The Devil

From *Concerning Prayer* (11 authors)

R. G. Collingwood (1889–1943)

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Editor's Preface

Thirteenth of the fourteen chapters of a book called *Concerning Prayer,* "The Devil" is the earliest published work of Collingwood that I know of. I obtained the book from `archive.org` as a `pdf` file consisting of images of the pages. I transcribed Collingwood's essay, first by means of an OCR program, and then with a lot of editing by hand, since the OCR program made many mistakes.

The title page of *Concerning Prayer* is the book's page iii, and it lists eleven authors, one of them anonymously: see entry [2] of the Bibliography below. The next page of the book reads:

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The book's Introduction (pages ix–xiii) describes the eleven authors as

> a lady, three laymen, two parish clergymen, two clerical dons—all Anglicans—a Wesleyan theological tutor, a Congregational minister, and an American professor belonging to the Society of Friends.

Th introduction is signed by B. H. S. and L. D., and is dated February 1916 at Cutts End, Cumnor. Presumably B. H. S. is B. H. Streeter; but either "L. D." is a misprint, perhaps for L. H., Leonard Hodgson; or L. D. is the author of "Pro Christo et Ecclesia," or some twelfth person.

Page 449 of the original book is a title page for Collingwood's contribution; the page describes him as "Fellow and Lecturer of Pembroke College, Oxford." Page 450 gives a Synopsis: a table of contents showing three levels of divisions of Collingwood's essay. The Synopsis is reproduced below, with page numbers of the present document. The levels as such are not named; but in the underlying LaTeX file of the present document, I have called them chapters, sections, and subsections. The divisions are not indicated in the original text, except that chapters I and II are separated by a space, and chapters II and III are separated by a row of five dots. I have now added to the text itself all of the names (or descriptions) of the divisions from the Synopsis. However, sometimes it is not clear on which side of a transitional paragraph a division should be made to fall.

Editor's Introduction

Collingwood's footnotes are numbered by arabic numerals in the original. In the present document, I signify these footnotes with asterisk and dagger ($*$ and †), so that I can number my own notes with arabic numerals. Underlinings are also my own.

My notes may elaborate what I think Collingwood is saying. They may point out how "The Devil" prefigures ideas in Collingwood's later works. A specific reason (arising in February, 2016) for turning to "The Devil" is my concern that psychology continues to misunderstand what it is about. See especially the long note 15 starting on page 16. I am provoked in particular by Ngo *et al.*, "Two Distinct Moral Mechanisms for Ascribing and Denying Intentionality" [25], and by an article about this, "Brain Scans Explain Quickness to Blame" [3].

Here are specific ideas that recur in later work:

1. Civilization never reaches perfection (page 10).
2. Opening questions must be chosen with care (page 12).
3. Ancillary sciences must be used with care (page 16); they may be "good servants, but bad masters" (page 26).
4. The distinction between real and illusory is not empirical (page 20).
5. "Action is precisely that which is not caused" (page 26).
6. "On any given occasion there can only be one duty" (page 30).
7. Both sides may be responsible for a war (page 32).

8. Evil is in conflict with itself (page 33).
9. The negative or contradictory is distinct from the contrary (page 35).
10. There can be emotional contagion in crowds (page 51).

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Introduction—The Devil of orthodoxy and that of Manichaeism

"FROM the crafts and assaults of the Devil, good Lord, deliver us." So we pray; and the prayer certainly answers our need. We feel ourselves surrounded by powers of evil, from which we want to be defended, and the desire expresses itself in the form of a petition for help against the Devil. But most people who have responded to the prayer must have asked themselves how much more than this they meant; whether they believed in a Devil at all, and if so what they imagined him to be like. There is no doubt that common belief has long been tending more and more to discard the idea of a Devil; and yet the idea is orthodox.[1] Does this mean that modern thought is drifting away from orthodox Christianity? Is the disbelief in a Devil only part of that vague optimism, that disinclination to believe in anything evil, that blind conviction of the stability of its own virtue and the perfection of its own civilisation, which seems at times to be the chief vice of the modern world?[2]

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[1] That is "orthodox" with a small oh.

[2] In the *New Leviathan,* to be written during another war, Collingwood will observe that political ideals are never realized. In particular [14, 34. 52],

> No society is just *civil*; no society is just *barbarous.* The state in which any society is actually found to be is a mixture of civility and barbarity.

