Notes on R. G. Collingwood's *Principles of Art*

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Preface

I first read R. G. Collingwood's *Principles of Art* [3] in 1987/8, when a former art teacher of mine lent me his copy. The book immediately suggested a new way to read Plato's treatment of art in the *Republic.* I was drawn in.

I have read the book several times since. I write these notes primarily as an aid to my own understanding of the book. Secondarily, the notes may encourage others to either read the book, or else tell *me* what to read instead. The notes are a thorough revision and expansion of a version dated November 7, 2003.

Collingwood makes arguments about language and art. As a mathematician, I am familiar with a certain kind of argument. To me, what makes mathematics *possible* is that there are certain kinds of propositions, which can be justified by arguments that will be accepted by everybody who understands them. It may be argued that *every* proposition is such: anybody who *really* understands it will feel the same way about it. Indeed, Collingwood seems to argue this. But then it may be argued in response that 'real understanding' has been defined just to make the claim tautological.

Disagreements about the truth of a piece of mathematics are not *emotional*; it is understood that such disagreements should and *can* be resolved dispassionately. I do not speak here about whether a piece of mathematics is worth studying; only about whether it is correct.[1]

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[1] I recently spent an hour arguing with a student over his loss of one point out of five on an exam problem in number theory. The problem was to prove something, and the student's proof was littered with the arrow $\Rightarrow$, not used with any precise meaning except that of, 'The argument flows this way.' The student really resented losing the point. He said his teachers had used the arrow as he did. I said I had been taught the same way, by an otherwise-good teacher; but such use of the arrow is still bad style, unless one is writing $A \Rightarrow B$ to mean, not that A and B are true, and B is true *because* A is true, but that *if* A should happen to be true, then B will be true.

The student was from Tajikistan, and told me, when I asked, that he had attended an English-language high-school. As I said, he didn't like losing a point. He seemed at times to be making an effort to control his rage. In the end he had to submit to my authority, though he still said, 'OK, I see I shouldn't use the arrow that way. Can't you give me the point now?'

Mathematics is emotional. That student and others were also disturbed to lose points on the problem of finding a number k such that $0 \leqslant k < 409$ and $408! \equiv k \pmod{n}$, where $n = 1 + 2 + \cdots + 408$. What these students did was to show that *if* there was such a number k, then it must be 408. But they did not explicitly verify that this number did indeed meet the desired condition. Such verification is easy, and one student claimed it was implicit in what he had written; for he had written somewhere in his solution $408! \equiv 408 \pmod{409}$, and elsewhere $408! \equiv 408 \pmod{204}$, and these two statements implied $408! \equiv 408 \pmod{n}$, since $n = 204 \cdot 409$ and the factors were coprime. I said this was not good enough: the verification had to be explicit. This student was good-natured about it; but I'm not sure he didn't finally concede the point simply because I was the teacher, and not because he agreed with me.

So there are emotional disputes about the correctness of *written* mathematics! But there

This correctness is something that you can in principle work out for yourself; and once you do that, you know that everybody else will come to the same conclusion. In practice, you know that you can make mistakes, and you want others to check your work. But the conviction of others that an argument is true is no substitute for your *own* conviction.

In all of this, mathematics is apparently like nothing else. In Chapter 3, 'Proof', of his excellent book *Mathematics: A Very Short Introduction* [6, p. 40], Timothy Gowers argues:

> ...the fact that disputes can *in principle* be resolved does make mathematics unique. There is no mathematical equivalent of astronomers who still believe in the steady-state theory of the universe, or of biologists who hold, with great conviction, very different views about how much is explained by natural selection, or of philosophers who disagree fundamentally about the relationship between consciousness and the physical world, or of economists who follow opposing schools of thought such as monetarism and neo-keynesianism.

However, it is disappointing that Gowers here does not consider mathematics with respect to the so-called fine arts. Obviously there are disagreements about the novelists that are worth reading. My enjoyment of Collingwood's contemporary Somerset Maugham is personal; I don't expect others to get out of him what I do. On the other hand, when writers last, like Homer, there may be a reason.

I am still trying to figure out what to make of philosophical arguments like Collingwood's. I get a lot of enjoyment out of Collingwood. Summarizing him (as I do in these notes) feels like summarizing Plato (not to mention Maugham): it leaves out the personality. It leaves out the *poetry.* Like the characters of the Dialogues, Collingwood follows an argument where it goes. In his *Autobiography* [4, p. 57] he writes:

> This habit of following and taking part in discussions where both subject and method were other people's proved extremely valuable to me. I found it not only a delightful task, but a magnificent exercise, to follow the work of contemporary philosophers whose views differed widely from my own, to write essays developing their positions and applying them to topics they had not dealt with, to reconstruct their problems in my own mind, and to study, often with the liveliest admiration, the way in which they had tried to solve them.

I think *The Principles of Art* [3, p. 325] is not one of Collingwood's exercises, but represents what he really thinks. Still, one can read it as the trying out of an argument to see where it goes. If one wants to see if the argument really does go there, then perhaps nothing will do but to read Collingwood's argument

was no dispute that 408 was in fact a number k as desired.

itself. Summarizing another's argument can be done; Collingwood himself does it in his book; but here and there he acknowledges that he could be mistaken.

