philosophy that grounded the unified human being in a natural, social, and historical context, and aimed to solve social and practical problems while accepting contingency, uncertainty, and diversity. His philosophy was intended to incorporate the findings of science without neglecting the aesthetic, spiritual, and religious aspects of life. While growth of experience was a central aspect of Dewey's thought—especially in his philosophy of education—he did not regard it as a narrowly individualistic project, but something that benefited the common good.

Social Unity and the Great Community

The notion of social unity or the common good and its connection to organicism is already present in Dewey's first political text, "The Ethics of Democracy." Here Dewey challenges the notion of individuals as isolated atoms—"a mere minced morsel… a disorganized fragment"—and the mechanical view of society (EW 1: 235). Instead, he argues that an individual comes into being and is "realized" in relation to other individuals, and that democracy therefore should be regarded as a social organism. Seen in this way, "democracy approaches most nearly the ideal of all social organization; that in which the individual and society are organic to each other" (EW 1: 237). Democracy, for Dewey, was the realization of an ideal that he, in his earlier texts, spoke of as a "spiritual unification of humanity" and

regarded as a realization not only of the self, but of "the Kingdom of God" on earth (EW 4: 8).

Dewey's early texts also show that these lines of thought were, to a large extent, inspired by T. H. Green. In "The Philosophy of Thomas Hill Green," Dewey claims that the idea of the common good is the basis of civil society, and that progress signifies "the extension of the area of the common good, the practical widening of those who are considered members of society or interested in the same good" (EW 3: 28). But progress also means "the fuller determination of the content of this good." Furthermore, "it must be noticed that the good can be conceived only as a *common* good. This was implied when it was said that personality could be realized only in a society of persons" (EW 3: 28–29).

Dewey elaborated on this topic in his 1898 "Lectures on Psychological and Political Ethics," where he describes self-realization as "the organic unity existing between the self and the act." Self-realization is also "a social process" and "the principle of morality." The self, says Dewey, is not metaphysical and given, but a dynamic and "synthetic process" that creates itself by acting. Dewey thinks that Green's theory points in this direction but that he falls back into metaphysical abstractions and formalism.[531] Dewey does, however, agree with Green that "acting for the common good is the essence of morality," and thinks Green refines Kant's moral philosophy by replacing the notion of universal law with the common good.[532]

While Dewey toned down the religious language that is present in his earliest political and social philosophy, the social view of human nature and the rejection of the dichotomy between individual and society remained important.[533] In *Ethics*, Dewey explicitly draws on Green's *Prolegomena* and L. T. Hobhouse's *Morals in Evolution* in arguing that moral

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531 John Dewey, *Lectures on Psychological and Political Ethics, 1898*, ed. Donald F. Koch (New York: Hafner, 1976), 205–207.

532 Ibid., 232.

533 It should be noted that Dewey recognized that non-idealists had propounded a theory of the common good, and done so before idealism came into existence. He finds the notion in both Hobbes and Bentham, but argues that political theory has progressed beyond their thought because of "an improved knowledge of human nature" (MW 11: 40); presumably, Dewey has Darwinism in mind here.

philosophy is a matter of "extending" the range of persons included in the common good and "intensifying" individual social interest (MW 5: 385).[534] This moral philosophy stood in contrast to Kantian ethics as well as hedonistic utilitarianism, both of which separated "inner motive" from social responsibility—a dualism Dewey rejected (EW 5: 388). Because Dewey did not regard the "outer" or social as conflicting with the "inner" or individual sphere, he did not accept the distinction between positive and negative freedom. Like the idealists, Dewey thought the state could play a positive role in providing its citizens with the means to become free. While freedom *from* subjection is indispensable, "effective freedom," without which freedom is "formal and empty," also "requires (1) positive control of the resources necessary to carry purposes into effect, possession of the means to satisfy desires; and (2) mental equipment with the trained powers" (MW 5: 392). Dewey therefore regards education as central to democracy, saying that overcoming the antithesis between egoism and altruism and bringing about an "appreciation of social relations as a common good is the chief function of the school as a social institution" (MW 6: 369).

It should be stressed that Dewey rejected one-sided collectivism as much as one-sided individualism. He never regarded the individual parts as merely a function of the whole, nor did he regard the community or social whole as static (MW 5: 433), unlike some of the absolutistic idealists. In *German Philosophy and Politics*, Dewey said that he looked for a middle position between the "isolation" of individualism, which made morality a subjective affair, and the abstract a priori conception of duty that "sacrifices" the individual to the community or the state (MW 8: 162–166). He regarded the latter as a notion shared by "true socialism and true nationalism," with origins in German idealism (MW 8: 433).

In the new introduction, "The One-World of Hitler's National Socialism," Dewey wrote for the 1942 edition of *German Philosophy and Politics*, he recognized that Hitler's national socialism also shared the ideal of social unity. Although Hitler's method relied on abandoning political parties, trade unions, federated states, religious difference, and controlling the media (MW 8: 430). "With Hitler," says Dewey, "the ideal became creation

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534 See, T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, 232.

of a completely unified 'community' by means of force" (MW 8: 432). This is, of course, unacceptable for Dewey, who rejects the abstract and absolute ideals of national socialism and argues that social unity must be achieved "by means of free companionship and free communication" (MW 8: 446). Furthermore, the democratic, in contrast to the authoritarian, ideal of social unity also "commits us to unceasing effort to break down the walls of class, of unequal opportunity, of color, race, sect, and nationality, which estranges human beings from one another" (MW 8: 446). The aim of democratic method must be "the continuous developing of social unity" (MW 8: 444). Hence, Dewey's liberal and democratic social unity is not a fixed ideal but is constantly in the making.

Dewey's processual and historical view of politics and ethics, and his middle position between individualism and collectivism is formulated in *Ethics*:

> A true public or social good will accordingly not subordinate individual variations, but will encourage individual experimentation in new ideas and new projects, endeavoring only to see that they are put into execution under conditions which make for securing responsibility for their consequences. A just social order promotes in all its members habits of projecting schemes of new goods. It does not aim at intellectual and moral subordination. Every form of social life contains survivals of the past which need to be reorganized. The struggle of some individuals *against* the existing subordination of their good to the good of the whole is the method of the reorganization of the whole in the direction of a more generally distributed good. Not order, but orderly progress, represents the social ideal (MW 5: 433).

Here, we also see that for Dewey, the individuals that makes a "social whole," "public or social good" form a unity in diversity.

From "The Ethics of Democracy" onward, Dewey was critical of political theory's preoccupation with the state; instead, it was the process through which individuals became a community, a public, a whole, or a social unity that interested him. Ideally, the state only came into being as a tool for serving the interests of a public, which is something broader than the state. This was one of the main points of *The Public and Its Problems*,

where Dewey argued that the value of the state lay in how well it served "public interests" and the extent to which it provided its members with "greater liberty and security" and relieved them from "the waste of negative struggle and needless conflict" (LW 2: 280). In Dewey's view, the state is an instrument for the public, social, and common good.

The Public and Its Problems brings some clarity to Dewey's idea of how humans ideally form associations that become communities. "We are," he writes, "born organic beings associated with others, but we are not born members of a community" (LW 2: 331). We may, however, be born into a society, even a Great Society as in twentieth-century America, but the aim is to turn this Great Society into a "Great Community." Doing so requires, according to Dewey, a "wider and fuller" notion of democracy that "must affect all modes of human association, the family, the school, industry, religion" (LW 2: 325). While Dewey recognizes that it is difficult to achieve this in a Great Society, he nevertheless thinks that new transportation and communication tools, if used wisely, "in the sense of free and full inter-communication," will make the realization of a Great Community possible (LW 2: 367). That said, Dewey recognizes that large scale communities will never "possess the qualities which mark a local community" (LW 2: 367). He therefore sees the local community as the starting point of democracy, but is, as noted above, always keen to expand the range of individuals and groups included in the social unity. Furthermore, this unity must not be nationalistic—a point where Dewey differs from, for example, the St. Louis Hegelians. International cooperation, however, must be conducted in such a way that "the unity does not destroy the many" (MW 11: 71). Here we see once again that Dewey's vision of social unity is intertwined with unity in diversity.

Summary

The aim of this chapter has been to show that unity and its partner concepts were a central characteristic of the idealist thought style and that it was shared by Dewey and Collingwood. The preoccupation with unity is also the aspect of idealism that marks the clearest contrast to the thought style of analytical philosophy. That said, the preoccupation with unity was

widespread in culture among proponents of different political ideologies, in different sciences, and among philosophers other than idealists. Unity and its partner concepts had existential implications, but their meanings varied quite a lot. Generally, unity should be understood in contrast to mechanism, atomism, individualism, and scientific specialization.

While some of the Anglo-American idealists could be accused of viewing the whole as preexisting to its parts, and of determining the nature of its parts, most sought to find a balance between atomism and monism, individualism and collectivism, analysis and synthesis. In this sense, they followed Hegel's organic notion of unity in diversity, or identity in difference. The parts (or individuals) were regarded as organically interrelated to one another and to the whole (or community) they together composed. Therefore, idealists rejected dualisms like the individual and society, and regarded self-realization as intertwined with working for the common good, or social unity. Consequently, philosophy was not a mere contemplative endeavor, but a practical and social activity.

The idealists agreed on the need to bring about a unity of opposites between dualisms such as the material and the spiritual, the secular and the sacred, the self and the world, mind and matter, and subject and object. While they resisted turning philosophy into a natural science, they were not opposed to natural science either (a common misconception). Rather, the idealists wanted philosophy to take on the increasingly difficult task of unifying the growing body of knowledge. Idealism therefore rejected scientific specialization to the extent that it meant that sciences became isolated from one another, from philosophy, and from human life.

Collingwood's understanding of unity was underpinned by Hegelian process metaphysics, which regards reality to be in a state of constant becoming. He stressed the interconnectedness of things but rejected the transcendental idea of a fixed or final unity. According to Collingwood, the purpose of philosophy was to constantly reinterpret the relation between opposites and forms of experience, while incorporating new facts, views, and ideas. But philosophy did not have a starting point or end point outside of experience, which for Collingwood was a whole made up of two sides: one "immediate," and one reflective. The purpose of the latter was to unify the diversity in the former and bring its latent theoretical content to the surface.

Collingwood, like most of the idealists, rejected the dualisms between self and world, knowing subject and known object, theory and practice, the particular and the universal, the individual and the community, fact and value, and faith and reason. No one, however, attacked these and other dualisms more fiercely than Dewey. According to him, the opposites might be justified functionally, but not ontologically. They were unified in experience, which he regarded as situated, common, and processual. Experience is reflective, temporal, and continuous, not fixed and final, and it grows as we incorporate and coordinate our activities and the different aspects of life—religious, aesthetic, ethical, and so on—as well as the aims of the various communities we belong to.

While individual freedom and self-realization or growth of experience are important to Dewey, he does not regard these aspects as distinct from striving for the common good and social unity, which is an inclusive process that pays respect to unity in diversity. As we will see in the next chapter, both he and Collingwood regarded the liberal political method to be rather like their philosophic method, which is connected to their shared conception of philosophy as a practical and humanistic endeavor.

5. Philosophy after Idealism: Historicism, Humanism, Praxis

The previous chapter argued that four notions of unity—unity of opposites, unity of experience, unity in diversity, and social unity—were central idealist concerns shared by Dewey and Collingwood. While they both, to differing degrees, turned away from the transcendental, theological, metaphysical, and absolutistic parts of idealism, adopting a more historical, liberal, and humanistic version, their prevailing preoccupation with unity proves that their thought styles remained idealistic throughout their lives. Idealism also influenced Dewey's and Collingwood's notions of experience and their Hegelian process metaphysics, according to which reality and human nature are constantly changing and therefore historical. This led them to abandon the notion of eternal problems and instead emphasize the contextual nature of inquiry.

This chapter will provide a comparative close reading of Dewey's and Collingwood's views on history, naturalism, and praxis, and will conclude by outlining their conceptions of philosophy. I will argue that while Dewey and Collingwood moved away from the absolutistic, theological, and transcendental aspects of idealism, they shared the view that we live in a world of processes, and, like most Anglo-American idealists, embraced a practical and liberal notion of philosophy. They did, however, develop these aspects to a larger extent than their forerunners, and their version of idealism was a historicist and humanistic idealism compatible with pragmatism.

First, I will address the impact of the processual and historical view on their philosophies, doing so by contrasting "historicism" with "naturalism."[535]

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535 I am grateful to Admir Skodo for suggesting to me that Dewey's and Collingwood's views on naturalism might be an interesting point of comparison.

The latter label is often used to described Dewey's philosophy, while Collingwood generally is regarded to be an anti-naturalist. By distinguishing between strong and weak metaphysical and epistemological naturalism, I intend to show that Collingwood's and Dewey's views were much closer than they might appear. Even though Dewey was more interested in incorporating the results and methods of the natural sciences into his philosophy, and much less inclined to admit any conflict between the natural and human sciences, I will argue that he, like Collingwood, should be regarded as a humanist philosopher. This should become apparent when we compare their views on history, which they both regarded as a central aspect of all forms of knowing and inquiry.

Their process metaphysics led Dewey and Collingwood to regard the past and present as continuous, and they therefore rejected the idea that historiography should deal with "the past for past's sake." Instead, they wanted historians to look at the past with present problems in mind and use history for contemporary purposes. Collingwood therefore regarded history as essential for individual and collective self-understanding and self-creation; what Dewey called "growth of experience" and the German neo-humanists called *Bildung*.

The second part of this chapter turns to Dewey's and Collingwood's view of praxis and action. As we saw in Chapter 2, making philosophy practically useful was a central concern for the Anglo-American idealists. They rejected the distinction between the individual and society and regarded self-realization to be intertwined with the common good. Philosophy should offer guidance for action and aim to be of practical use, which is why education, ethics, and social philosophy were common idealist themes. None of the Anglo-American idealists, however, attempted to develop a philosophy of praxis to the same extent as Dewey and Collingwood. Arguably, we find in their thought a liberal and humanistic alternative to the more well-known Marxist philosophy of praxis.

By comparing Collingwood's and Dewey's notions of praxis and action, I will also address their relation to pragmatism—the philosophical tradition in which we, for good reason, tend to situate Dewey and which he himself embraced. Collingwood, in contrast, rejected pragmatism, and I intend to show that this was because of misunderstandings and that a

pragmatist reading of him is fully possible. Most importantly, this comparison will stress the historically close relationship between idealism and pragmatism, which should make us question attempts to assign an end date to Dewey's idealism. As we have seen, Dewey himself was wise enough to recognize the lasting influence of idealism on his philosophy.

The third and last part of this chapter turns to Dewey's and Collingwood's conception of philosophy. Here we will see that another example of their resistance to adopting the analytical thought style was their rejection of epistemology and formal logic, which is connected to their attempt to make philosophy practically useful, as well as to their view of the universe as dynamic and processual. Both of them regarded experience to be the starting point and end of philosophy. However, for Dewey and Collingwood, it was not the end result, but the method of inquiry that mattered. Providing a *theory of inquiry* was not important only for philosophy, since they regarded philosophical method to have many parallels with political method. Furthermore, the philosophical method they developed was a method of reconstructive cultural criticism—a broad and synthetic notion of philosophy that was a heritage from idealism and its quest for unity of experience.

Between Naturalism and Historicism

To bring about a rapprochement between Dewey and Collingwood, a good starting point is to look at two subjects on which they appear to have fundamentally conflicting views: naturalism and historicism. Both "isms" concern epistemological, methodological, and metaphysical matters, and are sometimes taken as opposed, which is an oversimplification. While Collingwood regarded historical understanding to be the opposite of naturalism, which he often attacked, there has been disagreement regarding whether he ever became a historicist. In contrast to Collingwood, Dewey is acknowledged as a naturalist and identified as such during the second half of his life. While Collingwood emphasized the importance of historical thinking and is most recognized as a philosopher of history, Dewey never developed a philosophy of history, although he often touched on the

subject. When we assemble his scattered writings on history, we will see that there was a great deal of convergence between him and Collingwood on this subject. We will also see that Dewey and Collingwood meant somewhat different things by naturalism, and that Dewey's naturalism and Collingwood's anti-naturalism have a surprising amount in common.

To compare their views on naturalism, we need to distinguish between metaphysical (or ontological) and epistemological (or methodological) naturalism. *Metaphysical naturalism*, in holding that only natural entities exist, is opposed to theism and supernaturalism. A *strong* metaphysical naturalist will "downplay or explain away elements of our common understanding of human experience," and may reject "things such as free will, the self, and morality" as illusory.[536] A *weak* metaphysical naturalist, on the other hand, will allow for these things as well as for the existence of subjective human experience.

Metaphysical naturalism, then, involves the question of what reality consists of. One's answer will influence how one thinks inquiry should be conducted, which is the central question in *epistemological naturalism*. Here we may once again differentiate between a strong and weak position. *Strong* epistemological naturalism ends up in a position similar to positivism in holding that natural science provides the role model for all kinds of inquiry, while *weak* epistemological naturalism "allows a high degree of holism and historicity."[537] Weak epistemological naturalists insist, for example, that philosophy and historiography must be *compatible* but not necessarily *continuous* with natural science, since these inquiries may be conducted in ways that are rather different from and not reducible to the methods of natural science.

Comparing Dewey's and Collingwood's thought in relation to these types of naturalism will help us see that their positions are much closer on these issues than we might first expect. It will also help us understand how they conceive of the natural and human sciences and the relation between them. We will see that Dewey was a weak naturalist in both the epistemo-

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536 Kelly James Clark, "Naturalism and its Discontents," in *The Blackwell Companion to Naturalism*, ed. K. J. Clark (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 4–5, Wiley Online Library.

537 "Naturalism," in Audi and Audi, eds., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 699.

logical and metaphysical senses. In Collingwood's case, his later works, especially *An Essay on Metaphysics*, are compatible with weak metaphysical naturalism, but it is difficult to determine whether this was a position he embraced. Collingwood's philosophy could possibly be combined with weak epistemological naturalism, even though it might be unjust to describe him as any kind of naturalist, since he was so dismissive of that label throughout his career.

Collingwood's Case Against Naturalism

Collingwood objects to two kinds of naturalism: aesthetic and historical. He describes aesthetic naturalism as a historical phenomenon that dominated French and British art in the nineteenth century and includes landscape painting and portraits, novels by Charles Dickens and Emile Zola, and the aesthetic ideal promoted in John Ruskin's *Modern Painters*.[538] According to this ideal, the aim of art is "the literal representation of that common-sense world of things as they appear to a normal and healthy eye which we call nature" (PA: 54). Collingwood rejects this view because copying the natural world is not only impossible, but attempts to depict nature must necessarily include selection, imagination, and creativity, which belong to the realm of "art proper."[539] Collingwood is not saying that naturalistic artifacts cannot be art, but that being naturalistic is not what makes an object a work of art. His rejection of aesthetic naturalism follows from his rejection of representative theories of art: because representations are made with a preconceived end in mind, they are not art, but craft (PA:

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538 Collingwood, "Aesthetic Theory and Artistic Practice," in *The Philosophy of Enchantment*, 91, 99–102. Although an admirer of Ruskin, Collingwood found the treatment of the relation between art and nature to be "the greatest difficulty in all Ruskin's works." Collingwood, "Ruskin's Philosophy," 32.

539 *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art*, 123–124. Here Collingwood speaks of "idealization" as a necessary component of art, a term he abandons in *The Principles of Art*, where he prefers to speak of "art proper" as an imaginative experience (in contrast to a merely sensory experience) "of total activity." Imagination is necessary both for creating and experiencing art in "supplementing, correcting, and expurgating" what is brought to us by sensory data (PA: 147–149, 151). Self-conscious reflection, then, is part of imagination and necessary for the appreciation of art.

42–43). There is a difference, however, between emotional and literal representations: the former, which is what aesthetic theories of representation usually refer to, holds that the artwork is supposed to evoke the same feeling as the original object, which often implies creating an artwork that is not a literal representation (PA: 53); aesthetic naturalism, however, is an example of literal representation, a copying of nature.[540]

Collingwood traces the rejection of aesthetic naturalism to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. He praises Cézanne for having turned against naturalism and dubs him "the inventor of modern pictorial art."[541] Of special interest is that Collingwood sees the development of modern art as parallel to a new philosophical movement:

> In the middle of the century the dominating philosophy had been a naturalistic positivism—a worship of "natural facts"—which accurately expressed the spirit of the naturalistic art of the age. The Romantic period had conceived an idealistic philosophy of nature according to which "we receive but what we give." In the materialism and positivism of the succeeding period, this conception had been rejected; or rather, it had fallen apart into two elements. That we receive from nature, was still believed; that we give to her, was denied. Now, in the last quarter of the century, there arose in England and France a new school of philosophy, in revolt against naturalism and materialism and positivism, asserting the freedom of mind to create an orderly life of its own and a world in which to dwell. The generation which, in France, produced Cézanne, produced Lachelier and Renouvier, and prepared the way for Boutroux and Blondel, Poincaré and Bergson, the philosophers of action and freedom. At the same time, Green and Caird, Bradley and Bosanquet, were attacking naturalism in England, and it was their generation that produced the central literary figure of modern England, Thomas Hardy, the novelist who turned his back on naturalism and conceived life as a drama whose actors are spiritual forces working within the mind of man.[542]

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540 Aesthetic naturalism is, however, not the only kind of literal representation. There are, for example, literal representations of dreams, insanity, abnormality, and delirium. Collingwood's examples are "Breughel's pictures of animal-demons, Strindberg's *Spook Sonata,* Poe's thrillers, Beardsley's fantastic drawings, [and] surrealist paintings" (PA: 54).

541 Collingwood, "Aesthetic Theory and Artistic Practice," 105.

542 Ibid., 106–107.

Here we see that Collingwood's rejection of naturalism must not only be understood as the rejection of an aesthetic doctrine that holds nature to have inherent properties which it is the artist's purpose to copy; he also sees naturalism as a philosophical doctrine related to materialism and synonymous with positivism. The naturalism Collingwood objects to is therefore strong epistemological naturalism; his reasons for doing so will become clearer as we turn to Collingwood's rejection of "historical naturalism."

"The fundamental principle" of what Collingwood calls "eighteenth-century historical naturalism"—which he argues dominates historical thought even in the twentieth century—is "that historical events have natural causes" (IH: 125). Historical naturalism is epistemologically realistic, according to Collingwood, in the sense that it rests on a dualism between the inner mind and the outer world, and holds that knowledge is not knowledge of the mind, but of the objects outside the mind. This, says Collingwood, is "naturalistic empiricism," which "true to the principles of positivism," holds knowledge to mean natural science (IH: 142). He also criticizes "evolutionary naturalism" for having misled historians to hold a "conception of history as the progress of the human race in and towards rationality" (IH: 144).