At the beginning of the last chapter of *The Principles of Art* (p. 325), Collingwood writes:

> My final question, then, is: how does the theory advanced in this book bear upon the present situation, and illuminate the path to be taken by artists in the immediate future?

The first part of the answer is, 'we must get rid of the conception of artistic ownership.' Indeed, Collingwood's own book has no copyright.

Beyond its Introduction, Collingwood's book comprises three Books:

I. Art and Not Art;
II. The Theory of Imagination;
III. The Theory of Art.

The purpose of the first book is to find out what we mean by the word 'art'—rather, what we are *trying* to mean: The word is to its proper meaning as a seagull to the deck of the ship it is hovering over. We want to induce the bird to settle on deck (p. 7).

The numbered Parts below correspond to Collingwood's Books. The further subdivisions in Part II correspond to Collingwood's chapters and sections, and they are numbered and named accordingly. It is this part that I have covered in the most detail, because here Collingwood himself most explicitly places his thought in a tradition that begins with Descartes. However, the last three sections of this part especially contain passionate writing, with examples and metaphors, to such an extent that summary seems especially misleading.

I do aim to speak in Collingwood's voice as I understand it, except between square brackets and in footnotes. Often Collingwood's own words are the best summary of what he has to say; then I quote these words.

Contents

Part I. Art and Not Art

Art is expression of emotion, effected by creation of an imaginary experience or activity. The creation is for ourselves, but may also be for others. The imaginary is not make-believe.

The artistic experience as such is not sensuous (p. 141): For example, the art in a painting is not to be found in the exciting quality of certain colors; the art in music is not to be found in the soothing timbre of certain instruments. In this way, listening to music as art is like listening to a scientific lecture (p. 140), in which the point is not the sound of the speaker's voice as such.[2]

Expression of emotion is not arousal of emotion, since emotions must exist before they can be expressed.

Craft is to be distinguished from art. Craft produces something to serve a purpose. It is also fulfilment of a plan. The plan is not the craft. Also, by the way, the plan is not primarily something written down: it is 'in the head'.

Whereas art—for example, a poem—can exist entirely in the head, being art nonetheless.

However, art may be joined with craft: craft is the making of a physical object, but emotion may be expressed through this making. For example (Book III, p. 309), the portrait-painter, hired to craft a likeness, may in painting come to some insight about the sitter and express this through painting. (But the sitter may then find the painting not to be what he had ordered.)

Part II. The Theory of Imagination

8. Thinking and Feeling

8.1. The Two Contrasted

We analyse experience into **thinking** and **feeling.**

1. The act of feeling is 'simple'; the act of thinking is 'bipolar', in that it can be done well or ill, successfully or unsuccessfully, and so on.

[2]However, in Book II (p. 267), an admittedly fantastic possibility is proposed: that, had another scientist been present when Archimedes lept from his bath crying 'Eureka', that scientist might have understood something about what Archimedes had found, without needing it explained. See § 11.8 below. (The story of Archimedes is told by Vitruvius, as quoted in the second of the two Loeb volumes of *Greek Mathematical Works* [11, pp. 36–9].)

2. What we feel (for example, coldness) is private; what we think (for example, that the temperature is 22° F) is public.
3. '[T]houghts can corroborate or contradict each other, but feelings cannot.'

Feelings flow like a river; thoughts are more lasting, like the river-bed.

'Words like thought, feeling, knowledge, experience have... a double-barrelled significance', referring both to an act and the object of the act.[3] The relation between act and object is not the same for thought and feeling.

8.2. Feeling

Feeling can be **sensation** or **emotion,** but the distinction is not that between two species of a genus (as it is between seeing and hearing, or anger and fear). An experience combines sensuous and emotional elements, but 'the sensation takes precedence of the emotion.' This precedence is not

1) temporal, or
2) causal, or
3) logical,

although a child may be frightened *because of* a red curtain. In a word, an emotion is the **'emotional charge'** on a sensation. Sensation here is not the act, but what is felt: the **sensum.**

Probably every sensum has an emotional charge; but we are in the habit of 'sterilizing' sensa. This was not always so: consider the color-symbolism of the Middle Ages.

'Feeling appears to arise in us independently of all thinking, ... it is a foundation upon which the rational part of our nature is built'. Thus we may speak of 'levels of experience'. The level of mere feeling will be called the **psychic** level. This alludes to a distinction between psyche (or soul) and spirit, corresponding to that between feeling and thinking.[4] '[T]hought... brings with it new orders

[3] I introduce the word *object;* Collingwood just refers to the activity of thinking as opposed to what we think, and so on.

[4] Collingwood seems never to refer to spirit again.

of emotions', but these will not be called feelings.[5]

8.3. Thinking

'In its primary form, thought seems to be exclusively concerned with' feeling. In thinking, 'we are becoming aware, by an act of attention, of certain feelings which at the moment we have; and we are going on to think of these as standing in certain relations to other feelings, remembered as past or imagined as possible.' This is true for both 'It is hot' and 'That is my hat.'

In its secondary form, thought is about thoughts.[6] Some standard terms referring:

[5]Under *Psyche* and *Psychic,* the OED [10] suggests that the distinction between psyche and spirit is developed by Paul from a distinction in Jewish thought. Collingwood is presumably aware of this (he gives hints here and there of being a serious Christian). The reference is to I Cor. 2:14:

> ψυχικὸς δὲ ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ...ὅτι πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται. [1]

> But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God...because they are spiritually discerned (KJV [2]),

where 'natural' translates ψυχικός (and 'spirit', πνεῦμα); in the RSV [9], 'natural' becomes a footnote to the main translation, 'unspiritual'. See also 15:44–5:

> σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν. εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πευματικόν. οὕτως καί γέγραπται, Ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ είς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζῳοποιοῦν.

> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit. [KJV]

> It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. [RSV]

According to Collingwood (p. 171 n.), the word 'psychology' was created in the sixteenth century to designate an empirical science of feeling. In the nineteenth century, some people tried to expand the meaning to include an empirical science of thought. But there is no such science—there is only a pseudo-science—because of the bipolarity of thought mentioned above. Sciences of thought must be normative or 'criteriological'; examples include logic and ethics.

The OED at *Psychology* is more or less consistent with Collingwood's dates. It says that creation of the word 'psychologia' is attributed to Melanchthon in sixteenth-century Germany, but that the word is not much used in modern languages until the 19th century. In 1682, one Thomas Govan, in Latin, makes the following classification of *physica* (natural science):

- *somatologia* or *physiologia*
- *pneumatologia*
  - *theologia*
  - *angelographia* (including *demonologia*)
  - *psychologia*

In *The Idea of History* [5, pp. 1 f.], Collingwood calls psychology the 'science of mind' and says that it 'treats mind in just the same way that biology treats life.'

[6]Again in *The Idea of History* [5, p. 2], Collingwood refers to psychology as 'thought of the first degree'.

1) to primary or first-order thought are *understanding* and *science*;
2) to secondary or second-order thought, *reason* and *philosophy.*

All knowledge is derived from experience, 'as anybody can see' (p. 167). Here experience includes experience of thinking. It is 'philosophical jargon' to restrict the meaning of experience to sensuous experience. When one makes this restriction, then two mystifications may arise:

1) Kant's, that thoughts of the second order are known independently of experience;
2) that of 'some modern philosophers', that thoughts of the second order are about nothing but words.

In short, a paralogism arises:[7]

1. Knowledge is derived from experience [in the broad sense].
2. A thought is not an experience [in the narrow sense].
3. Second-order thought is knowledge, if at all, only 'in a different and mysterious sense of the word'.

8.4. The Problem of Imagination

Thought establishes relations amongst feelings. But this point will need further investigation, because feelings, as such, flow; they need to be retained to be related to one another. 'The difficulty is concealed, in current philosophical works. . . by the adoption of' terms like

1) 'sense-data' for sensa,
2) 'acquaintance' for our relation to our sensa,
3) 'appealing' to sense-data for how we test the truth of an empirical proposition.

The terminology must refer to something different from sensa, namely what Hume called **ideas** as distinct from **impressions.**[8] The activity of mind correl-

[7] I introduce the term *paralogism,* taking it from Kant, who gives his own example in the *Critique of Pure Reason* [8, B 410–11]:

> The procedure of rational psychology is governed by a paralogism, which is exhibited through the following syllogism:
>
> **What cannot be thought otherwise than as subject does not exist otherwise than as subject, and is therefore substance.**
>
> **Now a thinking being, considered merely as such, cannot be thought otherwise than as subject.**
>
> **Therefore it also exists only as such a thing, i.e., as substance.**
>
> The major premise talks about a being that can be thought of in every respect, and consequently even as it might be given in intuition. But the minor premise talks about this being only insofar as it is considered as subject, relative only to thinking and the unity of consciousness, but not at the same time in relation to the intuition through which it is given as an object for thinking. Thus the conclusion is drawn *per Sophisma figurae dictionis,* hence by means of a deceptive inference.

[8] Here *impression* appears to be a feeling at stage 1 as described in § 10.6 below. The present passage is Collingwood's first reference to Hume. As Collingwood will refer to Hume often,

ative to ideas in this sense is **imagination:** this is Aristotle's φαντασία, Kant's 'blind but indispensible faculty' linking sensation and understanding. Imagination 'deserves... a more thorough study than it has yet received'.

9. Sensation and Imagination

9.1. Terminology

There is a common-sense distinction—albeit an obscure one—between **really sensing** and **imagining.** Here 'real' is not as opposed to unreal, but is as used in the phrase 'real property'.

9.2. History of the Problem: Descartes to Locke

Medieval philosophers assumed 'sensation in general gives us real acquaintance with the real world;' this was undermined by 16th-century sceptics.

Descartes 'did not deny that there was such a thing as real sensation; what he denied was that we could distinguish it by any test short of mathematical reasoning from imagination.'