In short, historical naturalism is a consequence of trying to make historiography into a science modelled on the natural sciences. This leads historians to the fatal mistake of explaining historical events with reference to human nature, the environment, climate, or geography (PH: 79). Collingwood's examples of historical naturalism include Montesquieu's idea that geographical facts are causes of historical facts, and "the error of regarding a given community's historical function as bound up with its biological character," which he sees an example of in the eugenics of Nazi Germany (PH: 235, 237). He also finds Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of Western Civilization* to be a kind of "anti-historical" historiography of "positivistic naturalism" in which individuals have no agency and the purpose is instead to establish general laws regarding the cyclical rise and fall of cultures (IH: 181–182). Even Arthur Toynbee, whom Collingwood admires, is said to regard "the life of a society as a natural and not a mental life, something at bottom merely biological and best understood on biological analogies." Toynbee "regards history as a mere spectacle, something

consisting of facts observed and recorded by the historian, phenomena presented externally to his gaze, not experiences into which he must enter and which he must make his own" (IH: 163).

In his most clear definition of historical naturalism, Collingwood describes it as "that kind of failure to think historically which ends in either (a) *substituting* natural facts for the historical facts about which one is trying to think (losing the distinction between them altogether), or else (b) *superordinating* natural facts to historical facts, as the causes of which these historical facts are the effects" (PH: 235). He believes that the success of the natural sciences since the seventeenth century has led to the widespread belief that the knowledge produced in natural science is the only kind of valid knowledge. But the facts of history and natural science are not the same kind of facts, says Collingwood: natural scientists are experimental and inductive and use observation to establish facts, but a historian using this method becomes a "scissors-and-paste historian," a historian who relies on observable facts recorded by credible witnesses and attempts to establish cause thorough inductive methods alone (PH: 80).

Like aesthetic naturalism, Collingwood views historical naturalism as a consequence of the "naturalistic empiricism of the nineteenth century, where—true to the principles of positivism—knowledge meant natural science" (IH: 142). While aesthetic naturalism was eventually replaced as the dominant aesthetic ideal, Collingwood thinks that naturalism still haunts philosophy and historiography. This kind of naturalism—which he sometimes refers to as positivism or empiricism and attacked throughout his career—is strong epistemological naturalism.

Dewey's Weak Naturalistic Humanism

The first time Dewey mentions naturalism in a published text is in his contributions to the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (1902) (MW 2: 142):

> NATURALISM (1) The theory that the whole of the universe or of experience may be accounted for by a method like that of the physical sciences, and with recourse only to the current conceptions of physical and

natural science; more specifically, that mental and moral processes may be reduced to the terms and categories of the natural sciences. It is best defined negatively as that which excludes everything distinctly spiritual or transcendental. In this meaning it is about equivalent to Positivism.

NATURALISM (in art). A theory which holds it to be the true end of art to "follow nature." The rendering of a landscape or human character without subjective idealization; without omission of elements that are opposed to the personal or average taste and conscience. It is, however, distinguished from realism by implying faithfulness to the forces at work rather than minute copying of details.

The "minute copying of details" Dewey identifies with "realism" and later, in *Art and Experience*, rejected as an aesthetic ideal (LW 10: 157), is equivalent to what Collingwood means by "naturalism" in art. They agree that art is not a matter of reproducing details or copying the natural world. Nevertheless, Dewey defends naturalism in art, but in doing so, means something very different from Collingwood.

"Genuine naturalism," says Dewey, "signifies a deeper and wider sensitivity to some aspect of the rhythms of existence… it signifies that in some particular a personal perception has been substituted for a convention" (LW 10: 157). This call for deep attention and subjective expression is the only hint of any normative implications in Dewey's aesthetic naturalism, which is mainly a rejection of an antithetical view of art and nature that is consistent with his insistence on the unity of human and nature. This unity implies that "all which can be expressed is some aspect of the relation of man and his environment" (LW 10: 156). Naturalism is "a necessity of all great art, even of the most religiously conventional and of abstract painting, and of the drama that deals with human action in an urban setting" (LW 10: 156). What Dewey promotes here is weak metaphysical naturalism.

Despite their different definitions of aesthetic naturalism, Dewey's other definition of naturalism—what I have called strong epistemological naturalism—agrees with Collingwood's definition. According to this definition, Dewey was not a naturalist, since he never wanted all forms of inquiry to follow the methods of natural science, nor did he think that

"mental and moral processes may be reduced to the terms and categories of the natural sciences."[543]

Dewey's definition of naturalism changed soon after writing the contributions to the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* quoted above. He gravitated toward the understanding of naturalism proposed in *Art as Experience*, a weak metaphysical naturalism that rejects supernaturalism and insists on the continuity between human beings and nature. To regard naturalism in opposition to supernaturalism was common in the 1920s; it was the understanding the American critical realist Roy Wood Sellars, for example, promoted in his 1924 presidential address to the Western Division of the American Philosophical Association.[544] Close to a decade later, Sellars wrote the draft for the widely-read 1933 Humanist Manifesto that Dewey and other intellectuals signed,[545] in which a naturalistic humanism is promoted. This was a view that Dewey also embraced in his prima-

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543 In 1894, Dewey insisted that in having value as their subject, logic, ethics, and aesthetics— "the philosophical sciences"—differed from natural sciences, which "investigate facts and relations in their objective character" (EW 4: 132). Dewey later described the pragmatism of William James, which he had begun to identify with, as a "via media" between positivism and idealism (MW 6: 96). While Dewey had been an idealist before becoming a pragmatist, he never identified with positivism, which he often seemed to regard as a form of, if not identical to, materialism. For Dewey's argument that naturalism does not entail materialism, see "Anti-Naturalism in Extremis" (LW 15: 46–62) and "Are Naturalists Materialists?" (LW 15: 109–126). The latter text was co-written with Sidney Hook and Ernest Nagel.

544 Roy Wood Sellars, "The Emergence of Naturalism," *International Journal of Ethics* 34:4 (July 1924), 309–338.

545 "Humanist Manifesto I," Roy Wood Sellars, et. al. Republished by the American Humanist Association, accessed September 7, 2021, https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto1/. The original manifesto was published in *The New Humanist*.

ry text on religion, *A Common Faith*, which was published the following year.[546]

True to his usual anti-dualism, rather than opposing naturalism to supernaturalism, Dewey argued for the necessity of unifying these opposites. *A Common Faith* argues that religion must cease subordinating the natural to the supernatural, since religious experience, values, and ideals are important, but only in so far as they are seen as part of the natural world and put in the service of the human community.[547] Dewey worries that supernaturalism could turn our attention away from real-life problems and even isolate us from the natural world (LW 9: 32, 36). The ideal is not opposed to what is actual, natural, and real, but "has its roots in natural conditions; it emerges when the imagination idealizes existence by laying hold of the possibilities offered to thought and action. There are values, goods, actually realized upon a natural basis—the goods of human association, of art and knowledge" (LW 9: 33). These goods and values are not experienced supernaturally, but in concrete situations and relations. The religiosity Dewey promotes rejects supernaturalism and transcendentalism and urges religious institutions to "show a more active interest in social affairs, that they take a definite stand upon such questions as war, economic injustice, political corruption, that they stimulate action for a divine kingdom on earth" (LW 9: 55). When Dewey addresses naturalism in relation to religiosity, he promotes a weak metaphysical naturalism.

While Dewey's discussions of naturalism are infrequent before the mid-1920s, he embraces the term from *Nature and Experience* (1925) onward. It is worth noting that he began identifying as a naturalist and a pragmatist

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546 Dewey did not use the term naturalistic humanism in *A Common Faith*, although he claimed that were "the naturalistic foundations and bearings of religion grasped, the religious element in life would emerge from the throes of the crisis in religion. Religion would then be found to have its natural place in every aspect of human experience that is concerned with estimate of possibilities, with emotional stir by possibilities as yet unrealized, and with all action in behalf of their realization. All that is significant in human experience falls within this frame" (LW 9: 38–39). He further states: "A humanistic religion, if it excludes our relation to nature, is pale and thin" (LW 9: 36).

547 See also "Anti-Naturalism in Extremis." In this text, Dewey views anti-naturalism as "absolutist and totalitarian," and thereby implicitly lets us know that naturalism is tolerant and experimental (LW 15: 59).

at the same time, although he was keen to distance himself from the "ethical naturalism" of Herbert Spencer, which he found individualistic and pseudo-scientific (MW 5: 332–335). In contrast, Dewey holds that human nature is naturally social and this insight must be the foundation of ethics; because of this, "the union of acknowledgment of moral powers and demands with thoroughgoing naturalism" is a "most desirable thing" (MW 3: 98). Dewey also stresses the importance of bringing together naturalism and humanism in *Reconstruction in Philosophy*:

> When the consciousness of science is fully impregnated with the consciousness of human value, the greatest dualism which now weighs humanity down, the split between the material, the mechanical, the scientific and the moral and ideal will be destroyed. Human forces that now waver because of this division will be unified and reinforced. As long as ends are not thought of as individualized according to specific needs and opportunities, the mind will be content with abstractions, and the adequate stimulus to the moral or social use of natural science and historical data will be lacking. But when attention is concentrated upon the diversified concretes, recourse to all intellectual materials needed to clear up the special cases will be imperative. At the same time that morals are made to focus in intelligence, things intellectual are moralized. The vexatious and wasteful conflict between naturalism and humanism is terminated (MW 12: 179).

Ralph Barton Perry named naturalism one of the four *Present Philosophical Tendencies* in the United States in 1912.[548] This trend was even more obvious in 1944, when Dewey's "Antinaturalism in Extremis" was reprinted as the opening essay for the collection *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, a volume that sought to show the implications of naturalism for religion, democracy, ethics, aesthetics, epistemology, logic, sociology, history, philosophy of

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548 Perry's makes an early attempt to distinguish between two types of naturalism: a "naïve" metaphysical materialism, and a "critical" methodological positivism. Hence, he is in one sense a forerunner to the distinction I apply, but neither Dewey, Collingwood, or any idealist would accept either of Perry's naturalisms, which in my terminology is *strong*. See, Ralph Barton Perry, *Present Philosophical Tendencies: A Critical Survey of Naturalism, Idealism, Pragmatism, and Realism Together with a Synopsis of the Philosophy of William James* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1912), 63–64.

mind, and other subjects. According to John Herman Randall, Jr., who wrote the epilogue, the essays were united in viewing naturalism as "not so much a system of a body of doctrine as an attitude and temper: it is essentially a philosophic method and a program. It undertakes to bring scientific analysis and criticism to bear on all the human enterprises and values so zealously maintained by the traditional supernaturalists and by the more sophisticated idealists."[549] While idealistic supernaturalism was rejected by naturalists, there were values and insights from idealism worthy of keeping; for even though Hegel lacked understanding of the natural sciences, Randall argued that his "emphasis on continuity" and anti-dualism were essential ingredients in twentieth-century American naturalism—especially Dewey's version.[550] The anti-dualism of naturalism meant a rejection of the dualism between the natural and the supernatural, and between nature and human experience. But naturalism is also anti-reductionistic in its rejection of materialism and empiricism, says Randall.[551] His view of naturalism is essentially Dewey's: humans are regarded as organisms continuous with nature, which is a fact that must be recognized in all kinds of inquiry. This does not, however, exclude inquiries into, say, art or religion, since everything that enters human experience can be a subject of inquiry. This is weak naturalism in both the epistemological and metaphysical senses.

Randall recognized Dewey and Santayana and, to a lesser extent, Woodbridge and Whitehead, as the leading figures in American naturalism,[552] and the exchanges between Santayana and Dewey following the publication of *Nature and Experience* are therefore of interest. In a review, the self-professed "dogmatic naturalist" Santayana claimed that Dewey's characterization of his doctrine as "naturalistic metaphysics" was paradoxical.[553] He argued that Dewey's philosophy suffered from being "relative to some

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549 John Herman Randall, Jr., "Epilogue: The Nature of Naturalism," in *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, ed. Yervant H. Krikorian, 2. print (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1945), 374.

550 Ibid., 372–373.

551 Ibid., 362–363.

552 Ibid., 366–367.

553 George Santayana, "Dewey's Naturalistic Metaphysics," *The Journal of Philosophy* 22:25 (December 1925), 673, 687.

chosen point of view… to a particular time and place," which led Dewey to situate human perspective and interest "in the place of universal nature or behind it, or before it, so that all the rest of nature is reputed to be intrinsically remote or dubious or merely ideal."[554] In Santayana's terms, the "foreground" dominates Dewey's philosophy, causing Dewey's naturalism to remain "half-hearted and short-winded."[555] Nature and experience are treated as identical by Dewey, and Santayana is troubled by the fact that nature seems to mean what appears before experience (in the foreground), while experience is at the same time constituted by social convention.[556] It is therefore the moral and practical aspects of life that dominate Dewey's pragmatism, and not the natural "background," and Dewey's naturalism is consequently the naturalism of Emerson, Schelling, and Hegel. While Santayana does not use the term, he believes Dewey's doctrine suffers from anthropocentrism.[557]

Dewey's response to Santayana was published as "'Half-Hearted Naturalism'" in *The Journal of Philosophy* (1927). He insisted on a continuity between culture and nature against Santayana's dualistic view. "To me," writes Dewey, "human affairs, associative and personal, are projections, continuations, complications, of the nature which exists in the physical and pre-human world. There is no gulf, no two spheres of existence" (LW 3: 74). Experience, history, and culture "are indicative of outstanding features of nature itself" (LW 3: 75). While Dewey admits that consciousness is the foreground in Santayana's sense, experience, in its "immediacy," is natural. It "reaches down into the background as that reaches up into experience." But having immediacy does not mean that experience is merely immediate—it is also emotional and reflective ("intelligent") (LW 3: 78–79). Unlike Santayana, Dewey refuses to accept dualisms between the individual and the social, mind and matter, the real and the ideal, and culture and nature, and claims to find support for his anti-dualism in contempo-

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554 Ibid., 679.

555 Ibid., 680.

556 Ibid., 681.

557 Others have accused of Dewey of anthropocentrism. See for example, Morris R. Cohen, "Some Difficulties in Dewey's Anthropocentric Naturalism," *Philosophical Review* 49 (March 1940), 196–228.

rary physics, where experience, being viewed as "continuous with nature as background," is regarded as both individual and social ("associational") (LW 3: 80). "In reality," says Dewey, "I think that the ideal … is as real as the biological from which it emanates, and, expressing a higher need of the interaction of things than does the biological without sensation, is in so far I will not say more real, but a fuller reality" (LW 3: 78).[558]

This view is present again in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, where Dewey describes his "naturalistic conception of logic" as "cultural naturalism," meaning that biology is continuous with logic in the sense "that rational operations *grow out of* organic activities" (LW 12: 26). Since human beings are social animals, these activities are also cultural and social. Only

> a naturalism which perceives that man with his habits, institutions, desires, thoughts, aspirations, ideals and struggles, is within nature, an integral part of it, has the philosophical foundation and the practical inspiration for effort to employ nature as an ally of human ideals and goods such as no dualism can possibly provide (LW 5: 114).

The naturalism Dewey promotes here is non-reductive. He would not, for example, reduce values or moral facts (the ideal) to natural facts (the real). What Dewey defends is a weak metaphysical naturalism. In a text co-written with Sidney Hook and Ernest Nagel, it also becomes clear that Dewey not only rejects strong metaphysical naturalism, but strong epistemological naturalism. A naturalist, say Dewey, Hook, and Nagel, should admit that natural science offers "the most reliable method for achieving knowledge," but must also recognize that it is an insufficient method in accounting for aesthetic, mystical, or emotional experiences, which also provide valid sources of knowledge (LW 15: 118). The naturalist philosopher does not have to hold that philosophy should become a natural science; on the contrary, Dewey insists that while human experience and scientific inquiry are continuous with the natural world, this does not mean that all experience "must be translated into the terms of the material of the physical sciences" (LW

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558 For Dewey's critique of Santayana's naturalism, see also his reviews of *The Life of Reason, or the Phases of Human Progress* (MW 3) and *The Philosophy of George Santayana* (LW 14).

14: 143). Philosophy, in having value and morals as its foundation, is distinct from, but interconnected and compatible with, natural science (LW 14: 148). This is the essence of weak epistemological naturalism.

Dewey's weak naturalist philosophy retained the anti-dualistic lesson he had learned from idealism. He continued to refuse the antitheses between theory and practice and fact and value, as well as the Kantian separation between phenomena and noumena, which he attacked throughout his career.[559] In an essay on the atomic bomb written toward the end of his life, Dewey claimed that science and technology would "operate in inhuman ways" if the dualism between the natural and the moral, or fact and value, was not overcome (LW 15: 200). Natural science must be put in the service of humanity, but that can only happen if human needs, wants, values, and aims are identified, which they cannot be by natural science alone. In other words, Dewey's naturalism was also a humanism. "[T]he naturalist," he says, "is one who of necessity has respect for the conclusions of natural science," and has the wisdom to apply scientific methods to serve humanity (LW 15: 48).

In his philosophy of education, Dewey once again complains about the opposition between naturalism and humanism, or natural science and the humanities—an opposition he regards as "a reflection of the time-worn discussion of the relations of spirit and matter, mind and nature, subject and object" (MW 7: 214). In overcoming these unhelpful dualisms, Dewey thinks that philosophy and pedagogy are

> confronted with a common problem: The discovery of the common background or matrix in which humanistic and naturalistic interests are united; and the tracing of their respective differentiations from this community of origin,—a differentiation, however, which should not become a separation, and which, accordingly, secures the possibility of fruitful interaction between them whenever desired (MW 7: 217).[560]

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559 For the earliest example, see "Kant and Philosophic Method" (EW 1: 41); for the harshest attack, see *German Philosophy and Politics* (MW 8: 147), which was discussed in Chapter 3.

560 Dewey's most elaborated discussion of this topic can be found in Chapter 21, "Physical and Social Studies: Naturalism and Humanism," in *Democracy and Education* (MW 9: 286–299).

Dewey's unity between humanism and naturalism was a unity in diversity. He was keen to incorporate the lessons from physics and biology into his humanistic social philosophy, without reducing philosophy to a tool for the natural sciences. He was therefore not a strong epistemological naturalist—which is how Collingwood understood naturalism—but a weak metaphysical naturalist and a weak epistemological naturalist. For him, naturalism, like pragmatism, offered an escape from supernaturalism, epistemology, and the dualisms that haunted philosophy. Dewey and Collingwood would agree that positivism and materialism should be rejected, even though Dewey was much less critical of strong epistemological naturalism, which was Collingwood's main target of attack, since he feared it prohibited the self-knowledge that only the human and historical sciences could give. Both Dewey and Collingwood included natural science in their notions of unity of experience, but while Dewey was keen to draw inspiration and build on the insights and results from the natural sciences—sometimes to the degree that the boundaries between different kinds of science and research became blurred—Collingwood was keen to protect philosophy and historiography from the dominance of natural science, and was above all concerned with showing that history was an autonomous science that followed its own set of methods and principles.

Was Collingwood a Historicist?

Like naturalism, "historicism" is a term with many meanings. It has been suggested that it should be understood as a rejection of a static and mechanic worldview, as well as the dominance of the positivist doctrine, according to which historiography was supposed to follow the model of the natural sciences in establishing universal laws.[561] This is exactly why Collingwood rejected (strong epistemological) naturalism. While this is a debatable definition of historicism, it highlights the fact that the discussion of naturalism and historicism involves a possible conflict between inquiry

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561 Dwight E. Lee and Robert N. Beck regard this as fundamental to their broad conception of historicism, in which they include Collingwood. See their "The Meaning of 'Historicism'," *The American Historical Review* 59:3 (April 1954), 568–577.

in the natural and human sciences. We saw above that Collingwood reject-ed historical naturalism, meaning the attempt to apply the methods of the natural sciences to history; instead, Collingwood argued that historiogra-phy differs from natural science in studying the "inside" of actions (thought), not merely external factors (IH: 213–214). Historiography must therefore become a science in its own right, with its own methods and subject matter (IH: 208–209; A: 115–116).

Another definition of historicism is that it emphasizes the historicity of reality and human nature and insists that the understanding of all phe-nomena needs to take place within their historical contexts. According to Maurice Mandelbaum's definition: "Historicism is the belief that an ade-quate understanding of the nature of any phenomenon and an adequate assessment of its value are to be gained through considering it in terms of the place which it occupied and the role which it played within a process of development."[562] When Louis Mink calls Collingwood a historicist, this is the aspect of Collingwood's philosophy he has in mind; it is not Colling-wood's empirical concept of history, which concerns what historians ought to do, but his philosophical concept of history, which "refer[s] to a form of consciousness, characterized by ideas and beliefs which have come into existence in connection with the development of historical studies but which now escape any attempts to restrict them to historical inquiry" that makes Collingwood a historicist.[563] For Collingwood, human nature is at bottom historical, as are philosophical systems and the philosophical prob-lems that tend to be viewed as "eternal"; even metaphysics is a historical science (A: 60, 66).

These views are present throughout Collingwood's career, but the only time he explicitly endorsed historicism was in his 1919 address on "Ruskin's Philosophy," where he advocated historicism over "logicism" (i.e., positiv-ism). Here the representatives of historicism are Ruskin and Hegel, and the latter is said to have provided the most systematic account of historicism, a

562 Maurice Mandelbaum, *History, Man, and Reason: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Thought* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1971), 42.

563 Louis O. Mink, "Collingwood's Historicism: A Dialectic of Process," in *Critical Essays on the Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood*, ed. Michael Krausz (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 159.

term which Collingwood at one point uses interchangeably with "Hegelism."[564] Unlike logicism, which holds that the purpose of all science is to establish universal laws, historicism is concerned with individual facts and their specific circumstances. Historicists are contextualists and reject the notion of eternal problems and natural rights.[565] This, says Collingwood, makes historicists tolerant, since they regard every historical phase as having "its own individual character, ideals and virtues," and attempt to understand it on its own terms, not with reference to general laws or universal standards.[566] For Collingwood, this principle goes hand in hand with Hegelian dialectics and "the belief in the unity or solidarity of the human spirit."[567]

In being synthetic and dialectical, historicism emphasizes "the resemblances and connexions between problems, instead of regarding every problem as intrinsically different from every other."[568] Historicism also emphasizes the continuity of the past. A "logically-minded person" will regard history as "a mere succession of events, fact following fact with little or no internal cohesion," while the "historically-minded person" regards history to be "a drama, the unfolding of a plot in which each situation leads necessarily to the next."[569] This is reminiscent of the principle of the "living past" from *The Idea of History*: to isolate historical events or periods would be to regard history as "dead," because it would mean that it has no connection to the present. If history is to matter, a historian must instead emphasize the connection and continuity between the past and the present (IH: 158).