Hobbes denied the distinction between real sensation and imagination.

Spinoza agrees, saying 'that all sensation is imagination'. For him, *imaginatio* is not a mode of thought; imaginations contain no truth or error.

For Leibniz, sensa are ideas, but 'essentially confused' ideas.

'It is only with Locke (*Essay* II. XXX) that an attempt is made to distinguish "real ideas" from "fantastical" '—but not to distinguish real from imaginary sensa; for him they are all real. Only 'certain complex ideas' are fantastical, namely

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I quote the relevant passage, from the beginning of *A Treatise of Human Nature* [7] (in fact I take the text from `http://www.class.uidaho.edu/mickelsen/ToC/humetreatiseToC.htm` November 30, 2010, but I correct the typography according to the print version):

> ALL the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS. The difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness. Those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name *impressions*; and under this name I comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul. By *ideas* I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning; such as, for instance, are all the perceptions excited by the present discourse, excepting only those which arise from the sight and touch, and excepting the immediate pleasure or uneasiness it may occasion. I believe it will not be very necessary to employ many words in explaining this distinction. Every one of himself will readily perceive the difference betwixt feeling and thinking. The common degrees of these are easily distinguished; tho' it is not impossible but in particular instances they may very nearly approach to each other. Thus in sleep, in a fever, in madness, or in any very violent emotions of soul, our ideas may approach to our impressions, As on the other hand it sometimes happens, that our impressions are so faint and low, that we cannot distinguish them from our ideas. But notwithstanding this near resemblance in a few instances, they are in general so very different, that no-one can make a scruple to rank them under distinct heads, and assign to each a peculiar name to mark the difference.

those 'which the mind "makes to itself".' Locke could have developed from this, but did not develop, the theory whereby **introspection** serves to distinguish real from imaginary sensa.

9.3. Berkeley: the Introspection Theory

Berkeley distinguishes **ideas of sense** from **ideas of imagination,** borrowing the terms from Malebranche. But Malebranche explains the distinction through physiology, while ordinary people are aware of the distinction without physiology or any other theory.

Berkeley says 'the ideas of Sense are more strong, lively, and distinct than those those of the Imagination.' This could be a distinction

1) between real and imaginary sensa—in which case real sounds would be louder than imaginary—or
2) between the act of real sensation and the act of imagination—in which case 'a real sound is heard whether we will or no, whereas an imaginary one can be summoned up, banished, or replaced by another at will... it is a difference appreciable not by the ear, but by the reflective or introspective consciousness'.

The latter position is Berkeley's, but is not tenable, because there is 'the hallucination of mental disease', and even healthy people sometimes cannot control imaginary sights and sounds (as after a horrible accident).[9]

9.4. Berkeley: the Relation Theory

Berkeley's alternative theory is that real sensa are related to one another by the laws of nature, while ideas of imagination are **wild.** But they are not. One might say they obey the laws of psychology; but then how do we distinguish laws of nature (that is, physics) from laws of psychology, unless we can already distinguish real sensation from imagination?

9.5. Hume

Hume sees the problem, so he reverts to the introspection theory. In particular, **ideas** differ from **impressions** only in degree, not in nature.[10] So the difference is between, not sensa, but sensations.

Hume recognizes that there are exceptional cases when 'our ideas conform to the definition he has given of impressions'. But to recognize exceptions is to appeal to the (rejected) relation theory.

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[9] See also § 10.1 and note 11 there.
[10] Hume refers to 'degrees' twice in the passage quoted in note 8.

‘It was Kant who first showed that progress in the science of human nature must come, like progress in any other science, by taking exceptions seriously’.

9.6. Kant

For Kant, reality is a category of the understanding [8, B 106]—of primary thought.

‘According to Berkeley, the “laws of nature” are without exception learned from “experience”; that is, they are all empirical laws, laws of the first order... Hume tentatively, and Kant more explicitly, attacked this doctrine, and showed that these first-order laws implied second-order laws, which Kant called “principles of the understanding”.’ Some sensa may be wild, relatively to first-order laws; but they cannot be so, relatively to the second-order laws, since ‘It is a principle of the understanding that every event must have a cause.’ A real sensum is therefore one that has been interpreted by the understanding.

9.7. ‘Illusory Sensa’

We should still consider whether the common-sense distinction between real and imaginary sensa. There is no **class** of illusory sensa, but any sensum is illusory if we make a mistake in relating it with other sensa.

9.8. ‘Appearances’ and ‘Images’

Using words like **appearance** and **image** (as in, parallel railway lines appear [look] convergent, or they converge in the image) is just an attempt to project our mistakes in interpretation onto sensa themselves.

The use of the word *image* suggests the analogy

$$\text{sensum} : \text{body} :: \text{photograph} : \text{object}.$$

But both the photograph (or drawing) and the object are present to us as two things; the image of the railway lines, and the lines themselves, are not.

9.9. Conclusion

Sensa are:

1) real, if correctly interpreted;
2) illusory, if wrongly interpreted;
3) imaginary, if not interpreted at all.

10. Imagination and Consciousness

10.1. Imagination as Active

The introspection theory—having germs in Locke, clearly stated by Berkeley, used fundamentally by Hume—was rejected only because of hallucinations and *idées fixes.* Still it does appear that 'imagination contrasts with sensation as something active with something passive'. That this is often taken for granted is shown by the popularity of the term *sense-datum,* for something *given* in sensation. But the meaning of **give** here is not one of the usual meanings:

1) transfer ownership of,
2) allow in an argument.

The distinction between imagination and sensation seems to be like that between making something for oneself and receiving it as a present. It is not:

1) 'a distinction between activity and passivity as such. Sensation itself is an activity';
2) 'a distinction among passivities... according as they are done to us by external bodies impinging on our own, or by changes arising in our own organism, as Malebranche maintained', since sensation too involves changes in our organism;
3) 'a distinction among activities... between those we do of our own choice and those we cannot help doing', since some imaginations are harder to stop than sensations.[11]

Still, 'In some sense or other, imagination is more free than sensation.' But 'even imagination is not free in the way in which the conscious carrying-out of an intention is free; the freedom it possesses is not the freedom of choice'. With respect to freedom, there is a sequence:

1) feeling,
2) imagination,
3) thought.

10.2. The Traditional Confusion of Sense with Imagination

'As soon as the act [of sensing it] is over, the sensum has vanished, never to return. Its *esse* is *sentire.*

'Objection may easily be raised to this last phrase as an overstatement... "what could be more absurd than to argue that, because we have stopped seeing it, the colour has ceased to exist?"... The objection is an excellent example of "metaphysics" in the sense in which that word has at various times become a term of merited abuse...

[11] Collingwood's example, mentioned earlier (§ 9.3), is 'the frightful accident which one saw yesterday'; but another example might be the *earworm.*

‘The error dates back to Locke…“Let us suppose the Mind to be, as we say, White Paper, void of all characters, without any Ideas; how comes it to be furnished?”…The answer is given by stating the doctrine of ideas, with their two classes, ideas of sensation and ideas of reflection…[However,] sensation “furnishes” the mind with nothing whatever…

‘It was Hume who first perceived the problem, and tried to solve it by distinguishing ideas from impressions…But because he was not able…to give a satisfactory account of this difference…philosophers…lose sight of his partial but very real achievement’.

10.3. Impressions and Ideas

There must be a distinction between ‘real’ colors (for example) and ‘imaginary’ colors, the latter including colors that *would be* or *have been* perceived. Otherwise nobody could talk about relations between sensa. ‘There must…be a form of experience other than sensation, but closely related to it…¶ This…is what we ordinarily call imagination.’ It remains to be seen how this relates to imagination in the sense of § 9.9.

‘It was in order to distinguish [imagination] from sensation that Hume distinguished ideas from impressions’.

10.4. Attention

In order to think about sensa, we first must *attend* to them: we must apply **attention**—also called **consciousness** or **awareness** (p. 206). ‘Seeing and hearing are species of sensation; looking and listening are the corresponding species of attention.’ Attention to a red patch **divides** this from the rest of the visual field; but to **abstract** the redness is done not by attention but by *thinking.*

‘At the merely psychical level, the distinction between conscious and unconscious does not exist.’ Consciousness changes the character of our psychical activities (which are called by Descartes ‘using his senses’, and by Professor Alexander[12] ‘enjoying ourselves’). Therefore we cannot study psychical experience by enquiring of consciousness.

Behaviorism identifies the psychical with the physiological, but this implies that we must already have independent knowledge of psychical experience.

We have this knowledge by analysing the object of consciousness into sensum *and* sensation. The *con-* of *consciousness* may be taken as implying this dual object.

[12]In Collingwood’s index he is S. Alexander, that is, Samuel Alexander, author of *Beauty and other Forms of Value,* which Collingwood refers to elsewhere in the book.

10.5. The Modification of Feeling by Consciousness

'Colour or anger, which is no longer merely seen or felt but attended to, is still colour or anger... But the total experience of seeing or feeling it has undergone a change... This is the change which Hume describes by speaking of the difference between an impression and an idea.'

Consciousness is not a response to a stimulus; it is absolutely autonomous. But the conscious being, as such, *must* decide which feeling to attend to. This is *not* a choosing between alternatives (this would imply having already attended to the feelings to be chosen among).

Consciousness is a domination of feelings by a self that was formerly dominated by them. Thus consciousness causes feelings to become domesticated, less violent. Feelings (including sensa) can then be perpetuated at will. 'Memory... is perhaps only fresh attention to the traces of a sensuous-emotional experience which has not entirely passed away.'

10.6. Consciousness and Imagination

Philosophers want 'not only to recall sensa which are vanishing, but to envisage others which have never been present to them'. This is done not by consciousness alone, but also intellect; how this is done is beyond the scope of the book.

We have to account for the two different ways (in this chapter and the last) of distinguishing impressions and ideas. A feeling may pass through three stages:

1) as bare feeling, below the level of consciousness;
2) as a feeling of which we are conscious;
3) as a feeling placed in relation to others.