Despite this early favorable account of historicism, Collingwood abandoned the term except in his "Notes on Historiography," written while sailing the East Indies in 1939. In this text, Collingwood claims that what in Germany is known as historicism should instead be viewed, in his terms, as "anti-historicism," because it tends to follow the positivist doctrine of approaching historical problems using methods from the natural sciences

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564 Collingwood, "Ruskin's Philosophy," 17.

565 Ibid., 14.

566 Ibid., 22.

567 Ibid., 17–18.

568 Ibid., 30.

569 Ibid., 19.

(PH: 238, 246–247). Collingwood repeated this charge against historicism—here understood as "the German conception of history" proposed by nineteenth-century historians—in *The Idea of History*,[570] where he claims that the importance of historicism (although he did not use the term) was that its proponents realized the importance of moving away "from the positivistic principle that natural science is the only true form of knowledge" (IH: 175). Collingwood credits Herder with being the first thinker to move away from a universal notion of human nature (IH: 90–91); Windelband for making the claim that history is a science with its own particular methods (IH: 166); and nineteenth-century German historians, led by Ranke, for having rejected Comtean positivism, and for turning to historical facts rather than historical laws (IH: 131). However, Herder failed to rise above the biological conception of human nature; Windelband failed to conceptualize the difference between history and natural science; and Ranke's school held on to the positivist notion of facts "as separate or atomic" and "independent of the knower," which led to a historiography that rejected large-scale syntheses and distinguished between fact and value (IH: 131). Even the "neglected genius Dilthey" failed to rise above the positivist conception of history, despite his important insight that "genuine historical knowledge is an inward experience" (IH: 171–172). The problem, says Collingwood, is that Dilthey thought the experience of historical agents must be understood in relation to their psychological structure, rather than in relation to a particular problem; as a result, Dilthey remains trapped by "naturalistic principles" (IH: 173).[571]

Is Collingwood's disagreement with Ranke, Dilthey, and other German historians and philosophers of history a sufficient reason to refrain from calling him a historicist? He in fact agrees with their aim of making history an autonomous science, although he faults them for being trapped by strong epistemological naturalism. Does this mean we should perhaps view Collingwood as the true historicist? If we consider that Croce advocated a

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570 On nineteenth-century German historicism, see George G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1984), ProQuest Ebook Central.

571 To an extent, Collingwood misinterprets Dilthey and therefore overemphasizes the difference between their views. For a comparison, see Jay, *Songs of Experience*, 235–237, 240–241.

kind of historicism, following Vico and Hegel, it is no stretch to consider Collingwood a historicist. Like Collingwood, Croce rejected the abstract rationalism of "illuminism" and the notion of a transcendent world of ideas from which universal values and ideals emanate. He described historicism as "the affirmation that life and reality are history and history alone."[572]

The historical exposition of *The Idea of History* ends, in fact, with a discussion of Croce's philosophy of history, and Collingwood credits him with having freed history from naturalism (IH: 193). Unlike the Germans, Croce realized that a theory of history must not only be formulated in dialogue with science, but with art and philosophy. He came to realize that history was a combination of universal philosophical judgement and "artistic representation" of individual fact (IH: 192–193). Similar to Hegel's notion of "the concrete universal," Croce argues that the individual truths of history were realizations of universal truth, which made philosophy "an integral part of historical thinking itself" (IH: 196).[573] He also claims that because reality is historical, so is all knowledge, although there is a distinction to be made between scientific knowledge, which concerns the external side of an object, and historical knowledge, which means "apprehending the individuality of a thing by thinking oneself into it" (IH: 199).

Collingwood's own philosophy of history builds on Croce's. He agrees that history is an autonomous discipline with methods distinct from the natural sciences, and emphasizes the need for "a rapprochement between philosophy and history" (A: 77). Like Croce, Collingwood holds that all history is history of the present in the sense that history is a matter of experiencing the past in the present (IH: 202). The historical experience is, however, not an "immediate experience," as Dilthey claimed, but a reflective experience (IH: 174).[574] Nor is it an experience of the past as distinguished from the present, as Oakeshott claimed, which would be to treat the past as "dead"; rather, the past is living "because it was thought and

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572 Benedetto Croce, *History as the Story of Liberty* (New York: Norton, 1941), 65.

573 Croce writes: "Historicism is a logical principle; it is, in fact, the very category of logic; it is logicality in its full acceptation, the logicality of the concrete universal." Ibid., 78.

574 Compare this to Collingwood's notion of the aesthetic experience being an *imaginative* experience (involving reflection) and not an *immediate* (merely sensory) experience, as discussed above.

not mere natural event," and can therefore "be re-enacted in the present and in that re-enactment known as past" (IH: 158). Hence the presentist claim: "The ultimate aim of history is not to know the past but to understand the present" (PH: 140).

What Collingwood calls "re-enactment" is not merely a matter of seeing things from the historical agents' view, but involves philosophical judgement and reflection. "All history is the history of thought," but in reenacting past thought the historian "re-enacts it in the context of his own knowledge and therefore, in re-enacting it, criticizes it, forms his own judgement of its value, corrects whatever errors he can discern in it" (IH: 215). The reenactment doctrine is not a method in the sense that it tells one how to conduct historical research;[575] it rather answers the theoretical question of how historical knowledge is possible in the first place. History rests on the assumption that we can understand people from other times and other cultures, and to understand the meaning of a past action we must comprehend the problem it answered to. By studying history in accordance with these principles, we "attain self-knowledge" of and in the present, claims Collingwood (IH: 315). Here we see that history cannot follow the methods of natural science: it must be a science on its own terms, for it is interpretive and concerned with meaning and understanding, not with causal explanation and laws.

By now, it should be clear that there are good reasons for considering Collingwood to be a historicist. Nevertheless, many Collingwood scholars want to shield him from charges of historicism, which were first made by T. M. Knox in his preface to *The Idea of History*.[576] The debate has come to revolve around three issues: (1) whether Collingwood came to think that history was the only proper form of knowledge; (2) whether he became a relativist; and (3) what he meant by the claim that metaphysics is a historical discipline.

While Collingwood's remark about philosophy being "liquidated" into history is unfortunate (PH: 238),[577] I do not think that he meant to say that

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575 This is pointed out in Jan van der Dussen's "Editor's Introduction" (IH: xxvii).

576 T. M. Knox, "Editor's Preface," viii, xvii.

577 This comment was written in 1939 as a preparatory note to what was meant to become *The Principles of History*.

philosophy had become the exact same thing as historiography and therefore should size to exist as a separate activity. *An Autobiography* proposes a rapprochement between philosophy and history, but never argues that one should be reduced to the other (A: 77). While metaphysics is said to be a historical discipline, Collingwood never says that metaphysics is equal to historiography; in fact, the metaphysician and the historian share neither subject matter nor methodology, because while the historian reenacts the thought of historical agents, the metaphysician uncovers the unconscious constellations of "absolute presuppositions" that form the background of any period in history or culture.[578] Nor does Collingwood claim that aesthetics and natural science are nothing but history; in fact, he explicitly rejects the view, which he attributes to Rickert, that history is "the only genuine knowledge that exists or can exist" (IH: 169). As we saw in the previous chapter, Collingwood embraces a unity between art, history, science, and philosophy, but conceives of this as a unity in diversity. These ways of knowing, or forms of experience, overlap—they differ in kind and degree simultaneously.

I believe Collingwood to be a historicist because I do not think that this label requires one to regard history as the only game in town. D'Oro and Connelly, in contrast, believe this to be the case, and therefore argue that Collingwood was not a historicist.[579] A more pressing issue concerns whether historicism implies relativism; I do not believe so, but those who have defended Collingwood against charges of historicism do, as did

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578 Re-enactment requires that the historical agent deliberately decided to act in a particular way. There may, however, be reasons for the agent's behavior that the agent is unconscious of. He or she may have propounded a scientific theory which is based on the belief in God, or the idea that everything in the universe is law-bound without recognizing that such is the case. If so, these are the absolute presuppositions that shapes the agents experience, thought, and action. The absolute presuppositions cannot be re-enacted and therefore belongs to the realm of metaphysics rather than historiography, according to Collingwood. Hence, a historian tries to understand past agents from their point of view, while a metaphysician is more concerned with the discourse that makes individual statements possible in the first place. But why not broaden historiography to include the task of identifying absolute presuppositions and abandon metaphysics as a separate discipline? Collingwood does not give us a satisfying answer.

579 Giuseppina D'Oro and James Connelly, "Collingwood, Scientism and Historicism," *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 11 (2017), 281–282.

Knox.[580] It is not surprising that Knox held this belief, since when he edited *The Idea of History*, the "crisis of historicism" debate had been going on for two or three decades, and at the heart of this debate was the fear that historicism led to moral relativism.[581] This fear must, of course, be understood in light of the totalitarian threats of the era, but, as Frank Ankersmit notes, it should only be a fear for those who cannot decide between, or try to combine, historicism and positivism—something that applies to neither Knox nor Collingwood.[582] It is therefore difficult to understand why many subsequent scholars have been keen to protect Collingwood from charges of historicism. I suggest that we instead regard his philosophy of history as an attempt to defend historicism against charges of relativism. In other words, I agree with those who defend Collingwood against charges relativism, but I disagree with their view of historicism as implying relativism. None of the German eighteenth-century proponents of historicism endorsed relativism, and it was not until the early twentieth century that historicism began to be associated with it and, more specifically, with the fear that moral values could not be justified.[583] This aspect of the crisis of historicism should also be considered in relation to the crisis of faith; in both instances, it was thought that if there were no transcendent supernatural realm that could guarantee objectivity and moral absolutes, humankind was doomed.

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580 While the problems Knox addresses are those of relativism, he uses the terms dogmatism, skepticism, and "unquestioning acceptance." See Knox, "Editor's Preface," xvi–xvii. Nathan Rotenstreich, Tariq Modod, James Connelly and Giuseppina D'Oro agree that relativism follows from historicism; but while Rotenstreich agrees with Knox that Collingwood became a relativist and historicist, Modod, Connelly and D'Oro defends Collingwood against charges of historicism (and relativism). See Rotenstreich, "Metaphysics and Historicism," in *Critical Essays on the Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood*, 179–200; Modood, "The Later Collingwood's Alleged Historicism and Relativism," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 27:1 (January 1989), 101–125; D'Oro and Connelly, "Collingwood, Scientism and Historicism," 275–288.

581 Herman J. Paul, "A Collapse of Trust: Reconceptualizing the Crisis of Historicism," *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 2 (2008) 63–82.

582 Frank R. Ankersmit, "Historicism: An Attempt at Synthesis," in *History and Theory* 34:3 (1995), 144n4.

583 Paul, "A Collapse of Trust," 63–82.

The debate about Collingwood's alleged relativism is related to the third issue: What Collingwood meant in saying that metaphysics is a historical discipline, and if this statement be understood as a rejection of transcendentalism. I probably differ from most Collingwood scholars in holding that he would have benefitted from rejecting transcendentalism, although it is disputed whether he did.[584] Furthermore, while historicism undermined transcendent justifications, leading to the crisis of historicism, a rejection of transcendentalism must not follow from historicism, and certainly did not for nineteenth-century historicists like Ranke.[585]

There are, however, indications that Collingwood moved away from transcendental idealism toward the end of his life. As we have seen, he had already in his earliest texts stressed that experience is not transcendental. He also promoted a historical view of the world, which was a Hegelian processual world of becoming, not being. Metaphysics, Collingwood wrote, "is no futile attempt at knowing what lies beyond the limits of experience but is primarily at any given time an attempt to discover what the people of that time believe about the world's general nature" (A: 66). In *An Essay on Metaphysics*, he rejected the view that metaphysics was a science of "pure being" (ontology) and claimed that it was a historical science dedicated to uncovering "absolute presuppositions"; that is, the underlying assumptions of past thought that structure all knowledge (EM: 11). That metaphysical statements lack verifiability is not an issue, according to Collingwood—normally, we are not even aware of their existence. Somewhere between Thomas Kuhn's paradigms and Michel Foucault's epistemes, the absolute presuppositions appear in gradually changing unconscious "constellations" that work on the level of cultures, societies, and

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584 Robert Burns thinks Collingwood began as a transcendentalist but abandoned these views in the late 1930s, and James Connelly thinks Collingwood was a transcendentalist all along in regarding some concepts and forms of experience as necessary and universal. See Connelly, *Metaphysics, Method and Politics*, 150–156; and Burns, "Collingwood, Bradley, and Historical Knowledge," 178–203. See also my discussion of Collingwood's relation to Bradley in Chapter 2.

585 Paul, "A Collapse of Trust," 68–70; Frederick C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), 10, Oxford Scholarship Online.

institutions (EM: 66).[586] The metaphysician's business is to make these unexpressed and often unconscious assumptions explicit which gives us better understanding of history and reveals its contingency.

If we live in a processual universe of becoming and our knowledge of this universe comes to us through non-transcendental experience, and this experience, which includes our reflective thought about it, is at least partly determined by constellations of unconscious absolute presuppositions, how can relativism be avoided? Collingwood's answer is basically: with more historical inquiry. While he rejects the notion of progress as inherent in history, he argues that progress is created by historical thinking. Whether a historical change happened for the better or the worse depends on its relation to the situation it succeeded, as well as in determining for whom it was, or was not, an improvement (IH: 325–326). The historian "must judge the relative value of two different ways of life, taken as two wholes." By reenacting the two lives before and after a particular change, the historian becomes "a qualified judge" in the matter of historical progress (IH: 327). This is a judgement, however, that can only be made about specific changes, not entire periods.[587]

A universal standard with which to compare these changes may not exist, and what counts as good, true, and beautiful is always changing and relative to historical context, which makes is difficult, if not dubious, to speak of progress. This does not, however, imply relativism in the sense that all judgements concerning the good, the true, and the beautiful are equally valid, nor does it mean that progress is a mere matter of individual preference. "The life of morality," writes Collingwood, "consists not in the development of moral codes, but in their application to individual problems of conduct" (IH: 330). In this sense there is no moral progress,

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586 Parallels between Collingwood and Kuhn have often been indicated, but to my knowledge never sufficiently studied. Nor have I seen anyone discuss the similarities between Collingwood's absolute presuppositions and Foucault's epistemes. A comparison between the three of them lies beyond the scope of this thesis, but I believe it would be worth undertaking.

587 While it might seem that this position would lead to a rejection of universally fixed standards, Collingwood does, in fact, regard universals to exist as ideals. There is, for example, an ideal universal society, but no particular society can ever reach this ideal since ever actual society will involve non-social elements, which obviously are not ideal (NL: 21.5).

but in another sense there may be, because we may manage to put into place new institutions that help us, as a society, deal with moral problems in a more satisfying way than the old institutions did. If this is the case, progress has been achieved, which does not imply that a final or eternal good has been reached, only that an improvement compared to what previously existed has been brought into existence.

History and the rest of the human sciences are what Collingwood calls "criteriological," meaning that they "distinguish what a thing is meant to be from what it is, and aim at distinguishing cases where the two coincide (successes) from cases in which they do not (failures)" (PH: 83). Hence the human sciences involve an evaluative or critical element that is not present in the natural sciences. This, says Collingwood, is the problem with modern psychology, which studies human thought and conduct without taking the validity of beliefs and success of actions into account (PH: 85). Aesthetics as a natural science would abandon judgement for a study of bodily or emotional reactions to art. Logic as a natural science would stop evaluating the soundness and validity of arguments, and instead turn its attention to the type of person holding a particular belief: "Where the logician will say 'that argument is defective, I will show you why', the psychologist will say 'that argument is characteristic of a middle-aged, middle-class Englishman, I will show you why'" (PH: 86). As a natural science, psychology can provide valuable insights into human senses and instincts, but as a "science of mind," it fails, since a science of mind needs to study the rational and imaginative aspects of the mind, and this, says Collingwood, can only be achieved through historiography (PH: 225). History is therefore a fundamental part of all the human (and social) sciences, and they, in turn, are fundamental for human self-knowledge and self-creation, both individually and collectively.

Dewey's New History

Although Dewey never expounded a philosophy of history or attempted to collect his views on history, it was a topic he returned to, especially in relation to philosophy and pedagogy. It is also noteworthy that many of his texts are at least partly historical; for example, *Ethics* includes a histor-

ical survey of individualism with the explicit purpose of showing "the *relativism* of social formulae in their ethical aspect" (LW 7: 336)—in other words, to show that individualism is not "natural," but a historical and social product. Used as such, history becomes a tool for criticism.[588]

Even though Hegel was one of the main influences on Dewey's historical approach to philosophy, Dewey thought absolutism and the teleological aspect of Hegelianism were the opposite of the kind of historical relativism he embraced.[589] Here we touch upon Dewey's reasons for rejecting historicism, by which Dewey meant "the notion of an Ideal, a Mission, a Destiny which can be found continuously unfolding in the life of a people" (MW 10: 226). The purpose of historicism, which Dewey associates with Herder, Lessing, Fichte, and Hegel, was to "eulogize the existing régime" and the nation (MW 7: 124).[590] Historicism therefore, became one of the major forces in forming "the mind of Germany," and Dewey's critique of it should be understood in relation to the criticism he directed at *German Philosophy and Politics*, which we encountered in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, Dewey credits "such men as Niebuhr, Mommsen and Ranke" for having "developed such an effective historical technique that even mediocre men achieved respectable results" (MW 8: 186). It is not the new methods of historical research that are the problem, then, but the fact that historiography has been used to justify the present.

What should the purpose of history be then? We find Dewey's answer in his philosophy of education, where he addressed the issue repeatedly,

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588 Another example of Dewey's historical criticism can be found in *Liberalism and Social Action*, where he argues that the atomistic individualism and laissez-faire doctrines found in nineteenth-century liberalism served a purpose at the time, but need to be revised in consideration of new scientific discoveries and new social problems. The doctrines and aims of liberalism therefore must keep changing so as not to stagnate. The same is true, of course, of all philosophical doctrines, especially considering that Dewey rejects the notion of eternal philosophical problems.

589 Dewey uses the term relativism in the sense that an event, text, or action needs to be understood relative to its social and historical context, not in the sense that "anything goes."

590 Dewey also describes Marx as a historicist because of the "absolutistic spirit," or teleology, of his philosophy of history, which regards history as possessing "an automatic movement" (LW 8: 10). See also Dewey's criticism of Marx's philosophy of history in "Why I Am Not a Communist" (LW 9: 92).

though seldom in depth.[591] Like Collingwood, Dewey emphasizes that the past must not be treated as "dead," meaning "simply as a record of what has passed and gone" and as "a mere statement of what happened" (EW 5: 89; MW 1: 106). While history "deals with the past… this past is the history of the present" (MW 9: 222). This view led Dewey—again, like Collingwood—to claim: "The true starting point of history is always some present situation with its problems" (MW 9: 222). The purpose is not to learn *about* the past, but to learn *from* it.

The "ethical value of history" lays, according to Dewey, in providing perspective and insight into the present "structure and working of society" (EW 5: 70).[592] The past has therefore no intrinsic value, so one must always proceed "by relating the past to the present" (EW 5: 71). Furthermore, history must necessarily be selective, critical, and interpretive so that not all past events are "reduced to the same dead level" (MW 4: 282). Consequently, representing the past "as it was" cannot be the aim in teaching history.

Dewey is also critical of the tendency to reduce history to political history and biography, as the emphasis on political history and "military campaigns" might lead to a neglect of "common people," "the artistic advances, the educational movements, and the moral and religious conquest" (LW 17: 318). Too much emphasis on biography will neglect the social background, and could reduce history to "a mere exciting story" (MW 4: 283).[593] The same principle applies to works of art or literature, which

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591 See, for example, "Ethical Principles Underlying Education" (EW 5); "My Pedagogic Creed" (EW 5); *Moral Principles in Education* (MW 4); and, mainly, "The Significance of Geography and History," in *Democracy and Education* (MW 9).

592 Dewey was therefore critical of the tendency to privilege the study of "by-gone nations" and civilizations while ignoring the contemporary history of nations other than the United States and a few European countries (MW 13: 267).

593 Furthermore: "When a biography is related just as an account of the doings of a man isolated from the conditions that aroused him and to which his activities were a response, we do not have a study of history, for we have no study of social life, which is an affair of individuals in association. We get only a sugar coating which makes it easier to swallow certain fragments of information" (MW 9: 222).

should be studied in relation to their social context.[594] Historians should, however, not only take the social aspects into greater account but should also turn towards intellectual history.[595] As such, history would expand a person's "imaginative consciousness of the social relationships, ideals, and means involved in the world in which he lives" (EW 5: 72). Conceived as "an indirect sociology—a study of society which lays bare its process of becoming and its modes of organization," history may also teach us "what makes up a social situation and the agencies through which it is modified" (EW 5: 73; MW 1: 104).

Here we see that history has a central place in Dewey's idea of a progressive education, since it is thought to have the power to help us see beyond our own class and tradition, and may give us insights into how we can change society for the better. We do not learn history for the sake of the past, but for the sake of the present.

Despite Dewey's rejection of historicism, we should consider his views on history in the context of the debate on the American "crisis of historicism," in which he, for good reason, was regarded as one of the proponents of the "new history" associated with Frederick Jackson Turner, James Harvey Robinson, Carl Becker, Mary Beard, and Charles Beard.[596] These new historians turned away from the preoccupation with political history that had dominated nineteenth-century American historiography to focus more on social and economic factors, and emphasized groups over indi-

594 This is not to say that Dewey wanted to reduce artworks to products of certain social conditions. The point is that knowledge of context enlarges our understanding—and possibly our appreciation—of art. In *Art and Experience,* Dewey is equally dismissive of psychoanalytical and sociological criticism, both of which he regards as reductive (LW 10: 319–321).

595 Regarding the latter, Dewey said: "Perhaps the most neglected branch of history in general education is intellectual history. We are only just beginning to realize that the great heroes who have advanced human destiny are not its politicians, generals, and diplomatists, but the scientific discoverers and inventors who have put into man's hands the instrumentalities of an expanding and controlled experience, and the artists and poets who have celebrated his struggles, triumphs, and defeats in such language, pictorial, plastic, or written, that their meaning is rendered universally accessible to others" (MW 9: 224).