Here, stage 2 corresponds to Hume's *idea,* while Hume's *impression* is either 1 or 3, depending on whether we consider it as in this chapter or the previous one.[13] Hume failed to see the difference.

10.7. Consciousness and Truth

'The activity of consciousness, we have seen, converts impression into idea, that is, crude sensation into imagination.' What effects the conversion is **consciousness;** what undergoes it, **imagination.**

Consciousness is thought; it is just not yet **intellect**. As thought, it has the properties described in [§ 8.1]. In particular, it can err,[14] not 'by referring things to the wrong concepts', but by disowning the feeling attended to. 'We cannot see our way to dominate it, and shrink from persevering in the attempt.' This is **corruption of consciousness.** We may attribute the disowned experience

[13] But see § 8.4 and note 8 there.

[14] Collingwood does not here consider the other distinguishing features of thought in § 8.1: the 'publicity' of thought and the possibility of corroboration or contradiction.

(perhaps crossness, a being out of temper) to other people. The psychologists have the term **repression** for the disowning, and **projection** for the ascription to others.

'Spinoza... expounded better than any other man the conception of a truthful consciousness and its importance as a foundation for a healthy mental life... As soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of a passion, it ceases to be a passion.'

The untruth of a corrupt consciousness is not an error or a lie (this distinction lies at the intellectual level). It is an **evil,** but not differentiated into disease or wrong-doing.

10.8. Summary

'All thought presupposes feeling; and all the propositions which express the results of our thoughts belong to one of two types: they are either statements about feelings, in which case they are called empirical, or statements about the procedure of thought itself, in which case the are called *a priori*...

'Feeling proper, or psychical experience, has a double character: it is sensation and emotion... feeling proper is an experience in which what we now feel monopolizes the whole field of our view.'

To relate a feeling to others, to even tell what I feel now, requires the feeling to 'cease to be mere feeling and enter upon a new stage of its existence.

'This new stage is reached not by some process antecedent to the act of attention, but by that act itself.' Attention, theoretically, enlarges our field of view to include the act of feeling; practically, it is how we dominate our feelings. Impressions of sense become ideas of imagination.

'That which tames [imagination] is the activity of consciousness, and this is a kind of thought.

'Specifically, it is the kind of thought which stands closest to sensation or mere feeling. Every further development of thought is based upon it'. Such developments include

1) 'consider[ing] likenesses and differences between feelings,
2) 'classify[ing] them
3) 'or group[ing] them in other kinds of arrangements than classes,
4) 'envisag[ing] them as arranged in a time-series'.

However, 'Consciousness itself does not do any of these things.' If two ideas are summoned up, they fuse into one.

'To form an idea of a feeling is already to feel it in imagination. Thus imagination is "blind"... The freedom which it enjoys is not the freedom to carry out a plan, or to choose between alternative possible plans. These are developments belonging to a later stage.

'To the same later stage belongs the distinction between truth and error, regarded as the distinction between true and false accounts of the relations between things.' But consciousness can err by being **corrupt.**

11. Language

11.1. Language and expression

'**Language** comes into existence with imagination, as a feature of experience at the conscious level...

'...It is an imaginative activity whose function is to express emotion. Intellectual language is this same thing intellectualized, or modified so as to express thought.'

A **symbol** is established by agreement; but this agreement is established in a language that already exists. In this way, intellectualized language 'presupposes imaginative language or language proper...in the traditional theory of language these relations are reversed, with disastrous results.'

Children do *not* learn to speak by being shown things while their names are uttered; or if they do, it is because (unlike, say, cats) they already understand the language of pointing and naming. The child may be accustomed to hearing 'Hatty off!' when its bonnet is removed; then the child may exclaim 'Hattiaw!' when it removes its own bonnet and throws it out of the perambulator. The exclamation is not a symbol, but an expression of satisfaction at removing the bonnet.

11.2. Psychical Expression

More primitive than linguistic expression is **psychical expression:** 'the doing of involuntary and perhaps even wholly unconscious bodily acts [such as grimacing], related in a peculiar way to the emotions [such as pain] they are said to express.' A single experience can be analyzed:

1) sensum (as an abdominal gripe), or the field of sensation containing this;
2) the emotional charge on the sensum (as visceral pain);
3) the psychical expression (as the grimace).

We can observe and interpret psychical expressions intellectually. But there is the possibility of **emotional contagion,** or **sympathy,** whereby expressions can also be sensa for others, with their own emotional charges. Examples are the spread of panic through a crowd, or a dog's urge to attack the person who is afraid of it (or the cat that runs from it).

Psychical emotions can be expressed only psychically. But there are **emotions of consciousness** (as hatred, love, anger, shame): these are the emotional charges, not on sensa, but on modes of consciousness, which can be expressed in language *or* psychically. Expressed psychically, they have the same analysis as psychical emotions; for example,

1) ‘consciousness of our own inferiority,
2) ‘shame,
3) ‘blushing.’