596 The notion of "new history" comes from James Harvey Robinson, *The New History* (1912). For an overview of the relation between pragmatism and new history, see James T. Kloppenberg, "Pragmatism and the Practice of History: From Turner and Du Bois to Today," *Metaphilosophy* 35:1/2 (January 2004), 202–225.

viduals.[597] They also abandoned the Rankean idea that history should represent past reality *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, and admitted that history could never reach the exactness and objectivity of natural science.[598] Like the German crisis of historicism that preceded it, the American crisis of historicism revolved around the problem of claiming the autonomy of historiography rather than modelling it on the empirical methods of natural science.[599] Carl Becker and Charles Beard caused controversy with the presidential addresses they delivered before the American Historical Association, which emphasized the subjectivity of the historian and argued that historiography should abandon the notion of historical laws as well as objectivity.[600] This, of course, led to charges of relativism. Dewey, as a friend and colleague of Charles Beard, was aware of the epistemological and methodological conflicts among contemporary historians, and addressed these issues most fully in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938), which, according to Jurgen Herbst, provides a better response to the American crisis of historicism than any attempt to do so by the new historians did.[601]

Dewey's logic became a subject of criticism in *The American Historical Review.* Burleigh Taylor Wilkins attacked the pragmatic new history, which he thought suffered from presentism, relativism, subjectivism, and naturalism.[602] According to Wilkins, Dewey, like the new historians, attempted to model historiography after the natural sciences, and wanted to give up

597 It is presumably the new historians Dewey has in mind when he says: "Only recently have historians even for their own country begun to write the history of the people as distinct from that of the political state" (MW 13: 268).

598 Jurgen Herbst, *The German Historical School in American Scholarship* (New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1965), 114, 208–209.

599 For an account of the American crisis of historicism and its relation to the German, see ibid., 215–224.

600 See Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian," *The American Historical Review* 37:2 (January 1932), 221–236; Charles A. Beard, "Written History as an Act of Faith," *The American Historical Review* 39:2 (January 1934), 219–231. On the reception of these texts, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988), 258–264.

601 Herbst, *The German Historical School in American Scholarship*, 224–230.

602 Burleigh Taylor Wilkins, "Pragmatism as a Theory of Historical Knowledge: John Dewey on the Nature of Historical Inquiry," *The American Historical Review* 64:4 (July 1959), 878–890.

the notion of history being a science altogether. Interestingly, Wilkins suggests that "the Croce-Collingwood idea of history" provides a better solution to the crisis of historicism and a defense for history as an autonomous science.[603] In contrast, Chester McArthur Destler, who criticized the new historians on similar grounds to Wilkins, and regarded Dewey as "a leading champion of the presentist-subjectivist-relativist position," held Croce to be a "chief inspiration" for the new historians, and saw Collingwood as the "British champion" of new history.[604] The lines of conflict, then, were not entirely clear, but the debate at least shows that presentism, relativism, subjectivism, and naturalism were core issues.

Dewey was upset by Destler's article and thought the criticism was sweeping and unfair (it was). He was certainly not a subjectivist, had no knowledge of Croce's philosophy of history, and doubted that he himself had influenced the new historians in any way.[605] It is true that Dewey attacked subjectivism throughout his career and never advocated moral or epistemological relativism (in the sense that "anything goes"), though he would have rejected the idea that history is supposed to provide objective representations of past reality. He also defended "the idea of historic relativity," which he regarded as liberal and experimental, in contrast to "doctrinal absolutism" (LW 11: 291–293). Dewey says that only the experimental and relativistic view of history takes into account the "qualitative and internal" rather than merely the external and quantitative aspects of history. This seems rather like Collingwood's argument for rejecting the methods of natural science in historiography. Natural science can explain the

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603 Ibid., 886–887.

604 Chester McArthur Destler, "Some Observations on Contemporary Historical Theory," *American Historical Review* 55:3 (April 1950), 504, 506, 509.

605 See, John Dewey to Merle Curti, June 10, 1950, in *The Correspondence of John Dewey*. During the summer of 1950, Dewey discussed Destler's article and his own views on historiography in correspondence with the historian Merle Curti, who brought Destler's article to the attention of Dewey, Harold Taylor, Joseph Ratner, and others. Dewey did not write a reply to Destler himself, but Taylor assured him: "We will take care of the poor boy." Harold Taylor to John Dewey, July 5, 1950, in *The Correspondence of John Dewey*. For the reply to Destler, see Merle Curti et al., "Communications to the Editor," *American Historical Review* 56:2 (January 1951), 450–452.

outside of events, but history and the human sciences are concerned with the inside of events; in other words, how they are understood by human agents.

While it is not obvious that Dewey would agree with Collingwood, we at least know that he was not an advocate of the strong epistemological naturalism that Wilkins ascribes to him. Dewey could, however, like Croce and Collingwood, be charged with being a presentist in the sense that he thinks history should be written in relation to the concerns of the present and therefore always needs to be rewritten. Unlike Collingwood, who argued that history needed to become an autonomous science, Dewey avoided the issue:

> The question is not even whether judgments about remote events can be made with *complete* warrant much less is it whether "History can be a science." It is: Upon what grounds are some judgments about a course of past events more entitled to credence than are certain other ones? (LW 12: 230)

Nevertheless, Dewey claimed in *Experience and Nature* that apart from mathematics, "all knowledge is historic; chemistry, geology, physiology, as well as anthropology and those human events to which, arrogantly, we usually restrict the title of history" (LW 1: 130). We should understand this as an attempt to bring about a rapprochement between history and science, and naturalism and humanism, in line with Dewey's ideal of unity, which we encountered in the previous chapter. Not only did Dewey view all knowledge (except mathematics) to be historical, he also regarded reality and human nature to be historical and temporal.[606] Reality is therefore dynamic and processual, as is experience:

> When we say that experience is one point of approach to an account of the world in which we live, we mean then by experience something at least as wide and deep and full as all history on this earth, a history which, since history does not occur in the void, includes the earth and the physical relatives of man. When we assimilate experience to history rather than to

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606 For Dewey's argument against the notion of "fixity of human nature," see, for example, "'Contrary to Human Nature'" (LW 14: 258–261).

> the physiology of sensations, we note that history denotes both objective conditions, forces, events and also the human record and estimate of these events. Similarly experience denotes whatever is experienced, whatever is undergone and tried, and also processes of experiencing. As it is the essence of "history" to have meanings termed both subjective and objective, so with "experience." As William James has said, it is a "double-barrelled" fact. Without sun, moon and stars, mountains and rivers, forests and mines, soil, rain and wind, history would not be. These things are not just external conditions of history and experience; they are integral with them. But also without the human attitude and interest, without record and interpretation, these things would not be historical (LW 1: 370).

We see here an example of Dewey's attempt to bring about a unity of opposites between naturalism and humanism/historicism. While he does not want historiography to follow the methods of natural science, he does insist that human beings must be studied as part of nature; we are natural as well as social and historical beings. The problem with contemporary competing schools of philosophy—such as materialism, dualism, realism, and idealism—according to Dewey, is that they deny the "temporal quality" of reality and "of change to true Being" (LW 1: 119–120). Consequently, we may regard Dewey as a historicist in the sense that he regarded reality and human nature as historical.

Like Collingwood, Dewey sees history as matter of problem solving, and maintains that it is the historian who formulates the problem and selects the available evidence needed to give a satisfactory answer to the question posed. To that end, history constantly needs to be rewritten in light of new problems and interests, for propositions about the past only have meaning in relation to the present (LW 12: 223). The charges of subjectivism against Dewey's philosophy of history arise from this view of the historian as an active and selective inquirer rather than as a neutral, passive, and thoroughly empirical researcher. The conflict, however, is not between subjectivism and relativism in contrast to objectivism; rather, Dewey proposes a constructivist view of history in contrast to one that is representational. He recognizes that "historical construction is necessarily selective" and that there is no "ready-made past" available to us (LW 12: 233–234), and fur-

thermore says: "The notion that historical inquiry simply reinstates the events that once happened 'as they actually happened' is incredibly naïve" (LW 12: 236). Like experience, history is a "double-barrelled" word—it "is that which happened in the past and it is the intellectual reconstruction of these happenings at a subsequent time" (LW 12: 235–236).

Dewey emphasizes that "the principle used to control selection" is "primary and basic" in historiography. "This principle decides the weight which shall be assigned to past events, what shall be admitted and what omitted; it also decides how the facts selected shall be arranged and ordered" (LW 12: 234). Delimitation and selection of material is "strictly relative to the objective intent set to inquiry by the problematic quality of a given situation" (LW 12: 221). Dewey therefore regards the principle of selection as intertwined with "the conclusion that all history is necessarily written from the standpoint of the present, and is, in an inescapable sense, the history not only of the present but of that which is contemporaneously judged to be important in the present" (LW 12: 234). Historical judgement is therefore to a large extent a matter of delimitation, selection, and ordering of material according to its "weight and relevancy" for solving the problem posed by the inquirer (LW 12: 235). Since judgement is transformational, according to Dewey, not merely historical judgement, but all kinds of judgement contain a "temporal and historic phase" through which we understand change (LW 12: 221). Again, we see that Dewey does not limit his philosophy of history to the subject of historiography, but regards it as having implications for all fields of knowledge.

Dewey exemplifies the necessity of historical judgement through a hypothetical case in which a dead man has been found but there is "no evidence as to the time and manner of his death." Observation and medical examination will provide data that is used "as the basis of inference as to what took place in the past" (LW 12: 228). The inference is, of course, a product of human *interpretation* that, hopefully, will establish the time and cause of death. In Dewey's scenario, the man was killed by a bullet. But was it a murder or an accident? The body needs to be identified so that we can learn more about the dead person's movements and acquaintances. We will also need to search for witnesses and try to connect the man's death to

other events. The observable facts and data gathered will then be used to establish a "temporal course of sequential events" that provides us with an explanation—a historical judgement—of what happened (LW 12: 229).

Dewey's example is curiously similar to Collingwood's "Who killed John Doe?" from *The Idea of History* (IH: 266–268), although Collingwood's focus, unlike Dewey's, is to find out the motivation for the murder rather than the "temporal course of sequential events." This is, of course, mainly a difference in emphasis, but it also shows that the reenactment that was central to history according to Collingwood was an aspect Dewey largely neglected. Even though Dewey, like Collingwood, regarded history as having an inside that includes agency and meaning, he never tried to show how we get to that inside and how we can understand people from the past.

The Practical Past

Dewey and Collingwood regard reality and human nature to be historical and therefore constantly changing. This leads them to emphasize the necessity of regarding all knowledge and inquiry as temporal and contextual, which is not to say that they regard history as the only valid form of knowledge. They agree that the subject matter of the humanities requires understanding, meaning, evaluation, and criticism, and therefore reject strong epistemological naturalism. Furthermore, they reject the notion of inquiry for the sake of inquiry, and regard its purpose to be social usefulness, self-knowledge, or growth of experience.

As a bridge to the following section on Dewey's and Collingwood's concept of praxis, it might be enlightening to discuss their views on historiography in terms of Michael Oakeshott's distinction between the "practical past" and the "historical past"—a distinction that has also been used by Hayden White.[607] The practical past refers to the inevitable relation to the past that is necessary for self-understanding and helps us deal with ethical, social, and existential matters. Our practical relation to the past is

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607 Michael Oakeshott first made this distinction in *Experience and its Modes* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978[1933]), 102–111. See also, Hayden White, *The Practical Past* (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 2014), 7–16.

experiential, and concerns how we use the past in everyday life and how we "come to terms" with it, both individually and collectively. In contrast, the historical past is the professional and scientific approach to history for history's sake:

> The historical past is a theoretically motivated construction, existing only in the books and articles published by professional historians; it is constructed as an end in itself, possesses little or no value for understanding or explaining the present, and provides no guidelines for acting in the present or foreseeing the future.[608]

While Oakeshott created the distinction between these two ideal types to show what kind of relation the professional historian should have to the past, White, as we see in the quote above, does not question the idea that the historical past is the kind of relation modern historians have to the past, but sees this as proof of professional historiography's uselessness in our lives.

In contrast, Oakeshott argued that the practical past "must be distinguished absolutely" from the "dead" historical past, and the historian must approach the past "in its very disparity from what is contemporary."[609] As we have seen, Collingwood rejected this idea and argued that we must instead regard the past as still living in the present. Collingwood, therefore, as Jonas Ahlskog recently has argued, would also reject the distinction between a practical and a historical approach to the past.[610]

By reenacting the thoughts of past actors and attempting to understand which problems they were trying to solve, we come to understand the differences and similarities between ourselves and our own present situation and theirs. This leads to self-knowledge—which of course is a practical concern—and understanding of the present. According to Colling-

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608 White, *The Practical Past*, 9.

609 Oakeshott, *Experience and its Modes*, 105–106.

610 Jonas Ahlskog has made the best case for Collingwood's contemporary relevance for the philosophy of history; see *The Primacy of Method in Historical Research. Philosophy of History and the Perspective of Meaning* (London: Routledge, 2020), especially the chapters titled "The Presence of the Past" and "The Existential Relevance of the Historical Past."

wood, this is the purpose of history—not self-knowledge in the Cartesian sense, but knowledge of ourselves as social and temporal beings inevitably related to others, which is similar to how a hermeneutician like Gadamer would see it.[611]

Dewey agrees with the presentist claim that all history is the history of the present, and that its purpose is to help us understand contemporary society. Like Collingwood, Dewey rejected the dualism between fact and value and believed history to be interpretive and critical. They share a constructivist view of history, in contrast to one that is representationalist and strictly empiricist. Historiography is a matter of *creating* rather than *copying*, and history must always be rewritten to remain relevant. This does not mean that professional historiography is useless, but that it will potentially become more useful if we abandon the distinction between the historical past and the practical past.

If historicism is regarded as the attempt to understand the past on its own terms—as strictly concerned with the historical past—then it is certainly not an appropriate label for either Dewey or Collingwood. If it means the view that human nature and reality are historical and that therefore all production of knowledge and understanding (including self-understanding) is historical, then we should regard them to be historicists. While Collingwood's views on (the philosophy of) history are much more elaborate than Dewey's, both think that history can have major significance if it is guided by a practical approach to the past.

Philosophies of Praxis and Action

As I argued in Chapter 2, making philosophy practically useful was a major concern for most Anglo-American idealists. I also showed in Chapter 4 that one of the opposites Dewey, Collingwood, and many idealists before them sought to unify was the dualism between theory and practice. Making philosophy practical was connected to the idea that philosophy should contribute to both self-realization and the common good. The practical side of idealist philosophy was connected to its humanistic side.

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611 Ahlskog also makes this point; see "The Presence of the Past," in ibid.

For Collingwood, the strictly theoretical and academic nature of contemporary realism was one of the major reasons for rejecting it. For Dewey, it was the emphasis on praxis that attracted him to pragmatism and led him to abandon idealism, which he thought led to social absolutism and transcendentalism. We have seen that Dewey had already rejected absolute idealism in favor of experimental idealism in the early 1890s, and that he became increasingly concerned with ridding his philosophy of transcendent and supernatural elements, while at the same time making it compatible with the latest discoveries in the natural and social sciences. He began to regard ideas as instruments that became validated through their successful application to problematic real-life situations. One might assume that Collingwood, due to his lifelong commitment to practical philosophy, would have appreciated or at least been interested in pragmatism; this was not the case.

Collingwood and Dewey rarely use the term praxis, which is an analytical concept I use synonymously with partner concepts like "practice," "action," and "conduct." In this discussion, it is important to keep in mind that I am referring to the Aristotelian notion of praxis as distinguished from *poesis* (making). Praxis signifies activities performed by humans as political, moral, and social beings.[612]

I will begin by presenting the origins of pragmatism and showing why Dewey embraced it and Collingwood rejected it. I intend to show that Collingwood misunderstood pragmatism, and that his philosophy was much closer to (Dewey's) pragmatism than he realized. Once we compare their philosophies of praxis and action, it should become clear that they have a great deal in common. Like other philosophers concerned with praxis, such as Marx and Sartre, Dewey and Collingwood regard human beings not merely as passive knowers, but as active doers.[613]

Before turning to Dewey's and Collingwood's notion of philosophical praxis, a distinction must be made. While some notable pragmatists, like Dewey and James, were public intellectuals, C. S. Peirce was certainly not and nor was Collingwood. Although Collingwood hoped his texts would

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612 For a more elaborate discussion of these concepts, see Richard Bernstein, *Praxis and Action* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), ix–xiii.

613 Ibid., 5–7.

reach an educated audience outside the university walls, they seldom did. In the conclusion of *An Autobiography*, he confesses to have been "living as a professional thinker whose college gate symbolized his aloofness from the affairs of practical life," even though his philosophy rejected the distinction between a "thinker and a man of action" (A: 150). Collingwood even praises Karl Marx, whose philosophy he rejects, for having been "a fighting philosopher" who used philosophy as a "weapon" to improve the world (A: 152–153). This could also be said about many of the idealists in the "school of Green" that Collingwood admired. Many of T. H. Green's followers had been politically engaged either in the Liberal Party, the settlement movement, or the Charity Organisation. Collingwood did not, however, participate in any political groups or activities. A visit to the Labour headquarters aimed to convince its leaders to oppose the policy of appeasement and a written statement in the *Times* are among the few examples of Collingwood's political engagement.[614] There is no record of him appearing on radio or TV, nor did he publish much in periodicals or newspapers, apart from writing reviews for the *Oxford Magazine* and an occasional article for T. S. Eliot's *Criterion*. Collingwood contributed to professional philosophical and historical journals, but books were his primary medium of communication, though they did not reach a wide audience: typically, between 1,000 and 1,500 copies were printed, and none of his books were reprinted during Collingwood's lifetime.[615] In contrast, Dewey was a typical and very influential public intellectual, as we saw, mainly, in Chapter 3. His texts had a wide reach, he was active in many political and social organizations, and he often spoke out publicly on social issues.

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614 Stefan Collini, "Professor Cackling: R. G. Collingwood," in *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006), 344.

615 Ibid., 338. James Connelly has attempted to counter the picture of Collingwood as isolated and somewhat out of touch with the times by showing that Collingwood was involved in a broad range of "circles," including, besides the philosophical connections explored in Chapter 2, a choir, a religious group called the Cumnor Circle, and a few archaeological and historical societies that included both amateurs and professionals. While these networks were important for Collingwood, and he sometimes left Oxford to lecture, we must conclude that, despite his rhetorical excesses and promise to "fight in the daylight," he never lived up to the label of "public intellectual." See Connelly, "Thinking in Circles: The Strata of R. G. Collingwood's Intellectual Life," *CBIS* 24:2 (2018), 171–198.

That said, the fact that Collingwood never managed to live up to the ideal of the public intellectual that he embraced does not undermine his philosophical teachings. Promoting a practical ideal in philosophy and being a public intellectual are different things, and this section will focus on the former. One can promote a philosophy of action and praxis without being a public intellectual, and without being a pragmatist, which Dewey was but Collingwood was not. Nevertheless, they did have much in common. Both criticized formal logic and the notion of epistemology as philosophy's main method and task, and feared that the analysts turned philosophy into a technical and theoretical activity reserved for philosophers. Philosophy, as they had learned from idealism's ideal of unity of experience, must engage in conversation with history, aesthetics, science, politics, and religion. When Dewey and Collingwood wrote about political, religious, or aesthetic philosophy, for example, it was not in a narrow sense. They always approached these subjects from the angle of cultural criticism and highlighted their social importance. Dewey and Collingwood thought philosophy could and should lead to practical change and should guide human action. They agreed that philosophy should address problems in their social, historical, and political contexts. Philosophy needed to be based in, and should strive to enrich, human experience, and guide human conduct. Despite these similarities, how come Dewey embraced pragmatism while Collingwood rejected it?

Pragmatism: Early Definitions

Pragmatism originated in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the 1870s when a group of young Harvard intellectuals including Charles Sanders Peirce and William James gathered in a discussion group they, not without irony, called "The Metaphysical Club."[616] The central maxim of pragmatism—

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616 Plenty of accounts of the history of pragmatism are available. Good introductions include Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club* (London: Flamingo, 2002); Horace Standish Thayer, *Meaning and Action: A Critical History of Pragmatism* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968); see also the critical discussion on the history of pragmatism in Scott F. Aikin and Robert B. Talisse, *Pragmatism, Pluralism, and the Nature of Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 3–16.

that the meaning of a conception is determined by its "effects" and "practical bearings"—was introduced by Peirce in two articles for *Popular Science Monthly*: "The Fixation of Belief" (1877) and "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" (1878).[617] It has been suggested that "much of the subsequent history of pragmatism can be understood as the ongoing attempt to work out proper formulations of both the pragmatic maxim and the pragmatist conception of inquiry" from these articles.[618] Twenty years passed before William James began doing so with his popularization of pragmatism in the 1898 address "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results" and later writings.[619] The term pragmatism was soon picked up by the Oxford philosopher F. C. S. Schiller, who became another important popularizer, although he soon decided that "humanism" was a better name for his own doctrine. In the hands of James and Schiller, pragmatism became something much broader than Peirce had intended, so Peirce changed the name of his doctrine to "pragmaticism," a word "ugly enough to be safe from kidnappers."[620] As we have seen in Chapter 2, the instrumentalism developed by the department of philosophy at the University of Chicago under Dewey's lead resulted in the co-authored *Studies in Logical Theory*, which was recognized by James as a part of the pragmatist movement. I prefer the term pragmatism, but it should be noted that instrumentalism, experimentalism, humanism, pragmaticism, and radical empiricism are partner concepts that are often used synonymously.

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617 The rather abstract maxim reads: "Consider what effects that might conceivably have practical bearings we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object." This maxim was first stated in "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," and only recognized by Peirce as the central doctrine of pragmatism—a word he did not use in the two articles—in his entry on "Pragmatic and Pragmatism," in J. M. Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (1902). My references to Peirce's articles and the dictionary entry refer to the reprints in *Pragmatism: The Classic Writings*, ed. H. S. Thayer (New York: Mentor Book, 1970), 48, 88.

618 Aikin and Talisse, *Pragmatism, Pluralism, and the Nature of Philosophy*, 39.

619 William James, "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results," in *The Works of William James. Pragmatism*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1975), 257–270.

620 C. S. Peirce, "What Pragmatism is," in *Pragmatism: The Classic Writings*, 105. The article was first published in *The Monist* (1905).

In pragmatism's founding articles, Peirce urged philosophers to turn away from metaphysical absurdities and "meaningless gibberish" and instead focus on scientific inquiry, habit, action, experiment, and meaning.[621] He took the term pragmatism from Kant, who had used it to mean that which is experiential and related to "human purpose," as Dewey notes in his 1925 essay "The Development of American Pragmatism" (LW 2: 3–4). Peirce emphasized the practical aspects of inquiry and argued that doubt, being a stimulant of action, is inquiry's starting point, with its end point being belief, which is not merely an intellectual notion, but behavior.[622] The "function of thought" is to produce beliefs and "habits of action."[623]

Peirce's pragmatism was inspired by the experimental method of modern science, but while a scientist like Francis Bacon had been correct in holding that experience must be "opened to verification and reexamination," he had failed to provide "habits of mind" and "a *guiding principle* of inference" or reasoning.[624] The problem of "fixing belief," Peirce said, is communal.[625] Furthermore, while there are many ways of believing, only the scientific method "fixes" beliefs to the extent that we have reason to call them "true." It is not, however, the purpose of pragmatism to "determine any truth of things. It is merely a method of ascertaining the meanings of hard words and abstract concepts."[626] Pragmatism, Dewey said, is a "theory of inquiry" that aims at moving from doubt to "warranted assertions" (LW 12: 11).

James, like Peirce and Dewey, regards pragmatism as primarily a method of inquiry. But he also speaks of it as an attitude or "temperament" and, most provocatively, as providing a new meaning of truth by redefining it as that which it is useful to believe.[627] James refuses to separate truth from goodness and rejects the notion of truth as correspondence, which he finds

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621 Peirce, "What Pragmatism Is," 111.

622 Peirce, "The Fixation of Belief," in *Pragmatism: The Classic Writings*, 67.

623 Peirce, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," 83, 87.

624 Peirce, "The Fixation of Belief," 62, 64.

625 Ibid., 70.

626 Ibid., 57.

627 "What Pragmatism Means" is the second chapter in William James's *Pragmatism* (1907). My references are to the reprint in *Pragmatism: The Classic Writings*, 213, 219.

"absolutely empty" and "static."[628] He focuses less on meaning than Peirce, and emphasizes instead the function of ideas and beliefs in human experience. An idea becomes true, James says, as it is incorporated and assimilated into our experience and in relation to our "beliefs in stock."[629] Here we see a relation to a coherentist notion of truth, although this is not what James promotes. According to his criterion, the question is what practical and experiential difference a belief or an idea being true makes.[630] He argues that truth is not an inherent property, but something that "*happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events. Its verity *is* in fact an event, a process: the process namely of its verifying itself, its veri-*fication*. Its validity is the process of its valid-*ation*."[631]

James's pragmatism is supposed to provide "a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable." It does so by studying the practical differences of beliefs and ideas: "If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle."[632] "The whole function of philosophy," says James, "ought to be to find out what definite difference it will make to you and me, at definite instants of our life, if this world formula or that world formula be the true one."[633] Problems without practical consequences are not problems; they should be dissolved rather than solved.

In 1897 Dewey was already emphasizing the importance of conceiving "knowledge as a statement of action," and argued that philosophy should turn away from the theoretical concerns of epistemology and toward the application of knowledge in life (EW 5: 20–21). Here, we see that Dewey embraced what we have come to regard as central features of pragmatism while still identifying as an (experimental) idealist. While he had become influenced by James's *Principles of Psychology* in the early 1890s, it was not until the publication of the co-authored *Studies in Logical Theory* (1904)

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628 Ibid., 220, 223.

629 Ibid., 218.

630 "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth" is the sixth chapter in James's *Pragmatism*. My references are to the reprint in *Pragmatism: The Classic Writings*, 228.

631 Ibid., 229.

632 James, "What Pragmatism Means," 210.

633 Ibid., 212.

that Dewey began to be widely recognized as a pragmatist, even though the word did not appear in the book, and the logic promoted by the authors went under the name of instrumentalism. Six years later, Dewey used the terms pragmatism, instrumentalism, experimentalism, and intelligence interchangeably in the essays collected in *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy*, which was recognized as a pragmatist work. In the preface, Dewey pictures pragmatism as the philosophy best suited to incorporate "the experimental method of inquiry; the injection of evolutionary ideas into the study of life and society; the application of the historic method to religions and morals as well as to institutions." "How," he asks, "can such intellectual changes occur and leave philosophy what it was and where it was?" (LW 17: 40). Dewey obviously thought they could not; philosophy needed to consider the results of *all* the sciences—natural, social, and human— since humans are natural, social, and historical beings.

When Dewey wrote an entry on pragmatism for *A Cyclopedia of Education* (1912–1913), he described its central doctrine as a processual view of reality and knowledge; knowing "having a concrete purpose to fulfill in situations of practical experience" (MW 7: 329). Dewey portrayed James as the main pragmatist, even though his pragmatism was "incomplete" and a "sketch," but nevertheless important because it "opened a new road in philosophic discussion" (MW 7: 143, 148). When Dewey gave an introductory lecture on James's philosophy in China in 1920, he argued that *Principles of Psychology* was James's most important work because it was the first book to apply Darwinism to psychology (MW 12: 205, 208). In doing so, James abandoned the passive notion of experience held by nineteenth-century empiricists in favor of a view of experience as "active, adventurous, changing, forward-moving…, uncertain, and transforming" (MW 12: 217). For James, the purpose of reason was not to reach absolute truth, but to help human beings make their way in the world. He therefore regarded knowledge as experimental and argued that its value lay in its practical consequences (MW 12: 220). *Principles of Psychology* showed that logic and ethics needed to be regarded in an evolutionary and social context, which made logic "a systematized account of the procedures of thinking in adapting beings living in a social environment to the control of novel and uncertain features of existence" (MW 7: 328).

The criticism directed at formal logic for its inability to address actual real-life problems was, according to Dewey, the most important contribution F. C. S. Schiller made to philosophy.[634] While Schiller never became an important influence, Dewey recognized him as a co-founder of pragmatism and regarded his and James's work as having provided philosophy with a *via media* between the dominant schools of materialistic positivism and idealism (MW 3: 315; MW 6: 94, 96). Schiller embraced the ideal of unity of knowledge but conceived of it as related to the "*continuity* of experience" and as a question of method rather than as a transcendent and "ultimate but unrealizable achievement" (MW 3: 315). James, who rejected the monism and absolutism he found in much idealistic philosophy in favor of pluralism and empiricism, nevertheless was an ethical idealist who regarded religion and morality as equally important to the natural sciences (MW 6: 91–97). Dewey is clearly sympathetic to these features of Schiller and James's thought.

Although Peirce had been one of Dewey's teachers at Johns Hopkins, Dewey's first substantial engagement with his thought did not take place until 1916. While *The Pragmatism of Peirce* is "wholly expository," it is clear that Dewey agrees with much of what he finds in Peirce's "pragmaticism," not least the focus on the method of inquiry rather than its outcome (MW 10: 78). In a review of the *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, Dewey says that he agrees with Peirce that philosophy should not take its subject matter, but only "its attitude of experimentation" from science (LW 6: 276). In fact, if philosophy is to have a practical impact, it must be wary of "the increasing remoteness of physical science from everyday experience." Dewey even claims that much philosophy "seems to be wandering in a wilderness because… it tries to build upon the results of the special sciences in independence of, and in opposition to, coarse everyday experience" (LW 6: 277). Again, we see that he was not promoting strong epistemological naturalism.

Dewey's historical account, "The Development of American Pragmatism," sought to counter some misconceptions among pragmatism's critics.

634 See the obituary written by Dewey, "Tribute to F. C. S. Schiller" (LW 11: 155–157), and his review of Schiller's *Humanism: Philosophical Essays* (MW 3: 312–318).

While action and human conduct are central to pragmatism since it regards concepts and beliefs as meaningless if they make no practical difference, pragmatism is not a version of utilitarianism. It does not make "action the end of life," nor does it subordinate "rational activity to particular ends of interest and profit" (LW 2: 5). The purpose of the "practical criterion" is that it helps us determine if a philosophical debate "has an authentic and vital meaning or whether, on the contrary, it is trivial and purely verbal" (LW 2: 8). Praxis and meaning cannot be separated.

Dewey also emphasizes the temporal aspect of pragmatism. It is "a philosophy which regards the world as being in continuous formation," and holds that both the future and "the past can be a source of interest and consolation and give meaning to the present" (LW 2: 19–20). The universe of pragmatism is indeterminate and uncertain. Truths are "hypothetical and provisional, although a large number of these propositions have been so frequently verified without failure that we are justified in using them as if they were absolutely true. But logically absolute truth is an ideal which cannot be realized" (LW 2: 12). More importantly, the purpose of knowledge and human reason should not be regarded as a matter or representation—or "copying" as proponents of the correspondence theory of truth would have it—but rather as an adaptation to aspects of the environment (LW 2: 17).

Pragmatism aimed to reorient philosophy from foundations to process, from a search for truth to continuous inquiry, from the philosopher as passive spectator to active experimenter. What is central to pragmatism, especially in Dewey's interpretation, is that it takes human experience—in the broad sense—as the subject of philosophy. Pragmatism is a method which aims to transform doubts into beliefs. It regards human beings as temporal, social, and natural organisms who adapt to their environment in a changing and dynamic world. Pragmatism regards meaning as intertwined with praxis, and therefore sees the test of inquiry to be the influence it has on human action and conduct. Pragmatism, it has been suggested, is "a still-developing *problematic* concerning the right way to construe and manage the relation between philosophy and practical affairs."[635] This brief presentation provides, as we will now see, a very different interpretation of

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635 Akin and Talisse, *Pragmatism, Pluralism, and the Nature of Philosophy*, 4.

pragmatism compared to that of Collingwood, which provides an example of how early critics of pragmatism tended to misunderstand the object of their criticism.

Misunderstanding Pragmatism

It is likely that Collingwood was aware of the common criticism directed mainly at James's *Pragmatism* because of its simplified and sometimes careless statements that propounded the idea that truth is made and is equivalent to usefulness.[636] If Collingwood shared this understanding of pragmatism, it is not surprising that he considered it to be a parenthesis in the history of philosophy. In 1933, he referred to pragmatism as having "little more than historical interest" (EPM: 229). Six years later, when speaking of philosophy during World War I, he says "in those days there were pragmatists," as if pragmatism had perished in 1939 (A: 36). While the Oxford pragmatist/humanist F. C. S. Schiller had died two years prior, and both William James and C. S. Peirce had been dead for over two decades, Dewey, albeit at the age of 80, was still productive, and had just published *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938), perhaps the most powerful statement of pragmatism to date.

Collingwood's flawed understanding of pragmatism was established by 1920 and possibly influenced by H. H. Joachim's *The Nature of Truth*, which claims that pragmatism leads to a denial of knowledge and that the only thing that makes sense in pragmatism is what it shares with idealism.[637] Guido De Ruggiero's *Modern Philosophy* (1920), which Collingwood translated together with A. H. Hannay, might also have shaped Collingwood's view of pragmatism. De Ruggiero describes pragmatism as "the philosophy of the business man." It is said to bring philosophy to "the brink of comedy, if not downright charlatanism." Pragmatism, according

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636 On the reception of James, see Cheryl Misak, "The Reception of Early American Pragmatism," in *The Oxford Handbook of American Philosophy*, ed. Misak (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), 209–215, Oxford Handbooks Online.

637 Joachim, *The Nature of Truth*, 1–2. Collingwood edited the 2nd edition of Joachim's book (which is the one referred to). For his appreciative views of it, see *An Autobiography*, 18, 36.

to De Ruggiero, "does nothing but spin its absolutely empty formula and rest content with superficial paradoxes and extravagant fantasies."[638] Although De Ruggiero claims that Dewey is "the most serious" of the pragmatists, he also lets the reader know that Dewey "misconceives the problem of knowledge."[639]

Joachim was Collingwood's teacher, and De Ruggiero was a close friend. Both were Collingwood's philosophical allies. It is not unlikely that Collingwood trusted their judgement about pragmatism and therefore did not see any reason to close read the pragmatists firsthand. Collingwood himself barely mentions individual pragmatists or their works. I have found no references to Peirce, which is not surprising, considering that he was largely neglected for a long period,[640] and one each to Dewey and F. C. S. Schiller. The latter had reviewed *An Essay on Philosophic Method* for *Mind* and was an Oxford philosopher, so Collingwood would have had a basic understanding of Schiller's version of pragmatism or "humanism," as Schiller designated his philosophy.[641] The only pragmatist work Collingwood engages with is William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, which he had read before publishing *Religion and Philosophy* in 1916. His dismissive attitude toward pragmatism seems to be largely based on this book, which he described as a "fraud," and criticized again in both *The Principles of Art* and *An Autobiography* (PA: 172; A: 92–93). What Collingwood rejects is not so much pragmatism, however, but James's psychological treatment of religion. Collingwood views the book as a typical exam-

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638 De Ruggiero, *Modern Philosophy*, 252–254. De Ruggiero's critique of pragmatism is directed almost exclusively towards William James, whose *Pragmatism* "marks the complete downfall of [James's] mental faculties, the final impotence of his thought." Ibid., 256.

639 Ibid., 258. De Ruggiero criticizes Dewey for turning away from the question of the possibility of knowledge in general and only being interested in the possibility of knowledge "here and now." Dewey is only referred to in one paragraph and *Studies in Logical Theory* (1909) is his only work mentioned by De Ruggiero.

640 On the reception of Peirce, see Misak, "The Reception of Early American Pragmatism," 209–215.

641 Collingwood refers to Schiller once in *The New Leviathan* (NL: 28. 27). His only reference to Dewey can be found in his review of *Studies in the History of Ideas*. See also F. C. S. Schiller, review of *An Essay on Philosophic Method*, by R. G. Collingwood, *Mind* 43:169 (January 1934), 117–120.

ple of modern psychology, which he thinks is trying to turn the study of the human mind into an empirical and purely naturalistic science that removes the normative or "criteriological" element that is central to understanding human conduct and belief. Psychology, says Collingwood, ignores whether an action is right or wrong or a belief is false or true, and therefore should not study ethics or religion, in which these categories are essential (RP: 39–42). Hence Collingwood rejects pragmatism because he thinks it applies the methods of the natural sciences to humanist subjects; this is what I have called strong methodological naturalism, and it is not an appropriate description of pragmatism.

Collingwood indicated, however, that there were points of agreement between his philosophy and pragmatism, though when he did, he presented pragmatism as mere common sense. For example, *Speculum Mentis* describes the view of knowing as a matter of answering questions as an evident philosophical insight derived from Plato that "has lately dawned on the astonished gaze of the pragmatists" (SM: 78). When the "babblings of pragmatism" are not self-evident, its tendency to reduce truth to utility is said to follow from "a confused attempt to overcome the dualism of thought and action" (SM: 182). Collingwood does, however, find "a more important, because less tautological, position" in pragmatism's view of "science as hypothesis," but he regards pragmatism, like natural science, to be utilitarian in evaluating all action from the perspective of usefulness (SM: 182). Because he argues that science, in being utilitarian, must separate means and ends, or ethics and values (SM: 169–173), this must also be his verdict on pragmatism; this is, however, the opposite of what Dewey teaches. Collingwood seems implicitly to regard pragmatism as a form of positivism, while the pragmatists themselves regards it as a synthesis—a *via media*—between positivism and idealism.

At other times, Collingwood recognizes that there are points of convergence between pragmatism and idealism in that both regard thought, "like any other experience," to be contextual and "an organic part of the thinker's life" (IH: 300). Furthermore, Collingwood notes that James's pragmatism, the philosophy of Bergson, Mach, and Croce, shares his own view that reality and inquiry must be regarded in terms of historical process.

They all agree "that science is not knowledge at all but action, not true but useful, an object of discussion not to epistemology but to ethics."[642]

Some of these points of convergence will be elaborated now, as I turn to the concept of praxis in Collingwood's and Dewey's thought. Dewey (and possibly Peirce) was much closer to Collingwood's views than the pragmatists he was more familiar with (James and Schiller). As we have seen, Collingwood regards pragmatism to be guilty of strong methodological naturalism, but Dewey's naturalism was weak. Nor did Dewey accept utilitarianism or the dualistic view of fact and value that Collingwood implicitly ascribes to pragmatism.

Collingwood on Praxis and Action

In *An Autobiography*, Collingwood expresses a deep sympathy for "the school of Green" because it gave its pupils "ideals to live for and principles to live by," and had trained them to serve the common good. The idealists were convinced that ideas, ideals, and principles had an impact on human conduct. In contrast, the "sophisms" of realism that had come to dominate British philosophy in the interwar era separated theory from practice and the knowing subject from the known object, complained Collingwood (A: 48). While the idealists held philosophy to be "every one's business," the realists had a thoroughly professional and scientific view of philosophy which reduced it to a "futile parlour game" (A: 50). Philosophy, said Collingwood, must not be "a scientific toy guaranteed to amuse professional philosophers safe behind their college gates" (A: 153).[643]

The concluding chapter of *An Autobiography* argues for the need to bring about a rapprochement between theory and practice, the relation of which Collingwood conceives as an "intimate and mutual dependence, thought

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642 Collingwood, "Are History and Science Different Kinds of Knowledge," in *Essays in the Philosophy of History*, 25.

643 Collingwood's account of realism is obviously unfair. While Bertrand Russell, for example, wrote some complicated technical philosophy directed at a narrow philosophical audience, he was also a successful public intellectual who engaged with practical social issues in books like *Why I Am Not a Christian* (1927) and *Marriage and Morals* (1929).

depending upon what the thinker learned by experience in action, action depending upon how he thought of himself and the world" (A: 150). Changing "theories," says Collingwood, changes our relation to the world and the way we act (A: 147). Therefore, moral problems cannot be solved by action alone, but only in combination with theoretical reflection.

The importance of bringing about a rapprochement between theory and practice, thought and action, or knowledge and conduct expressed in *An Autobiography* is already present in Collingwood's first book, *Religion and Philosophy*. Religion, says Collingwood, cannot be separated from conduct and should therefore be judged ethically according to what conduct it teaches (RP: 29). In intentional actions, which is the kind of action he has in mind, theory and practice cannot be separated other than for analytical purposes. Because Collingwood regards knowing as an activity, he rejects "the familiar distinction between a life of thought and a life of action" (RP: 31), since even the most practical activity does to some degree require and can possibly be executed better with theoretical knowledge, which in turn is a "result of positive hard labour" (RP: 31).

In *Speculum Mentis*, the close connection between theory and practice is established early in the book:

> All thought exists for the sake of action. We try to understand ourselves and our world only in order that we may learn how to live. The end of our self-knowledge is not the contemplation by enlightened intellects of their own mysterious nature, but the freer and more effectual self-revelation of that nature in a vigorous practical life. If thought were the mere discovery of interesting facts, its indulgence, in a world full of desperate evils and among men crushed beneath the burden of daily tasks too hard for their solitary strength, would be the act of a traitor: the philosopher would do better to follow the plough or clout shoes, to become a slum doctor or a police-court missionary, or hand himself over to a bacteriologist to be inoculated with tropical diseases (SM: 15).

Speculum Mentis presents philosophy as *a way of life* that is supposed to unify the different forms of experience, while emphasizing the interconnection between theory and practice. It is not a conventional book on moral philosophy, although ethics is a recurring theme. A central message

is that action must not be reduced to a means to an end.[644] Collingwood rejects this distinction, and argues for a philosophy that refuses to separate self-creation from self-knowledge (SM: 305). The practical aspects of Collingwood's philosophy also appear in the preface, where he stresses that his investigation of the five forms of experience—art, religion, science, history, and philosophy—is not based mainly on what he has learned "from teachers [or] from books," but from practicing these activities himself (SM: 12). His philosophy, in other words, begins from experience.

The kinds of actions, practices, and experiences Collingwood is concerned with are those that form the proper subject of the human sciences, his main examples being art, history, and ethics. It is, then, not merely physiological and uncontrollable motions that are Collingwood's focus, but those we are aware of, can reflect upon, and, at some level, control; in other words, human actions that are intentional and rational. These actions are *language*, regarded in the broad sense as including all kinds of human expression (PA: 234–235).

Collingwood, however, does make a distinction between theory and practice: "An activity in ourselves which produces a change in us but none in our environment we call theoretical; one which produces a change in our environment but none in ourselves we call practical" (PA: 290). This distinction is for analytical purposes, and is important at least in the human sciences, since while bad astronomy, to use Collingwood's example, "does not derange the movements of the stars," a bad theory of art or morals may influence human conduct—although it is by no means certain that good theory will lead to good practice.[645] This should mean that theories need to be tested. Because theory and practice are inseparable in the human sciences, they cannot only be descriptive, but normative. Fact and value cannot be separated in subjects like history, philosophy, religion, and

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644 Which is not to say that instrumentality should be abandoned altogether. In *An Autobiography*, Collingwood describes three aspects of action. Every action, he says, has an economic or utilitarian side, it is a means to an end. But it also has a political side in being "relative to a rule" and concerned with right, as well as and a moral side "concerned with action as such" and duty (A: 148–149). For an elaborate discussion see Connelly, *Metaphysics, Method and Politics*, 189–204.

645 Collingwood, "Aesthetic Theory and Aesthetic Practice," 88.

art. These subjects are what Collingwood calls "criteriological," which is the term he prefers to "normative." The criteriological sciences are "self-critical activities," and can therefore not be studied using the methods of the empirical natural sciences, since criteriology is "concerned not only with the 'facts' of thought but also with the 'criteria' or standards which thought imposes on itself" (EM: 108–111; PA: 171).

For Collingwood, the purpose of philosophy is to reflect more deeply on the motives and the sometimes unconscious presuppositions behind our acts and ideas; the purpose of metaphysics is to bring to consciousness the unconscious *absolute presuppositions* that guide human thought; the purpose of history is to provide self-knowledge of our lives as rational beings; and the purpose of art is to provide self-knowledge in our emotional lives. In all of these examples there is a connection between theory and practice; for instance, art leads to self-knowledge of emotion, but since knowledge influences practice, art is also self-creation, and not merely of the self but of the world, since the self is social (PA: 291). Therefore:

> Art is not contemplation, it is action. If art were contemplation, it could be pursued by an artist who constitutes himself a mere spectator of the world around him, and depicts or describes what he sees. But, as the expression of emotion and addressed to a public, it requires of the artist that he should participate in his public's emotions, and therefore in the activities with which these emotions are bound up (PA: 332).