Shame is *not* the emotional charge on the sensa associated with blushing. ‘The common-sense view [that we blush because we are ashamed] is right, and the James–Lange theory is wrong.’[15]

Emotions of consciousness can be expressed in two different ways because, more generally, a ‘higher level [of experience] differs from the lower in having a new principle of organization; this does not supersede the old, it is superimposed on it. The lower type of experience is perpetuated in the higher type’ somewhat as matter is perpetuated, even with a new form.

‘A mode of consciousness like shame is thus, formally, a mode of consciousness and nothing else; materially, it is a constellation or synthesis of psychical experiences.’ But consciousness is ‘an activity by which those elements are combined in this particular way.’ It is not just a new arrangement of those elements—otherwise the sensa of which shame is the emotional charge would have been obvious, and the James–Lange theory would not have needed to arise.

‘[E]ach new level [of experience] must organize itself according to its own principles before a transition can be made to the next’. Therefore, to move beyond consciousness to intellect, ‘emotions of consciousness must be formally or linguistically expressed, not only materially or psychically expressed’.

11.3. Imaginative Expression

Psychical expression is uncontrollable. At the level of awareness, expressions are experienced ‘as activities belonging to ourselves and controlled in the same sense as the emotions they express.

‘Bodily actions expressing certain emotions, insofar as they come under our control and are conceived by us in our awareness of controlling them, as our way of expressing these emotions, are language.’

‘[A]ny theory of language must begin here.’

The controlled act of expression is materially the same as psychical expression; the difference is just that it is done ‘on purpose’.

‘[T]he conversion of impression into idea by the work of consciousness immensely multiplies the emotions that demand expression.’

‘There are no unexpressed emotions.’ What are so called are emotions, already expressed at one level, of which somebody is trying to become conscious.

[15]From Wikipedia `http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James-Lange_theory`, November 30, 2010:

> The theory states that within human beings, as a response to experiences in the world, the autonomic nervous system creates physiological events such as muscular tension, a rise in heart rate, perspiration, and dryness of the mouth. Emotions, then, are feelings which come about as a result of these physiological changes, rather than being their cause.

Corresponding to the series of sensum, emotional charge, psychical expression (as in red color, fear, start), we have, say,

1) bonnet removal,
2) feeling of triumph,
3) cry of ‘Hattiaw!’

The child *imitates* the speech of others only when it realizes that they are speaking.

11.4. Language and Languages

Language need not be spoken by the tongue.

‘[T]here is no way of expressing the same feeling in two different media.’

However, ‘each one of us, whenever he expresses himself, is doing so with his whole body’, in the ‘original language of total bodily gesture’—this is the ‘motor side’ of the ‘total imaginative experience’ identified as art proper in Book I.

11.5. Speaker and Hearer

A child’s first utterances are not addressed to anybody. But a speaker is always conscious of himself as speaking, so he is a also a listener.[16]

The *origin* of self-consciousness will not be discussed. However, ‘Consciousness does not begin as a mere self-consciousness… the consciousness of our own existence is also consciousness of the existence of’ other persons. These persons could be cats or trees or shadows: as a form of thought, consciousness can make mistakes [§ 10.7].

In speaking, we do not exactly *communicate* an emotion to a listener. To do this would be to cause the listener to have a similar emotion; but to compare the emotions, we would need language.

The single experience of expressing emotion has two parts: the emotion, and the controlled bodily action expressing it. This union of idea with expression can be considered from two points of view:

1) we can express what we feel only because we know it;
2) we know what we feel because we can express it.

‘The person to whom speech is addressed is already familiar with this double situation’. He ‘takes what he hears exactly as if it were speech of his own… and this constructs in himself the idea which those words express.’ But he attributes the idea to the speaker.

This does not *presuppose* community of language; it *is* community of language. If the hearer is to understand the speaker though, he must have enough experience to have the impressions from which the ideas of the speaker are derived.

[16] Collingwood’s footnote to the section title is ‘In this section, whatever is said of speech is meant of language in general.’

However, *mis*understanding may be the fault of the speaker, if his consciousness is corrupt.

11.6. Language and Thought

Language is an activity of thought; but if thought is taken in the narrower sense of **intellect,** then language expresses not thought, but emotions. However, these may be the emotions of a thinker.

'Everything which *imagination* presents to itself is a here, a now'. This might be the song of a thrush in May. One may imagine, alongside this, the January song of the thrush; but at the level of imagination, the two songs coalesce into one. By *thinking,* one may analyze the song into parts—notes; or one may relate it to things not imagined, such as the January thrush song that one remembers having heard four months ago at dawn (though one may not remember the song itself).[17]

Analyzing and relating are not the only kinds of thought. The point is that, to express any kind of thought (again, in the narrower sense), language must be adapted.

11.7. The Grammatical Analysis of Language

This adaptation of language to the expression of thought is the function or business of the grammarian. 'I do not call it purpose, because he does not propose it to himself as a conscious aim'.

1. The grammarian analyzes, not the activity of language, but 'speech' or 'discourse', the supposed product of speech. But this product 'is a metaphysical fiction. It is supposed to exist only because the theory of language is approached from the standpoint of the philosophy of craft... what the grammarian is really doing is to think, not about a product of the activity of speaking, but about the activity itself, distorted in his thoughts about it by the assumption that it is not an activity, but a product or "thing".