Collingwood, as we have seen, rejects representative theories of art and argues that "art proper" cannot have a preconceived end. Rather, art is "an imagined experience of total activity" that involves sense, thought, and feeling, and aims at making us aware of our emotions (PA: 151). This is important, since a healthy emotional life requires that we have the capability to express what we feel. This is, of course, not only important for artists but for everyone, and those who lack ability in the area of artistic expression can come to know their emotional lives through art created by others. In art, we find an antidote to repression, or what Collingwood calls "corruption" of consciousness (PA: 217–218). Furthermore, the self-knowledge we acquire through art is what makes us human as opposed to mere

"sentient organism[s]" (PA: 248). Artistic expression, then, is a fundamental human activity "and bad art not a thing we can afford to tolerate. To know ourselves is the foundation of all life that develops beyond the merely psychical level of experience" (PA: 284).

Collingwood urges artists to embrace their social significance and says that the artists' experience "must be of the same kind as that of the persons among whom they hope to find an audience" (PA: 119). The audience should be regarded as collaborators, and furthermore the individualistic myth of the artistic genius should be discarded, because artists, like the rest of us, are fostered by a community. They have "modelled their style upon that of others, used subjects that others have used, and treated them as others have treated them already. A work of art so constructed is a work of collaboration" (PA: 318).

This leads Collingwood to reject the view of art for art's sake as well as copyright laws, both of which he regards as products of individualism (the latter also being an obstacle to free artistic expression) (PA: 325). Art, says Collingwood, should be free and socially conscious. Its practical function, providing self-knowledge of our emotions, is fundamental in human life. When art fulfills this role, it can become "community's medicine for the worst disease of mind, the corruption of consciousness" (PA: 336).

Like art, history also provides self-knowledge, but of our rational lives. The subject of history, according to Collingwood, is "actions of human beings that have been done in the past" (IH: 9). It is not merely a matter of knowing what actions have been performed, however, but understanding why they were performed. Here history differs from the natural sciences: the latter studies events, which consist only of outsides, while the former studies actions that have both outsides and insides.

> By the outside of the event I mean everything belonging to it which can be described in terms of bodies and their movements: the passage of Caesar, accompanied by certain men, across a river called the Rubicon at one date, or the spilling of his blood on the floor of the senate-house at another. By the inside of the event I mean that in it which can only be described in terms of thought: Caesar's defiance of Republican law, or the clash of constitutional policy between himself and his assassins. The historian is never concerned with either of these to the exclusion of the oth-

er.… He is interested in the crossing of the Rubicon only in its relation to Republican law, and in the spilling of Caesar's blood only in its relation to a constitutional conflict. His work may begin by discovering the outside of an event, but it can never end there; he must always remember that the event was an action, and that his main task is to think himself into this action, to discern the thought of its agent (IH: 213).

Another way to phrase this would be to say that actions have a theoretical and a practical side, which explains why Collingwood, despite his claim that past actions are the subject of history, is led to the famous formula: "All history is the history of thought" (IH: 215). As a human science, history often begins with the outside of an action, but aims to figure out why the agent performing that action did so, which requires the historian to "re-enact" the past agent's thought to understand what problem the particular act or utterance was responding to. For Collingwood, *speech acts*, to use J. L. Austin's term, are social actions, and understanding an utterance, like an action, requires knowledge of the problem it was intended to solve. This is the aspect of Collingwood's theory of history that influenced Quentin Skinner's method of studying the history of political thought.[646]

Collingwood's formula for studying history is only applicable, however, if historians realize that not all human actions are appropriate subject matter, but only "actions expressing thought"—that is, actions "in which reason, in a high or a low degree, reason triumphant or reason frustrated, wise thought or foolish thought, is… recognizably at work" (PH: 47, 76). This definition of action is not merely applicable to history, but to all human sciences. In discussing ethics, Collingwood says:

> When I speak of action, I shall be referring to that kind of action in which the agent does what he does not because he is in a certain situation, but because he knows or believes himself to be in a certain situation. I shall not be referring to any kind of action which arises as a mere response to stimuli which the situation may contain, or as the mere effect of the agent's

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646 See David Boucher's discussion on the relation between Skinner and Collingwood, "In Defence of Collingwood: Perspectives from Philosophy and the History of Ideas," in *The Philosophy of Enchantment*, xcii– cxix.

nature or disposition or temporary state.… I shall not be referring to any kind of action in which the agent, though actually obeying a rule, is unaware that he is doing so (A: 102).

The actions Collingwood regards as the subject of the human sciences are intentional actions, since they are the kind of actions that express meaning. As we saw above, the theory he is concerned with is that which influences practices. Collingwood regards experience to be the starting point of philosophy (as we saw in Chapter 4), since all reflection comes from us being social, temporal, and acting beings. The importance of the human sciences lies in them providing us with the tools for self-knowledge, both individually and collectively, which Collingwood sees as intertwined with self-creation. Consequently, there is an intimate connection between experience, practice, and action, on the one hand, and thought, theory, and reflection on the other. Theory is meaningless if disconnected from experience and practice, since its purpose is to guide and evaluate action. Philosophic reflection seeks to bring about actual changes in social reality, not merely to secure a foundation for knowledge or "represent" reality. This, indeed, seems very similar to pragmatism.

Dewey on Praxis and Action

According to Dewey, the separation between theory and practice is caused by and upholds a class society divided into an intellectual leisure class and a working class. Unifying this "tragic division" (MW 12: 161), which has a devastating effect not only on philosophy, but on education and society as a whole, is therefore of the highest importance for a progressive society. According to Dewey, education is the place to start. As we saw in Chapter 2, Dewey's educational ideal is essentially a more progressive and science-friendly version of the neo-humanistic notion of *Bildung*, often addressed in terms of "growth of experience." But while proponents of *Bildung* sometimes tend toward a conservative and bookish ideal privileging passive and theoretical learning, Dewey emphasizes the importance of "social spirit" and experimentation (MW 9: 43–44). The explicit purpose of *Democracy and Education* was therefore to outline a pedagogy that connects personal growth with social progress and "the development of the

experimental method in the sciences" (MW 9: 3). Dewey attacks the tendency to separate theory from experience and privilege the former, which he regards to be a logical fallacy:

> The knowledge which comes first to persons… is knowledge of *how to do*… When [scholastic] education… which ignores everything but scientifically formulated facts and truths, fails to recognize that… initial subject matter always exists as matter of an active doing, involving the use of the body and the handling of material, the subject matter of instruction is isolated from the needs and purposes of the learner, and so becomes just a something to be memorized and reproduced upon demand (MW 9: 192).

Therefore: "An ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has vital and verifiable significance" (MW 9: 151). Practical experience precedes theoretical reflection, which arises as a response to doubt, problems, or uncertainties that emerge in experience (MW 9: 155). Knowing is not passive but active, experimental, and contextual. Dewey's theory of practice therefore takes its starting point from an anthropological assumption of what kind of creature humans are. We are experiential doers before we are contemplators.

The notion of experience, the unity of theory and practice, and the importance of the relation between science and social progress and individual growth are central concerns for Dewey, not only in education and pedagogy, but in all his philosophy, even prior to becoming a pragmatist. He was already questioning the division between the theoretical knowledge of logic and the practical action of ethics in a syllabus for an introductory course in philosophy written in 1892 (EW 3: 230–231). The value of knowledge, Dewey said five years later, "rests in solving the problem out of which it has arisen, viz., that of securing a method of action" (EW 5: 20–21). In other words, knowledge is contextual and practical. The problem with epistemology, which Dewey criticized throughout his career, is that it tends only to concern "the possibility of knowledge" and not "the possibility of its application to life." Knowledge must become a tool for "action as progress, as development, making over the wealth of the past into capital with which to do an enlarging and freer business, which alone can find its way out of

the cul-de-sac of the theory of knowledge" (EW 5: 21). Here we see the essence of Dewey's pragmatism captured a decade before he became recognized and started identifying as a pragmatist (a time during which he should still be regarded as an idealist). Like Peirce, and in opposition to common misunderstandings of pragmatism, Dewey stressed that he never meant to promote action for the sake of action (LW 2: 5).[647] The point both he and Peirce wanted to make is that knowledge cannot be separated from conduct, because humans are active and acting beings, and the purpose of philosophy should be to help us act more intelligently.

To understand the central place praxis and action hold in Dewey's thought, we must understand their relation to his attempt to bring about a unity of opposites, particularly between the ideal and the real and nature and experience. The latter concept was the beginning and end of Dewey's philosophy and is where we need to start. In one of his first articles, Dewey hailed Kant as the founder of "modernist philosophy" and the "turning-point" who departed from both Cartesian "intellectualism" and the meaningless conception of experience as sensory stimulus held by empiricists like Locke and Bacon. According to Kant, experience was an "ever growing" whole (EW 1: 34, 38, 47). Dewey held on to the essence of this view, but was never entirely happy with Kant's solution because his notion of "a priori" gave rise to an absolute category outside ordinary experience that resisted experimental verification (MW 12: 136). Such transcendentalism, Dewey thought, does not agree with modern science. It should, however, be stressed that while Dewey was always keen to integrate insights from the natural, social, and human sciences into his "new philosophy of experience," he nevertheless insisted that philosophy has "a distinctive problem and purpose of its own" (MW 6: 51; MW 9: 282).

As we saw in the previous chapter, the influence of James's *Principles of Psychology* was evident in Dewey's most famous psychological essay, "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology," which promoted a holistic notion of experience and emphasized its biological basis. The evolutionary understanding of experience provided Dewey with a link to praxis: "We are," he

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647 Action, says Peirce, "wants an end" but is not an end in itself. See, Peirce, "Pragmatic and Pragmatism," 49.

wrote, "active beings from the start and are naturally… engaged in redirecting our action in response to changes in our surroundings" (MW 8: 52n16). Dewey regarded James's insights (against the latter's intentions) as a synthesis of Darwinism and Hegelianism. Hegel had caused Dewey to conceive of the world as fundamentally social and historical, in a state of *becoming* rather than *being*, and Darwin freed him from the transcendental aspects of idealism—something he thought emancipated philosophy from its preoccupation with "absolute origins and absolute finalities in order to explore specific values and the specific conditions that generate them" (MW 4: 10). The ideal of reaching knowledge of a transcendental reality by means of contemplation therefore had to be abandoned for a contextually grounded inquiry into a reality in flux. Darwinism, said Dewey, forces modesty on philosophy, and in doing so, makes it socially responsible by turning it into "a method of locating and interpreting the more serious of the conflicts that occur in life, and a method of projecting ways for dealing with them: a method of moral and political diagnosis and prognosis" (MW 4: 13).

Dewey therefore rejects the notion of a fixed reality, eternal values, and transcendental experience that traditionally has engaged philosophers. In *A Quest for Certainty*, Dewey argues that philosophy (and religion) should abstain from offering theories of (absolute) reality in contrast to natural science. Philosophers should, in fact, embrace being liberated from their search for eternal Truth and transcendental Being and should instead embrace turning to questions of value and meaning grounded in social life (LW 4: 247–248). By doing so, philosophy is neither in conflict with natural science, nor subordinated to its methods and its vocabulary. It preserves its autonomy while strengthening its practical and social relevance.

This approach to philosophy has everything to do with Dewey's view of human beings as practical agents and biological, social, historical, and cultural products. It is because of this view he insists that inquiry must take the context of the problems it aims to solve into consideration. In being contextual, knowledge is also hypothetical, and takes place in human experience. As we have seen, Dewey's notion of experience is not the passive sensory experience of empiricism or the transcendental notion of experience found in idealism, but is rather the ordinary or everyday experience

of human beings as active organisms constantly adapting to and adjusting their environments. Experience is a transaction between the human organism and its environment;[648] it "is *of* as well as *in* nature," as Dewey put it in *Experience and Nature* (LW 1: 12). The naturalism promoted in the book, which we have already encountered, rejected the dualism between the two concepts contained in the book's title. It proposed that the "character of everyday experience which has been most systematically ignored by philosophy" instead should be placed at the heart of philosophy (LW 1: 6). This, Dewey said, must be the consequence of the insights of the empirical natural sciences, which have shown that it is only through experience that we get to nature (LW 1: 11).

Dewey followed James's description of experience as a "double-barrelled word," meaning that "it includes what men do and suffer" without separating subject from object (LW 1: 18). *What* we experience is inseparable from *how* we experience, and it is the "how" of human experience that separates us from other beings. We are social organism that can reflect on and change our ideals and values. Valuation, judgement, and meaning are therefore central concerns in Dewey's philosophy.[649] If meaning is one example of a typical human feature, awareness of temporality is another.

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648 On Dewey's notion of "transaction" and "interaction," see *Knowing and the Known* (1949), co-written with Arthur Bentley (LW 16: 96–109).

649 Dewey claims that the validity of judgements and values depends on their usefulness for everyday life and cannot be justified with reference to eternal or transcendental standards. He does, however, make a distinction between practical and theoretical judgement. The former is defined as an intelligent decision regarding "what to do, or what is to be done" that is made in "an incomplete and in so far indeterminate situation." In other words, action must be determined with the context of the situation in mind; see "Logic of Judgement of Practice" (MW 8: 30). Theoretical judgements share these characteristics, for they also take place in human experience and arise from a problem or problematic situation, which is not to say that they are justified only by serving practical ends. According to Richard Bernstein's interpretation, Dewey believes theoretical judgement gains "its systematic explanatory power in the degree to which it abstracts from the demands of immediate existential situations. Unless we have a disinterested concern with developing theoretical inquiry for its own sake, we cripple the systematic explanatory power of our theories." Hence, like practical judgements, theoretical judgements arise in experience and in the context of a problem or problematic situation, but differ in not having immediate practical ends such as providing us with guidelines for action. Bernstein, *Praxis and Action*, 217.

The opening lines of *Reconstruction in Philosophy* state: "Man differs from the lower animals because he preserves his past experiences" (MW 12: 80). These experiences are not static but related to the present and the future. What Dewey calls a "reconstructed" philosophy "would determine the conditions under which the funded experience of the past and the contriving intelligence which looks to the future can effectually interact with each other" (MW 12: 138). Here again we encounter, for lack of a better term, Dewey's historicism.

Like *Experience and Nature*, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* criticizes traditional philosophy for having regarded reason, transcendence, the eternal, supernatural, and theoretical as superior to the "world of everyday experience" and "practical affairs" (MW 12: 92). Dewey accuses both empiricists and rationalists of having flawed conceptions of experience. While rationalists though reason transcended experience, empiricists reduced it to sensory data, resulting in a passive and atomistic view of it (MW 12: 137). This is not to say that Dewey denies the usefulness of sense or reason, but rather that he attacks the dualistic view of these categories he believes empiricists and rationalists share. According to Dewey, new insights from the sciences, particularly physiological psychology, "have rendered possible a new conception of experience and a new conception of the relation of reason to experience, or… of the place of reason *in* experience" (MW 12: 127). We can no longer allow for existences *beyond* experience, nor should we regard sensations as *part of* knowledge, but instead as "provocations… to an act of inquiry which is to *terminate* in knowledge" (MW 12: 131).

What Dewey seeks is a philosophy that suits the processual, dynamic, ever-changing nature of the world. He claims that philosophy's traditional preoccupation with being, essence, the absolute, the eternal, and the changeless has led to "the superiority of contemplative to practical knowledge, of pure theoretical speculation to experimentation" (MW 12: 142). This is the view that has turned philosophy into an "epistemological industry" and led to the dominance of "the spectator view of knowledge"; that is, the correspondence theory of truth, which is irreconcilable with the notion of experience as "an affair of primarily doing" (MW 12: 129, 147; LW 14: 179).

Prior to *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Dewey called for an "emancipation" from the "traditional problems" of philosophy in "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy" (MW 10: 4). Both texts emphasize that philosophers should turn their attention to the practical and social problems that arise in human experience, thus providing a safeguard against "artificial problems which deflect the energy and attention of philosophers from the real problems that arise out of actual subject-matter" (LW 1: 26). "Artificial problems" are those without social significance, and they are not to be solved but *dissolved.* Taking what Dewey calls "common" or "everyday" experience as the starting point and the end of philosophical inquiry releases "philosophy from its burden of sterile metaphysics and sterile epistemology" (MW 12: 152).

Rather than being concerned with the end point of inquiry—truth—philosophers should turn their attention to the practice of inquiry itself, the active and experimental process of knowing (MW 12: 150). This, of course, is a typical pragmatist standpoint. Dewey is also typically pragmatist in holding that inquiry should start with problems present in human experience, but emphasizes the social nature of philosophical problems more than his pragmatist predecessors, James and Peirce. Philosophy, says Dewey, becomes "reconstructive" when it sets out "to clarify men's ideas as to the social and moral strifes of their own day" (MW 12: 94). Valuation and judgement are therefore necessary parts of philosophy, the purpose of which must be to unify the dualism between the ideal and the real, or fact and value.

While Dewey insists that philosophy should take the discoveries of science into account, he also stresses that natural science must become "humanistic in quality," because "when the consciousness of science is fully impregnated with the consciousness of human value, the greatest dualism which now weighs humanity down, the split between the material, the mechanical, the scientific and the moral and ideal will be destroyed" (MW 12: 179). Considering the aims and purposes of science and the practical and moral implications of knowledge on human conduct and experience are the tasks of philosophy. There can be no science for the sake of science, or art for the sake of art. These activities should be pursued for their positive social impact and to contribute to the growth of human experience.

According to Dewey, this redirects philosophy from its preoccupation with epistemology to its original notion as a search for wisdom and "a social hope" (MW 11: 43). "Philosophy," as Dewey famously said, "recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of men" (MW 10: 46).

A final topic of concern in relation to Dewey's thoughts on praxis and action is the central role art and aesthetics hold in his philosophy. Like Collingwood (and Croce), Dewey is concerned not so much with the art object as with experience, emotion, imagination, activity, and expression, and in being expressive, art is a form of communication and language. Dewey also shares the view that artistic expression is social and can be found in all human activities. He therefore rejects the notion of art for art's sake, the view of art as contemplation, "the museum conception of art," and the isolation of works of art from social life, as well as the separation of aesthetic experience from "common experience" (LW 10: 12, 15, 258–259). Aesthetic and everyday experience are continuous and differ only in quality.

As we have seen, Dewey regards experience to be the interaction between an organism and its environment; experience is not merely passive undergoing, but activity, doing, and interaction. *Art as Experience* introduces the notion of having *an* experience, by which Dewey means an "integrated," "fulfilled," and "demarcated" experience in contrast to the continuous flow of experience. For example, we have *an* experience when a problem is solved, "a piece of work finished …, a game is played through; a situation … is so rounded out that its close is a consummation and not a cessation" (LW 10: 42).

The aesthetic experience is said to be necessary for human self-knowledge because Dewey, like Collingwood, regards expression as a matter of "clarification of turbid emotion" (LW 10: 83).[650] This leads Dewey to argue that new art must be judged in relation to "meaning and life," and not in

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650 Dewey says that without emotion we may have craftmanship but not art. Hence, like Collingwood, he suggests that there is a difference of degree between art and craft, although he does not develop this line of thought (LW 10: 75).

relation to art history (LW 10: 308). The latter says nothing of why art is important, which has to do with it giving us a heightened sense of life.

> The experiences that art intensifies and amplifies neither exist solely inside ourselves, nor do they consist of relations apart from matter. The moments when the creature is both most alive and most composed and concentrated are those of fullest intercourse with the environment, in which sensuous material and relations are most completely merged (LW 10: 109).

Art is not, however, merely an interaction between an organism and its environment, but between persons, since in being expressive, art is also social and communicative. In fact, it is the most "the most universal form of language" and the most "complete and unhindered communication… that can occur in a world full of gulfs and walls that limit community of experience" (LW 10: 110, 275). Furthermore:

> Communication is the process of creating participation, of making common what had been isolated and singular; and part of the miracle it achieves is that, in being communicated, the conveyance of meaning gives body and definiteness to the experience of the one who utters as well as to that of those who listen (LW 10: 248–249).

The social value and "sense of communion" a work of art can potentially generate has, in Dewey's view, a "religious quality" (LW 10: 275). Here we see a link between art and the "social Christianity" Dewey embraced throughout his life. The liberal, democratic, and equal society he envisioned would provide its inhabitants with the means for cooperation, communication, and growth of experience. Like religion, ethics, and all forms of experience, art has two ultimate and interconnected purposes: on the one hand, what called self-realization or growth of experience, and on the other hand, contributing to social unity and the common good.

Philosophy as Humanistic Cultural Criticism

T. H. Green once distinguished between two approaches to logic; that of the formal logicians, and that of those who regarded logic as "the science of the method of knowledge."[651] In the latter category we find those (for example, idealists and pragmatists but also J. S. Mill) who regards logic to be interconnected with metaphysics and/or psychology. In the former category, we find most early analytical philosophers. It is with this distinction in mind we should understand Bertrand Russell's comment about Dewey's *Essays in Experimental Logic*: "What he calls 'logic' does not seem to me to be part of logic at all." For Russell, logic was formal, symbolic, and mathematic. Regarded as such, logic is a subject "which apparently does not seem to Professor Dewey a very important one."[652] This observation by Russell is correct, and he also noted that the main difference between him and Dewey came down to what they regarded as important tasks for philosophy. As we saw in Chapter 3, analytical realists like Russell wanted to make philosophy more like natural science, and aimed to clarify language by securing the validity of individual propositions. This turned philosophy

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651 T. H. Green, "Lectures on Logic: I. The Logic of Formal Logicians," in *Works of Thomas Hill Green,* vol. 2, *Philosophical Works*, ed. R. L. Nettleship (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1886)*,* 158–159. Green also emphasized, like Dewey and Collingwood would, that the important difference lies between unreflective and (self-)reflective thought, not between analysis and synthesis, which are interdependent. Ibid., 193–194.

652 Bertrand Russell, "Professor Dewey's 'Essays in Experimental Logic'," *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 16:1 (January 1919), 5–6. Similarly, Bernard A. O. Williams has criticized Collingwood for his "ill-advised and arrogant" remarks about "what is ordinarily called 'logic'." See, Williams, "An Essay on Collingwood," in *The Sense of the Past: Essays in the History of Philosophy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2006), 352. Tom Burke has suggested that we view Dewey's and Russell's views on logic as representing "two unreconcilable ways of viewing the world." This correlates with my description of idealism and analytical philosophy as two distinct thought styles. Tom Burke, *Dewey's New Logic: A Reply to Russell* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 9. Giving a full account of Dewey's complex theory of inquiry lies beyond the scope of this study. Burke's account is very thorough on this issue. A more comprehensive presentation is Larry A. Hickman, "Dewey's Theory of Inquiry," in *Reading Dewey: Interpretations for a Postmodern Generation*, ed. Hickman (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1998), 166–186.

into a narrow and highly theoretical endeavor. In contrast, philosophers with a background in idealism resisted the increasing professionalization and specialization of philosophy, and regarded it as a broad cultural activity that incorporated all spheres of human experience. As we have just seen, making philosophy practical and socially useful was essential for Dewey and Collingwood, which meant making philosophy into a humanistic and reconstructive form of cultural criticism.

But humanistic in what sense? Both Dewey and Collingwood emphasize the importance of humanist subjects like art, history, and religion, and are more concerned with meaning than truth. According to Collingwood, who rarely uses the word humanism, history is a "humanistic" science in the sense that its interest is the deeds and purposes of humans in the past (IH: 18–19, 40–42). As we have seen, he regards history to be an essential part of human life and necessary for individual and collective self-knowledge, which is interconnected with self-creation. Like Dewey, Collingwood regards continuous learning and growth as essential to philosophy, which reminds us of the neo-humanistic notion of *Bildung* that figures in the background of both their philosophies, though repackaged to fit their liberal and democratic ideals.

While Collingwood was critical of naturalism (in the strong sense) and always wanted to protect the humanities from the dominance of natural science, Dewey always aimed to unite them. He never embraced humanism and the humanities in opposition to naturalism and the natural sciences, but argued for an interconnected coexistence. He rejected the notion of humanism in the sense of "literary training" because it "produces only a feebly pretentious snobbishness of culture." Rather, humanism must refer to the "production of a social and socialized sense" and "concern for all that related to human action and feeling" (MW 10: 181; LW 5: 263). In a brief historical overview of humanism, Dewey expresses sympathy for the humanism of Francis Bacon and Condorcet, who regard inquiry to be for the sake of human well-being, and F. C. S. Schiller, who agreed with Protagoras that "man is the measure of all things"; something Schiller "applied… to the rejuvenation of logic, ethics and metaphysics, making the conception of value central in philosophy, and finding the source of value in human desire, purpose and satisfaction" (LW 5: 265). This kind of

humanism sees humans as part of nature, and aims to make science "the servant instead of the master of human destiny." By doing so, humanism becomes "an expansion… of human life… in which nature and the science of nature are made the willing servants of human good" (LW 5: 266).[653] Here we see again that Dewey stresses the importance of evaluation in all kinds of inquiry.

I will conclude this chapter by outlining Collingwood's and Dewey's conceptions of philosophy, which will show that their theories of inquiry are connected to their processual metaphysics and their view of knowledge as contextual, as well as their insistence that philosophy must be (self-)critical, normative, and reconstructive. We will see that there are clear overlaps between their views on philosophical and political method, and that there are good reasons for regarding them to be hermeneuticians.

Collingwood's Reconstructive Dialectics

Collingwood's philosophical method consists of two intertwined ideas: "dialectics" and the "logic of question and answer." That these intersect can be seen already in *Speculum Mentis*, which explicitly promotes a "dialectical" approach to philosophy and regards knowledge as the "interplay of question and answer" (SM: 77). As previously noted, *An Essay on Philosophical Method* instead speaks of the "overlap of classes" and "scale of forms," although Collingwood recognizes that these notions build on ideas from Plato, Kant, and Hegel, the same thinkers who inspired his early dialectics (EPM: 101–103).

I will stick to the term dialectics, which Collingwood used again in his final work, *The New Leviathan*, where it was contrasted to "eristic" methods. We saw in Chapters 3 and 4 that Collingwood regarded the dialectical method in politics to be a liberal method that requires one to set aside individual aims for the common good, and be ready to adjust and change one's beliefs in the light of new facts and arguments. Philosophical inquiry follows the same basic principle, and Collingwood first contrasts the dia-

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653 Dewey contrasts this humanism to the "anti-naturalistic," anti-scientific, and "dualistic" doctrines advanced by Paul Elmer More and Irving Babbitt.

lectical and eristic methods in his 1917 manuscript, "Truth and Contradiction." In this work he rejects the common laws of logic that, because they hold truth to be non-contradictory and coherent, requires belief in a transcendental world of absolute experience. But according to Collingwood, human experience is phenomenal and takes place *in* the world.[654] He argues that debate and argumentation must be dialectical since they aim at perfecting one's views and convincing others, while the primary concern for the eristic approach is victory, not truth.[655] In contrast to the eristic method, the dialectical incorporates and transforms conflicting views, which is what makes it incompatible with the laws of propositional logic.[656] Another difference is that the dialectical approach takes context into account. While propositional logic relies on an absolute and transcendental notion of truth, the dialectical method holds that no statement is meaningful outside its historical context.[657] Truth, therefore, is an activity and a matter of deliberation and self-criticism:

> We seem forced to the conclusion that the truth of a judgement is shown not by its power of resisting contradiction and of preserving itself unchanged in the force of opposition, but precisely by the ease with which it accepts contradiction and undergoes modification in order to include points of view which once it had excluded. Not self-preservation but self-criticism is the mark of a truth; and the enjoyment of truth is not an achievement but an activity.[658]

In his *Autobiography*, Collingwood describes how his processual theory of inquiry was informed by the experience of working on archaeological sites, which led him to realize that archaeological knowledge was not produced

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654 Collingwood, "Truth and Contradiction," 4.

655 Ibid., 7.

656 Collingwood collects many different approaches to logic under the terms "propositional logic," and they all regard truth without reference to context: "According to propositional logic (under which denomination I include the so-called 'traditional' logic, the 'idealistic' logic … and the 'symbolic' logic …) truth or falsehood … belongs to propositions as such" (A: 34).

657 Collingwood, "Truth and Contradiction," 10.

658 Ibid., insert.

by merely "apprehending" or "intuiting" an external "reality," but as answers to particular questions (A: 24–25).[659] This, Collingwood thought, was the same principle Descartes and Francis Bacon had used: "Each of them had said very plainly that knowledge comes only by answering questions, and that these questions must be the right questions and asked in the right order" (A: 25).

Collingwood thought the realist theory of knowledge was incompatible with this approach to philosophy, and consequently called for "a revolt against the current logical theories of the time" (A: 30). He therefore took the side of questioning against observation in the "war" between these attitudes (EM: 273n1). Proponents of the latter view mistook "truth" for a quality of propositions and neglected the importance of questioning, according to Collingwood.

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

Collingwood not only rejected realism, empiricism, and the correspondence theory of truth, but also the notion of truth as coherence (which many idealists embraced) as well as the pragmatic view of truth as a matter of usefulness, believing them to share the assumptions of propositional logic and, in doing so, to exclude the questioning activity he regards as central to all kinds of scientific inquiry (A: 36).

Rather than regarding "truth" as a quality of propositions, Collingwood suggested that it was a quality belonging to "a complex of questions and answers," and that the answer to an individual question must be "right"

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659 Collingwood attacked the same doctrine using different vocabularies in *Speculum Mentis* and *An Essay on Metaphysics*. In the former, it is empiricism that is said to view knowledge as assertions (SM: 77); in the latter, he attacks the same doctrine, but in this case refers to it as the idea that knowledge is merely a matter of observation, a theory he ascribes to (logical) positivism (EM: 277).

rather than "true," meaning that it "enables us to get ahead with the process of questioning and answering" (A: 37). This is rather similar to the description of the dialectical method ("scale of forms") of *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, where hypotheses are regarded "as stepping-stones to reach something which is not an hypothesis but the principle of everything" (EPM: 13).

Unlike the natural sciences, where concepts and "classes" are strictly separate from each other, in philosophy, they are not mutually exclusive but overlap (EPM: 27–31). In one sense, they differ in kind, but they simultaneously differ in degree. For example, while action is not thought, neither is it opposed to thought. We may (and should) act rationally, and therefore "an instance of action may be an instance of thought also" (EPM: 44). While water, steam, and ice also make a scale of forms, it differs from a philosophical scale, where the concepts do not share an unchanging essence (EPM: 59). Instead, a philosophical analysis of art begins from the assumption that art itself is a changing object. *The Principle of Art* asks, "What is art?" and proceeds by making and refuting hypothetical statements such as "art is craft," "art is representation," and "art is magic." By going through these "stepping-stones," Collingwood reaches a set of principles that allows him to answer the book's main question. Because art lacks an unchanging essence, there will be an overlap between it and closely related notions such as craft, representation, and magic. The differences between these categories are simultaneously differences of degree and kind. If art is the "generic essence" in this scale, craft, representation, and magic are the "imperfect or inadequate specification of the generic essence, which is realized with progressive adequacy as the scale is ascended" (EPM: 61). As the scale moves, it also progresses dialectically:

> The higher of any two adjacent forms overlaps the lower because it includes the positive content of the lower as a constituent element within itself. It only fails to include the lower in its entirety because there is also a negative aspect of the lower, which is rejected by the higher (EPM: 90).

In other words, there are aspects of representation, magic, and craft in art, but art also rejects parts of what was present in these lower forms. We will,

however, never reach a complete understanding of the "essence" of a philosophical concept like "art," because the dialectical scale of forms never reaches an absolute conclusion.

Importantly, Collingwood did not view philosophy—or any kind of knowledge—as resting on a fixed "foundation" but, as we have seen, regards philosophy's starting point to be experience, which is constantly in flux. Nor did Collingwood accept the notion of "eternal" questions. Instead, he follows the dialectical method of Socrates and Hegel, which holds the task of philosophy to be the improvement of something we to a certain degree already know rather than the discovery of the unknown (EPM: 11).[660] One's knowledge "is already full of philosophical elements; it is not at the zero end of the scale, for there is no zero end" (EPM: 172). Philosophy is therefore primarily a way to "clear up thoughts," a self-reflective activity aimed at making the implicit explicit, and an elaboration of the knowledge and experience of everyday life rather than something completely different from it (EPM: 96–97). For Collingwood, philosophy is grounded in social and historical reality, and its questions must therefore keep changing if inquiry is to have practical, social, and ethical significance.

To philosophize is to contribute to an ongoing dialogue with the "body of experience" that makes up "the past history of philosophical thought," and to try to bring clarity into things we already, to some extent, are aware of through experience (EPM: 174, 224). Collingwood therefore rejects any strict division between experience and theory: experience is a dialectical process that includes sensory, emotional, and empirical aspects, as well as those that are theoretical, reflective, and philosophical. Because we are social beings, experience is collective as well as individual.

As a never-ending processual activity that proceeds through dialectical stages in which "the goal of one stage [is] the starting-point of the next," philosophy must allow for its problems and objects of study to change (EPM: 3). Historical understanding of the processes that make up the history of philosophy is therefore necessary; otherwise, we might mistakenly address the same questions as our predecessors, and fall into the trap of believing that, for example, Hobbes' *Leviathan* and Plato's *Republic* are

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660 See also, Collingwood, "Notes on Hegel's Logic."

about the same thing, since they both concern the political state. Such an understanding would neglect the social and historical context of both books, and the fact that they were meant to answer different questions (A: 61–62). This is not an insight we can reach through natural science, but only by "reenacting" the thought of Plato and Hobbes and understanding them in their respective contexts.

Like Dewey, Collingwood is an anti-foundationalist, anti-realist, anti-dualist, anti-representationalist, and anti-essentialist. He provides us with principles and methodological guidelines and urges us to ask relevant question and seek their answers by keeping historical and social differences in mind. To do so, we must be aware of both our own context and the context of our object of study. We must criticize, select, and evaluate, and this "criteriological" aspect is what separates the humanities from the natural sciences. Furthermore, Collingwood stresses that philosophy must not merely criticize or reject false views, nor should it merely affirm certain views, since "it is never enough to state your aim in a special philosophical inquiry by saying that you wish to discover the truth about a particular subject; this must always be further defined by adding that you wish to discover what exactly is wrong with this or that view of it" (EPM: 109). Accordingly, we must position our inquiry against previous inquiries in the same field and not merely criticize our predecessors' views, since "reconstruction" is the purpose of the dialectical method. There is, in Collingwood's emphasis on the never-ending process of inquiry which begins and end in experience, and in his emphasis on practice and questioning clear similarities to pragmatism. But there is also a similarity to hermeneutics in his description of the process of inquiry as moving forward and backward between the overarching question that guides the study and the many smaller questions and revising the questions when needed (A: 32, 41–42).[661]

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661 Bernard Williams and Louis Mink are among those who have thought "hermeneutics" to be a better term than "logic" for Collingwood's method of question and answer. I am inclined to agree. I also agree with Mink that "Like the pragmatists … Collingwood's contribution was not to the *logic of proof* but to the *theory of inquiry*." Mink, *Mind, History, and Dialectic*, 131, 138; Williams, "An Essay on Collingwood," 355.

Dewey's Experimental Cultural Criticism

Like Collingwood, Dewey saw an affinity between philosophical and political methodology.[662] In contrast to the methods of "absolutistic" authoritarianism, liberalism is said to be "experimental," by which Dewey means "a certain logic of method, not, primarily, the carrying on of experimentation like that of laboratories" (LW 2: 361). He also described liberalism's method as one of discussion, "voluntary cooperation," "organized intelligence," and "intelligent action" (LW 11: 45, 56, 28). The liberal method aims to bring social conflicts "out into the open where their special claims can be seen and appraised, where they can be discussed and judged in the light of the more inclusive interests than are represented by either of them separately" (LW 11: 56). This should pave the way for settling social conflicts in a manner that serves the common good, but will not stop conflicts from appearing, since there is no end to the political process. In fact, he says, "the greatest mistake we can make about democracy is to conceive of it as something fixed." Democracy must keep being "rediscovered, remade and reorganized" (LW 11: 182).

Dewey not only criticizes Marxists, fascists, and Nazis for "social absolutism," but also claims that nineteenth-century liberals are guilty of regarding "individuality and freedom as absolute and eternal truths" (LW 11: 290). Liberalism must instead recognize that the meaning of these concepts and the aims of society must constantly be revised and adapted to new social circumstances according to what Dewey calls the principle of "historic relativity," which he regards as interconnected with the experimental method (LW 11: 292). Because democracy constantly needs to renew itself, education plays a central role. Democracy is even described as the "belief in the ability of human experience to generate the aims and methods by which further experience will grow in ordered richness" (LW 14: 229). Democracies are the kind of society that best allow growth of experience (*Bildung*) and development of capabilities, which in turn benefits the common good.

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662 They do, however, address their methods, which are quite similar, in different language. Rather than "dialectics," Dewey described his method using terms like "education," "intelligence," "communication," "cooperation," and "experimentation."

> The meaning of liberalism then consists in quiet and patient pursuit of truth, marked by the will to learn from every quarter. Liberalism is humble and persistent, and yet is strong and positive in its faith that the intercourse of free minds will always bring to light an increasing measure of truth (LW 14: 254).

Here "liberalism" could be substituted by "science" or "philosophy." Dewey regards all three as fields of inquiry, and because inquiry always takes place in a processual universe and an ever-changing social reality, it must keep adapting and revising its aims. Consequently, the pragmatist method and attitude are supposed to apply to all fields of research; pragmatism does not guarantee certain results, but provides an approach, an attitude, and a method.

Dewey's conception of philosophy is very different from that of the analytical philosopher. He had already rejected, in his earliest texts on the topic, the "intellectual gymnastic" of formal logic and "the whole modern industry of epistemology" in favor of a conception of logic as a method aimed to assist us in our practical interactions in social life and "everyday experience" (EW 3: 126–127; EW 5: 5, 19). This approach to philosophy was developed in texts like "The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy," "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy," *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, *Experience and Nature*, and *A Quest for Certainty*. In these works Dewey often stresses the anthropological basis of his philosophy. He claims that the insight that humans are natural organisms imposes modesty on philosophy by forcing it to abandon transcendentalism and instead ground thinking in everyday experience. The "naturalistic humanism" Dewey advocates, however, is in no sense equivalent to contemporary post-humanism, but might rather be regarded as anthropocentric in emphasizing that human beings differ from other species in being historical and cultural (LW1: 13; MW 12: 80–84).

> Ability to respond to meanings and to employ them, instead of reacting merely to physical contacts, makes the difference between man and other animals; it is the agency for elevating man into the realm of what is usually called the ideal and spiritual. In other words, the social participation af-

> fected by communication, through language and other tools, is the natura-
> listic link which does away with the often alleged necessity of dividing the
> objects of experience into two worlds, one physical and one ideal (LW 1: 7).

We see here one of many examples of Dewey's rejection of strict separa-
tions between the real and ideal, the natural and the spiritual. Value, mean-
ing, and ideals are central to his conception of philosophy, but he does not
regard them as transcendental or eternal. Philosophy has, of course, tradi-
tionally been preoccupied with absolute values and "eternal problems" but,
according to Dewey, we should discard such artificial concerns and instead
redirect our attention to practical real-life problems. Rather than searching
for Being, the Real, and the True, philosophy should provide a method for
solving actual conflicts and practical problems.

This means that philosophy must embrace existing in a dynamic and
processual universe of becoming, and therefore needs to abandon the
"over-pretentious claim to certainty" (MW 12: 91). While thought, reason,
and rationality are important, they are not something opposite or external
to experience, but rather aspects that develop out of it (MW 10: 6, 15–16):
"reason operates within experience, not beyond it, to give it an intelligent
or reasonable quality" (MW 9: 233). Philosophy therefore begins with
doubt, a concrete problem, a "conflicting experience" or a "problematic
situation" that arises in everyday experience, and aims to provide us with
"clarification and redirection," "a method of action," and a resolution
(MW 2: 359; MW 10: 4; LW 4: 193–194; LW 5: 20–21). This means that
philosophy is oriented toward the future and should provide "vision, im-
agination and reflection" connected to action (MW 10: 46).

In contrast to the realists and analysts who embraced formal logic and
the correspondence theory of truth ("the spectator theory of knowledge"),
Dewey described "true" as "that which guides us truly" (MW 12: 169). But
rather than speaking of truth, belief, and knowledge, Dewey preferred
"verification" or "warranted assertibility" to stress the temporal nature of
the results of inquiry. Furthermore, because he regards philosophy as an
active process taking place in experience and concerned with learning and

growth, he is more concerned with meaning than truth.[663] While Dewey regarded his philosophy to be instrumental in the sense that inquiry was supposed to resolve real-world problems that arise in experience, he never meant to defend instrumental rationality, but rather thought his approach embraced the original meaning of philosophy as "love of wisdom" and "knowledge turned to account in the instruction and guidance of life" in order to "give direction to our collective human activities" (LW 15: 161; LW 16: 389).[664]

Dewey's process metaphysics, his view of human beings as biological, social, and historical, and the idea that philosophy begins with and aims to resolve real-life problems that arise in experience leads him to regard all inquiry as contextual. He does in fact describe neglect of context as "the analytical fallacy," "the most pervasive fallacy of philosophic thinking," and "the greatest single disaster which philosophic thinking can incur" (LW 6: 5, 7, 11). In *Context and Thought*, Dewey's best discussion of these matters, he claims that neglect of context can lead to two opposite extremes: either denial of continuity and connection, or the notion of "unlimited extension or universalization" (LW 6: 8). Contextualization therefore forces us to recognize the extension and limits of both our own and others' ideas and actions. Like Collingwood's "logic of question and answer," Dewey holds that past philosophers must be understood as answering to concrete issues and "with reference to the intellectual conditions of their own times" (LW 6: 17).[665] Here Dewey invokes the notion of "tradition" as a spatial and

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663 In "Philosophy and Civilization," Dewey writes: "Meaning is wider in scope as well as more precious in value than is truth, and philosophy is occupied with meaning rather than with truth" (LW 3: 4). "Warranted assertibility" is the term Dewey uses in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*.

664 In *Art and Experience*, Dewey sought to clarify the meaning of his instrumentalism: "I have from time to time set forth a conception of knowledge as being 'instrumental.' Strange meanings have been imputed by my critics to this conception. Its actual content is simple: Knowledge is instrumental to the enrichment of immediate experience through the control over action that it exercises" (LW 10: 294).

665 Dewey writes: "The direct material of every reflection proceeds out of some precedent state of affairs in reference to which the existing state is disturbed or problematic or to which it is an 'answer' or solution" (LW 6: 12).

temporal "background" and a way "of interpretation and of observation, of valuation, of everything explicitly thought of" (LW 6: 11–12).[666]

Dewey regards recognition of the contextual nature of thought as an antidote to dogmatism. It opens our eyes to our own situatedness and forces us to become reflective and self-critical of our own tradition. As Dewey sees it, a contextual approach turns philosophy into a form of reconstructive cultural criticism:

> Philosophy is criticism; criticism of the influential beliefs that underlie culture; a criticism which traces the beliefs to their generating conditions as far as may be, which tracks them to their results, which considers the mutual compatibility of the elements of the total structure of beliefs. Such an examination terminates, whether so intended or not, in a projection of them into a new perspective which leads to new surveys of possibilities. This phase of reconstruction through criticism is as marked in justifying and systematizing philosophies as in avowedly skeptical ones (LW 6: 19).[667]

The reconstructive aspect is an implication of Dewey's quest for unity: philosophy must not merely break down but, more importantly, it "has the task of effecting unification in a single coherent whole. In this sense the goal of all thinking is the attaining of unity" (LW 6: 8).

Dewey's philosophy is historicist in the sense that he regards reality and human nature to be temporal and processual. Since there are no eternal problems, all thought and understanding are contextual. His philosophy is practical in the sense that he believes all thought and action should be regarded as responses to actual problems that arise in everyday experience, and inquiry that does not have a practical effect—such as helping us adapt

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666 Even though he refers to "everything explicitly thought of," Dewey seems to leave room for the implicit and unconscious, since he says that traditions are sometimes of such a nature that we cannot explain why we hold some of the beliefs that have become "part of ourselves" (LW 6: 13). He exemplifies this with Aristotelian physics, which was taken for granted until Newton came along. Here Dewey seems to have something very similar to Collingwood's "absolute presuppositions" in mind.