2. 'Next, this "thing" must be scientifically studied; and this involves a double process. The first stage of this process is to cut the "thing" up into parts. Some readers will object to this phrase on the ground that I have used a verb of acting when I ought to have used a verb of thinking... [but] philosophical controversies are not to be settled by a sort of police-regulation governing people's choice of words... I meant cut...

[17] Bird songs are wonderful to hear; but I am not sufficiently familiar with them, or I live in the wrong place, to be able to recognize seasonal variations in them. Looking for my own examples, I can remember that, last summer, I became drenched in sweat from walking at midday in the hills above the Aegean coast, before giving a mathematics lecture; but I need not remember the *feeling* of the heat.

3. 'The final process is to devise a scheme of relations between the parts thus divided...

a) '*Lexicography.* Every word, as it actually occurs in discourse, occurs once and once only... Thus we get a new fiction: the recurring word'. 'Meanings' of words are established in words, so we get another fiction: synonymity.
b) *Accidence.* The rules whereby a single word is modified into *dominus, domine, dominum* are also 'palpable fictions; for it is notorious that exceptions to them occur'.
c) *Syntax.*

'A grammarian is not a kind of scientist studying the actual structure of language; he is a kind of butcher'. *Idioms* are another example of how language resists the grammarian's efforts.

11.8. The Logical Analysis of Language

Logical technique aims 'to make language into a perfect vehicle for the expression of thought.' It asssumes 'that the grammatical transformation of language has been successfully accomplished.' It makes three further assumptions:

1) the **propositional assumption** that some 'sentences' make statements;
2) the principle of **homolingual translation** whereby one sentence can mean exactly the same as another (or group of others) in the same language;
3) **logical preferability:** one sentence may be preferred to another that has the same meaning. The criterion is not ease of understanding (this is the stylist's concern), but ease of manipulation by the logician's technique to suit his aims.

The logician's modification of language can to some extent be carried out; but it tries to pull language apart into two things: language proper, and symbolism.

'No serious writer or speaker ever utters a thought unless he thinks it worth uttering... Nor does he ever utter it except with a choice of words, and in a tone of voice, that express his sense of this importance.' The problem is that written words do not show tone of voice.[18] One is tempted to believe that scientific discourse is what is written; what is spoken is this *and* something else, emotional expression. *Good logic* would show that the logical structure of a proposition is not clear from its written form.[19] *Good literature* is written so

[18]Collingwood imaginatively describes Dr. Richards, who writes of Tolstoy's view of art, 'This is plainly untrue', as if he were a cat shaking a drop of water from its paw. Dr. Richards is Ivor Armstrong Richards, to whose *Principles of Literary Criticism* Collingwood refers; according to `http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I._A._Richards` (accessed December 3, 2010), 'Richards is regularly considered one of the founders of the contemporary study of literature in English'.

[19]In a footnote, Collingwood mentions an example of Cook Wilson: 'That building is the Bodleian' could mean '*That* building is the Bodleian' or 'That building is the *Bodleian.*'

that the reader cannot help but read it with the right tempo and tone.[20]

The proposition, as a form of words expressing thought and not emotion, is a fictitious entity. But 'a second and more difficult thesis' is that words do not express thought at all directly; they express the emotional charge on a thought, allowing the hearer to rediscover the thought 'whose peculiar emotional tone the speaker has expressed.'[21]

11.9. Language and Symbolism

Symbols and technical terms are invented for unemotional scientific purposes, but they always acquire emotional expressiveness. 'Every mathematician knows this.'[22] Intellectualized language,

- as language, expresses *emotion,*
- as symbolism, has *meaning*; it points beyond emotion to a thought.

'The progressive intellectualization of language, its progressive conversion by the work of grammar and logic into a scientific symbolism, thus represents not a progressive drying-up of emotion, but its progressive articulation and specialization. We are not getting away from an emotional atmosphere into a dry, rational atmosphere; we are acquiring new emotions and new means of expressing them.'

Part III. The Theory of Art

Collingwood ends his book by saying:

> Art is the community's medicine for the worst disease of mind, the corruption of consciousness.

He has been talking about *The Waste Land* of T. S. Eliot, having earlier (p. 295) referred to it as 'the one great English poem of this century'.

[20]Collingwood says good literature, like good logic, would save the reader from thinking the discourse was in the writing. But it seems to me that experience with *bad* literature would remind one that writing can fail to tell its story. Possibly the point is that if scientific writers have experience with good literature, they will try to write good literature themselves, and thus they will learn that what they are trying to say is not automatically to be found in the written word.

[21]It is here that Collingwood talks of Archimedes's cry of Eureka; see note 2 above. Collingwood does not revert explicitly to the idea of § 8.1 that thoughts can be public. But language can be made public. I suppose the emotions of language are private to each speaker or hearer, but allow the recovery of something shared. See the next section on *pointing* to a thought.

[22]I'll agree!

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