667 This is by and large a condensed version of the conception of philosophy Dewey presents in *A Quest for Certainty* (LW 4).

to or solve a problematic situation or change our conduct—is artificial. Dewey is a humanist in the sense that the starting point of his philosophy is humans as biological, social, and historical beings who differ from other species in having the capacity to create meaning and reflect upon their lives and history. Helping people resolve conflicts and grow collectively and individually is the humanistic aim of Dewey's philosophy. While "pragmatism" is the most appropriate label for his philosophy, the influence of idealists like Kant, Hegel, Green, Caird, Morris, and Harris should be recognized. It was them who first oriented Dewey towards a processual understanding of reality, a social liberalism, a practical conception of knowledge, and the ideal of unity of diversity, unity of opposites, and unity of and growth of experience.

6. Conclusion

Analytical philosophy has provided us with tools to dissect arguments and bring precision to our vocabularies, but it occasionally gets lost in intellectual gymnastics (to use Dewey's term) irrelevant to the world outside the philosophy department. Idealism and continental philosophy, on the other hand, dare to face the big existential questions and refuse to isolate philosophy from other human activities such as history, religion, and aesthetics. It sometimes suffers, however, from abstraction, supernatural transcendentalism, and a neglect of natural science. The lack of communication between these two traditions is unfortunate—and where does this division leave thinkers like Collingwood and Dewey? Neither could be easily categorized in either the analytical or the continental camp, and they would almost certainly reject the division, since it has only contributed to furthering philosophical specialization by making us publish in narrow journals and attend conferences aimed at the like-minded few, rather than seeking conversational partners with interests and views unlike ours.[668] This is, of course, not any individual scholar's fault, but an unfortunate part of the structural logic of the university system that we are forced to play along with in order to be able to do research in the first place. Given this situation, it is especially important to highlight Collingwood's and Dewey's approach to philosophy as a well-needed contrast.

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668 Post-Deweyan pragmatists have often sought to escape the dichotomy between analytical and continental philosophy. While Richard Bernstein regards it as an "unfortunate dichotomy [that] obscures more than it illuminates," Richard Rorty downplays the differences and describes them in terms of "style and tradition rather than … 'method' or … first principles." Bernstein, *The Pragmatic Turn*, x; Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. 30th anniversary ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2009), 8.

In this concluding section, I aim to tackle the challenge I set for myself at the beginning of this study: to reassess the value of Dewey's and Collingwood's philosophical ideals. I said in the introduction that intellectual history should be regarded as a critical conversation with the past that not only uncovers authorial *intent* but also *extension* of meaning, which includes, for example, an evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in conceptual use and argumentation. I have tried to live up to this ideal throughout the study and will now aim to collect my findings in an overarching judgement while summarizing the results and pointing out potential future areas of research.

The study's aim was to investigate the persistence of idealist philosophy in Anglo-America during the first half of the twentieth century using the cases of Collingwood and Dewey. By choosing an American and an English philosopher as the main subjects of analysis, I sought to illustrate the importance of taking a transnational approach to philosophy in contrast to the methodological nationalism that dominates the field. By studying Dewey and Collingwood I also aimed to illustrate the close historical relationship between idealism and pragmatism.

In Chapter 2, I argued that the similarities and connections between American and British idealism should lead us to consider Anglo-American idealism as one tradition, even though the Americans were much more influenced by British thinkers than the other way around. This is, no doubt, an argument that could be fleshed out more thoroughly, and I believe the history of philosophy has everything to gain by turning away from the methodological nationalism that dominates the field in favor of a transnational approach. I illustrated such an approach by showing how idealism began to circulate in Anglo-America in the early nineteenth century through personal contacts, translations, introductions, journals, literary groups, philosophical societies, summer schools, and, in the last decades of the century, the major universities.

The turn to idealism was a reaction against the materialism, individualism, empirical positivism, and utilitarian hedonism that dominated British and American philosophy during the first half of the nineteenth century, as none of these forms of thought were regarded as sufficient to tackle the social question or the Victorian crisis of faith. In contrast, idealist organicism pro-

vided an understanding of humans as social by nature, which meant that atomistic individualism was rejected and self-realization was regarded as intertwined with the common good. According to the idealist model of social Christianity, working for the good of one's community was often viewed as a religious cause. Overall, idealists sought to make their philosophy practically useful, which explains their preoccupation with topics like ethics and education. In addition to stressing the social value of Christianity, the idealist approach to theology was characterized by rejecting the antagonism between religion and science. Many idealists read Darwin through Hegel and found the former's processual view of nature to be compatible with the latter's processual view of reality. This is an example of how Anglo-American idealism hybridized with other schools of thought, giving cause to regard it as a tradition in constant transformation. Anglo-American idealism was never meant to be a mere "copy" of the German original.

The dismissal of the conflict between science and religion is related to the idealist aim to bring about a unity between all forms of experience—most notably philosophy, science, religion, and aesthetics. In contrast to the empiricists, the idealists held experience to include more than sensory data; mind, body, sense, reason, and emotion were all part of experience, and the division between the experiencing subject and the experienced object was blurred. All these aspects were central components of the idealist thought style, which I have argued influenced Dewey and Collingwood throughout their lives, even though they revised and rejected certain features of idealism, most notably the transcendental, theological, and absolutistic aspects. Instead, they stressed idealism's practical, social, historicist, and humanist qualities.

Both Dewey and Collingwood were socialized into the idealist tradition. Once an absolutist, Dewey began calling himself an experimental idealist in 1893, as he came to regard transcendentalism as incompatible with modern science. Nor was transcendentalism necessary for Dewey's aim of making philosophy practical and socially useful. That said, Dewey's ethical and sociopolitical thought was highly influenced by the social liberal tradition established by T. H. Green and remained so throughout his life. Dewey also found early inspiration in the St. Louis Hegelians W. T. Harris and Thomas Davidson, both of whom had a conception of philosophy very

much like the neo-humanist's idea of *Bildung*, which in Dewey's vocabulary became "growth of experience." The emphasis on philosophy's practical usefulness that Dewey found in Hegel and Green soon led him to pragmatism under the influence of William James. Pragmatism should not be regarded as a break with his earlier philosophy, however, but as a continuous development. The Hegelian attempt to unify opposites remained with Dewey throughout his career, as did social Christianity and the notion of philosophy as *Bildung*. Dewey's aesthetics and philosophy of history also show a similarity to those of interwar-era idealists like Croce and Collingwood, indicating an overlap between idealism and pragmatism.

Collingwood was never as keen as Dewey to incorporate the results from natural sciences such as psychology and biology into philosophy. While he thought all forms of experience (or knowledge) made up a unity, he was much more careful than Dewey to show not only their relations and connections, but also how they differed. Like Dewey, Collingwood's political viewpoint was essentially the idealistic liberalism of T. H. Green, although he was not nearly as radical as Dewey. Collingwood, again like Dewey, embraced a Hegelian process metaphysics which directed him toward a historical understanding of human nature and reality. He also agreed that philosophy is not concerned with eternal problems, but begins and ends in human experience. Like Dewey and most Anglo-American idealists, Collingwood regarded Hegel's philosophy to be a development of Kant's; in contrast to most Anglo-American idealists, however, Collingwood was also influenced by the Italian idealists Croce, De Ruggiero, and Gentile, whom he had been directed toward by his teacher, J. A. Smith. This influence can be seen primarily in the fields of aesthetics and philosophy of history, with Collingwood viewing the purpose of art and history to be individual and collective self-knowledge and self-creation. This, I suggested, is one reason to interpret Collingwood as a philosopher of *Bildung*. Another reason for this interpretation can be found in *Speculum Mentis*, where Collingwood stresses the interconnectedness of the different forms of experience—art, religion, science, history, and philosophy—and argues that they constantly interact but occupy different places in one's life over time.

In Chapter 3, I argued that *crisis imaginary* is a useful analytical concept to apply to particularly apocalyptic periods, such as the early twentieth

century and, mainly, the interwar era. In such periods, the search for new forms of thought and action becomes intensified, and old thought styles (in this case idealism) are regarded as outdated. In Anglo-America, idealism was associated with Victorian ideals and values, which were replaced with a modernist culture in the early twentieth century. This was one aspect of idealism's decline, but its downturn is also tied to a general anti-German sentiment that spread throughout British and American culture. Because of its German background, idealism was thought to lead to militarism and violence by supporting doctrines such as "might is right." Even liberal Anglo-American idealists were accused of supporting these tenets, so it is not surprising that British new liberals like Hobson and Hobhouse—who were essentially followers of T. H. Green—were nevertheless outspoken anti-idealists. They showed that the idealist doctrines that had turned liberalism in a more social direction could be abandoned without affecting their political thought. But even non-idealist social liberals were fighting an uphill battle, since Enlightenment beliefs in progress, reason, democracy, and public debate that had been central to nineteenth century liberals were under attack.

Another charge raised against idealism was that it was unscientific and unable to incorporate findings from the natural sciences. Its broad cultural approach to philosophy did not mesh well with the ongoing move toward scientific professionalization and specialization. Philosophers who would become known as "analytical" attacked the metaphysical, theological, synthetical, and coherentist aspects of idealism. Instead, they relied on methodological individualism and atomism, and regarded the purpose of philosophy to be the verification of propositions and analysis of language. The analysts aimed to find a secure ground for knowledge, an endeavor that should be understood as an answer to the crises of the time, which led to a sense of insecurity and fear of moral and epistemological relativism. In analytical philosophy we find a thought style very much in contrast to that of the idealists.

We also saw in Chapter 3 that Dewey and Collingwood were affected by the crisis imaginary but responded to it differently than the analytical philosophers. Both regarded historical and practical forms of thought as solutions, and stressed the necessity of understanding both politics and

philosophy in terms of method. They were critical of the predominance of formal logic and epistemology in philosophy and feared that too much professionalization and specialization would turn philosophy away from everyday human life. Dewey, however, emphasized the social and material aspects of the crisis to a much greater extent than Collingwood: providing everyone with a material basis and spreading education and science across society were his solutions. He was convinced that scientific inquiry could contribute to progress, but only if guided by human needs and values, not economic profit. A recurring theme is that Dewey always traces different crises to a set of dualisms that reinforce the division of humans into cliques and classes, such as those between mind and body, theory and practice, and individual and society. Criticizing these dualisms is therefore a main focus in Dewey's philosophy.

In contrast to Dewey, Collingwood has little to say about the material aspects of the crisis, and unlike Dewey, he did not participate in contemporary political debates or organizations. For Collingwood, neglect of art, history, and metaphysics means that self-knowledge becomes impossible, which leads to forgetfulness of what civilization is and why it is worth fighting for. He regards amusement and realist philosophy to be (implicitly) on the same side as the "barbarians" in the battle against civilization. This analysis, of course, lacks nuance and precision. Collingwood's tendency to regard social and political conflicts as the result of bad (philosophical) thinking leads him to overstate the importance of his own views on art, history, religion, philosophy, and science. Like the critics of Prussianism, Dewey included, Collingwood overemphasizes the connection between philosophy and politics. The fact that idealists historically have been conservatives, liberals, fascists, and communists should make us seriously doubt that certain philosophical doctrines lead to certain political views. This is, of course, an important point to keep in mind in contemporary philosophical analysis.

Chapter 4 argued that unity was a central characteristic of the idealist thought style that marks a sharp contrast to the atomism and methodological individualism of analytical philosophy. Here my foremost contribution to previous research was to provide a typology of four interrelated kinds of unity: unity of experience, unity in diversity, unity of opposites,

and social unity. I argued that Dewey and Collingwood, like most (Anglo-American) idealists, embraced these notions. I also aimed to show that unity was not only a topic that occupied idealists, but that it appeared in many different guises in culture, politics, and science. I was able to merely provide a sketch of a synchronic conceptual history of unity (and its partner concepts) during the period of this study's concern, but tentatively suggested that we should consider whether a holistic turn might have taken place. This is a topic that could be studied in much more depth, and a conceptual history of holism that continues to the present would be illuminating. Today, we have holistic medicine, therapy, massage, education, and such—what does a "holistic coach" even do?—but also holistic debates of an existential magnitude concerning the interrelatedness of humans, other species, and the planet that cannot be ignored by any philosopher who wishes to address the current "unity" of things. A conceptual history of holism (and its partner concepts) could possibly help us understand why we are so obsessed with unities and what the perceived danger of fragmentation and mechanization really consists of. What issues are holism of different types aimed to solve? Are there connections between holistic views in different fields of science, or politics, art, and philosophy? Are there potential dangers in holistic thinking? Could it, for example, be used by anti-democratic movements?

The notion of unity and experience is related to the idealists' process metaphysics and their broad notion of philosophy as a form of cultural criticism involving history, science, religion, and aesthetics. The focus on unity also stresses the anti-dualistic aspect of idealist philosophy, which led to a rejection of any strict separation between the individual and society, theory and practice, fact and value, and so on. While idealism's critics often regarded the idealists to be "monists" and to regard the parts as predetermined by the whole to which they belong, we saw that this is a simplified picture. In fact, many (Anglo-American) idealists embraced unity in diversity, and merely stressed the interconnectedness between individual parts, and parts and whole, without subordinating the parts to the whole.

The last analytical chapter (Chapter 5) aimed to problematize the historical relation between idealism and pragmatism through a comparative close reading of Dewey's and Collingwood's conceptions to philosophy. Here I

chose to focus on the historical, humanistic, and practical aspects of their thought. In contrast to the common view of Collingwood as an anti-naturalist, I argued that he was only opposed to strong methodological naturalism. As an attempt to nuance the picture of Dewey as a naturalist, I argued that he is merely a weak epistemological and a weak metaphysical naturalist. Collingwood's and Dewey's views on naturalism are therefore, in fact, compatible, and could possibly benefit from being combined.

I also discussed Dewey and Collingwood in relation to historicism, arguing that they both were historicist in the sense that they, inspired by Hegel, held reality and human nature to be historical. Although their philosophies of history differed from the German historicists of the nineteenth century, Dewey and Collingwood agreed that historical understanding was necessary in all forms of knowing. They also agreed that historiography should be presentist and involve subjective elements such as selection, criticism, and evaluation. Consequently, they believed that history must be problem-oriented and constantly needs to be rewritten from the perspective of the present, which is not to say that historiography is relativistic in the sense of "anything goes."

An important difference in their views on history, of course, is that Collingwood's thought on the subject is much more elaborated, and he has a clear idea of how historiography (and all human science) differs from natural science: namely that historiography studies the "insides" of events that are "re-enacted" in the historian's mind. Could pragmatist philosophers of history accept this principle? Whether or not, I believe Collingwood to be a valuable conversational partner for anyone who seeks to develop a pragmatist philosophy of history.

Chapter 5 then turned to Dewey's and Collingwood's ideas about praxis, where I challenged Collingwood's interpretation of pragmatism, which I argued was based on misunderstandings. I sought to show that he and Dewey agreed that philosophy begins from practical problems that arise in experience, and should aim to solve these problems and contribute to individual and collective self-understanding and guide human conduct. They were humanists in the sense that they regarded human welfare and growth (*Bildung*) to be the aim of philosophy, but also in the sense that they ascribed great value to humanistic subjects—most notably art and

aesthetics. I argued that both criticized the preoccupation with epistemology and formal logic in analytical philosophy and instead, according to the idealist ideal of unity of experience, regarded philosophy as a form of socially-engaged cultural criticism. Rather than focusing on "truth" as the end result of inquiry, Dewey and Collingwood concentrated on the broader notion of "meaning" process of philosophical inquiry. Interestingly, both regarded their philosophical methodologies to have parallels with the liberal and democratic political methods they supported, although they described their methods using different vocabularies. Collingwood considered his method to be dialectical, while Dewey relied on a scientific vocabulary and used terms like "intelligence" and "experimentalism," but also "communication" and "co-operation." Nevertheless, both sought principles that could help us identify which problems a philosopher should engage with, and how a philosophical inquiry should be carried out. They wanted philosophy to be socially engaged and a reconstructive form of cultural criticism rather than a narrow, specialized science—an ideal I believe has lasting value.

The growth, professionalization, and specialization of knowledge has continued far beyond what Dewey or Collingwood could possibly have imagined. This development, of course, has its pros and cons. Unlike what Dewey naively imagined, the last decade has revealed that improved communication tools do not necessarily strengthen democracies, but can, in fact, be used to tear them down. Unlike what Collingwood pessimistically imagined, amusement and realistic philosophy have not destroyed civilization. My point is that the threats and challenges we face today are rather different than those Dewey and Collingwood confronted, and some of their analyses and solutions have no bearing on today's world. It would, however, be contrary to their philosophical ideals to apply their thought outside its context. For while both urge us to look at the past to understand the present, they also urge us to constantly rethink problems from our own perspective. They provide us with a still relevant conception of philosophy as a broad, synthetic, situated, and reconstructive form of cultural criticism committed to the common good that might help us rethink the purpose and process of the humanities. It is my belief that their criticisms of the dualisms between fact and value, the individual and society, theory and

practice, and philosophy and history are of lasting value, as is their insistence on the interconnectedness of different fields of knowledge or forms of experience, and their firm belief that research must be evaluated according to its contributions to the common good, and not merely to academia. While we need not be idealists (or pragmatists) to embrace their conception of philosophy, we should recognize its idealist heritage.[669]

As a researcher, it is certainly easy to become prey to professionalization and lose oneself in narrow subjects of interest to no one outside a limited research community. While this study arguably is rather narrow, the process of writing this thesis has helped me better understand what I want intellectual history and the humanities to be like, and I hope the study has led my readers to reflect on these issues as well. Should historiography seek to have practical significance for the present? If not, what does the value of history, philosophy, and the other human sciences consist of? These questions are undeniably important, and I will conclude by providing one example from an exciting field of research where a rapprochement between Dewey and Collingwood could help us address such questions.

Recent discussions of the "post-narrativist philosophy of history" have indicated that a rapprochement between Dewey and Collingwood could provide fuel for this promising development in historical theory. In contrast to the narrativism and emphasis on the "practical past" of Hayden White and the "presence theory" promoted by Frank Ankersmit and Eelco Runia, Jonas Ahlskog has argued that a Collingwoodian philosophy of

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669 A recent work that provides a good example of how the idealist tradition and thought style lives on and continues to be reinvented is Martin Hägglund's *This Life*. While neither Dewey, Collingwood, nor Anglo-American idealists figure in Hägglund's book, he draws on a humanistic reading of Hegel (and Marx), and takes as a starting point the fact that humans are temporal and "spiritual" in the sense that we, unlike other animals, can decide what we should do with the limited time that has been given us. Here we see a parallel to the humanistic and existential starting point of Dewey's and Collingwood's philosophy. Like the idealists, Hägglund does not draw any sharp distinctions between philosophy, literature, and religion. Even as an atheist, he finds existential insights in Saint Augustine and Sören Kierkegaard. Hägglund's political views are similar to Dewey's and his notion of "secular faith" is similar to Dewey's "democratic faith." His approach to philosophy is very much like the socially-engaged reconstructive cultural criticism one finds in Collingwood and Dewey. Martin Hägglund, *This Life: Secular Faith and Spiritual Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 2019).

history provides an approach to the past that simultaneously does justice to scientific historiography ("the historical past") and our existential, ethical, and practical needs in relation to history ("the practical past"). According to Ahlskog, Collingwood helps us see that while it is true that our understanding of the past is always mediated (or "prefigured," in White's vocabulary) and that we never can understand the past *in itself*, we can, nevertheless, understand it from the perspective of past agents. This is Collingwood's principle of "re-enactment," by which he captures how a scientific approach to historiography is possible in the first place.[670]

Similarly, Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen has criticized the narrativism of White and Ankersmit for privileging the aesthetic and rhetorical aspects of historiography and neglecting the epistemic. Kuukkanen, who was discussed in the introduction to this study, suggests that Dewey's notion of "warranted assertion" from his *Logic* could help us bring the epistemic component back into historiography without falling into naive realistic representationalism. Historiography should, according to Kuukkanen, present epistemically justified arguments and theses about the past, not provide "true" representations of it. Like Dewey, Kuukkanen urges us to focus on the historiographical method (or "theory of inquiry") and not be too concerned with the end products, "objectivity" and "truth."[671]

Could Ahlskog's Collingwoodian approach to philosophy of history be combined with Kuukanen's Deweyan approach? I would like to think that my discussion in Chapter 5 shows that this would be fully possible. I am not entirely sure what the result would look like, but I think this question will be answered as the debate about the post-narrativist philosophy of history moves forward. In a few years' time, we might even realize that "pragmatist philosophy of history" is not only a less ugly name, but one that is more representative.

The post-narrativist philosophy of history, of course, positions itself against the post-structuralist narrativism that preceded it, and it is, I believe, not only in the field of philosophy of history that there is a need to

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670 I discussed this in the section "The Practical Past" in Chapter 5. See also: Ahlskog, *The Primacy of Method in Historical Research*, especially Chapters 4 and 5.

671 Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*; see especially Chapter 8.

leave certain aspects of post-structuralism behind as we search for new means of inquiry and criticism better attuned to present problems. In contrast to the modernist ideal of unity of experience and reconstruction stressed by Dewey and Collingwood, language and "deconstruction" has favorite themes among poststructuralist philosophers.[672] But rather than destabilizing established truths and binary opposition, we are today in need of tools to combat conspiracy theories and lies masked as "alternative facts," increasing socioeconomic gaps, and the ecological catastrophe that has led us into an unstable geological era that has become our new "meta-narrative," the Anthropocene.[673] Idealist themes like unity, synthesis, harmony, and wholeness seem unavoidable as our existence depends on our ability to work out a functioning relationship between ecology and the economy and between humanity, nature, and other species. While neither Collingwood nor Dewey will provide us with ready-made answers for how the humanities should meet such issues, I hope to have shown that they are worthy fellow travelers on the path towards a human science that fully integrates theory and practice, experience and nature, philosophy, and historiography.

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672 As one of Dewey's greatest admirers, Richard Rorty, sees it, the difference between the "classical pragmatism" of Dewey, Peirce, and James, and Rorty's own "neopragmatism," is that the latter has abandoned the notion of "experience" for "language." Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope* (London: Penguin, 1999), 24.

673 For discussions on Dewey's reconstructive philosophy as a better ideal than the deconstructive approach, see the essays R. W. Sleeper and Larry Hickman in *Philosophy and the Reconstruction of Culture: Pragmatic Essays after Dewey*, ed. John J. Stuhr (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1993). A valuable discussion of the Anthropocene from a philosophical point of view is Clive Hamilton, *Defiant Earth: The Fate of Humans in the Anthropocene* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017). For a thought-provoking discussion regarding the need to rethink criticism in the twenty-first century that parallels this discussion, see Bruno Latour, "Why has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," *Critical Inquiry* 30 (Winter 2004), 225–248.

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