Was "vague optimism" prevalent, even during the war of 1914–18? Collingwood himself (born in 1889) did not fight. As he reports in *An Autobiography* [11, ch. V, p. 28]:

> A YEAR or two after the outbreak of war, I was living in London and working

In part this is so. And a world rudely awakened once more to the conviction that evil is real may come again to believe in a Devil. But if it returns to the same belief which it has gradually been relinquishing, the step will be retrograde. For that belief was neither fully orthodox nor fully true. Orthodox Christianity believes in a Devil who is, as it were, the bad child in [**452**] God's family; the "Devil" in whom people of to-day are coming to disbelieve owes much if not all of his character to the Manichaean fiction of an evil power over against God and struggling with Him for the dominion over man's soul. It may seem surprising that popular thought should confuse Manichaeism with orthodoxy; and it certainly is surprising that theologians should so seldom come forward to correct the mistake. But it is hard for the uninstructed to follow technical theology, and it is perhaps equally hard for the theologian to follow the obscure workings of the uninstructed mind.[3]

> with a section of the Admiralty Intelligence Division in the rooms of the Royal Geographical Society. Every day I walked across Kensington Gardens and past the Albert Memorial.

Collingwood does not mention the present essay or the meetings that gave rise to it. In "The Devil," the sentence after the next suggests that not all was cheery at home during the war. Collingwood will observe on page 32 that when two countries are at war, at least one and possibly both are wrong. See also note 18, page 19.

[3] Does Collingwood consider his audience to include the "uninstructed"? In any case, his considerations need not be restricted to theology, but might be applied, say, to mathematics.

I. Uncritical Arguments for the Existence of the Devil

It is clear then that the vital question is not, Does the Devil exist? but rather, What conception have we of the Devil?[4] Unless we first answer this question it will not be certain whether the spirit into whose existence we are enquiring is the orthodox or Manichaean or indeed any other devil. Further, it is important to determine in what sense we believe in him. A man may, for instance, believe in Our Lord in the sense of believing what history tells us about Him, but yet not believe in Him, in the sense of not believing in His spiritual presence in the Church. So one might believe in the Devil in the sense that one accepts the story of Lucifer as historical; or in the sense that one believes in Lucifer as an evil force now present in the world; and so forth.

[4] Compare the beginning of the *Meno,* where the title character asks how virtue comes to be, and Socrates says he does not even know what virtue is. Compare also *An Essay on Metaphysics* [13], whereby metaphysics is the study, not of reality, but of what we think reality is. Theology or physics (for example) is a study of reality. Metaphysics then studies theology or physics; more precisely, it looks for the "absolute presuppositions" underlying this or that science. Properly done then, metaphysics aids science by clarifying what it is really about. A way of doing this is looking at the historical meanings of a word, as "cause" in the cited book, or "civilization" in the *New Leviathan* [14, 34. 19]:

> any scientific study of a thing like civilization must begin with an historical study of the word which has been used as its name.

(*a*) Psychological evidence

This way of proceeding[5] may be called the critical method; and it is this which will be adopted in the present essay. But much popular thought on the subject is of a different kind. It concerns itself immediately with the question, Does the Devil exist? without first asking these other questions; and the method it adopts is "scientific" in the popular sense of the word,[6] that is, inductive.[7] It proceeds by searching for "evidence" of the Devil's existence; and this evidence is nowadays drawn chiefly from psychology. As the eighteenth century found the evidences of religion chiefly in the world of nature, so the present [**453**] generation tends to seek them in the mind of man; but the argument is in each case of the same kind.

This psychological argument plays such an important part in popular thought that we must begin by reviewing it; otherwise every step in our criticism will be impeded by the protest that an ounce of fact is worth a ton of theory, and that, however we may theorise, there are facts, positive facts, which prove the existence of the Devil.

Let us then begin by considering these facts; not *in extenso*, for they would fill many volumes and could only be collected by much labour, but in a few typical instances, in order to see what kind of conclusion they yield. The evidence is no doubt cumulative, like all evidence; but a sample will show in what

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[5] That is, trying answer the question of "our" *conception* of the Devil.

[6] The popular is always suspect, but must not be simply rejected.

[7] Science is not *merely* the drawing of general conclusions from specific instances. A particular science, perhaps astrophysics or molecular biology, will have its own conventions or practices about when general conclusions may be drawn.

direction, if any, the accumulation tends.[8]

(i.) The will under diabolical influence

The two most striking groups of evidence[9] may be described as obsessions and visions. By "obsession" I mean not the morbid phenomena of demoniacal possession, or the "*idée fixe*" of mania, but the sense of the merging of one's own personality in a greater and more powerful self, the feeling that one is overwhelmed and carried away not by impulses within but by the resistless force of another will. This feeling is extremely common in all religious experience. The saint feels himself passive in the hands of God. "This is a trait" (says Höffding, *Philosophy of Religion*, § 28) "very frequently found in mystics and pietists; the more they retain (or believe themselves to retain) their powers of thought and will, the more they tend to attribute to their inmost experiences a divine origin."[10] Höffding's parenthesis looks almost like a suggestion that the feel-

[8] A sample may show this, if judiciously selected; otherwise it may mislead.

[9] "Evidence" in the singular, and not "evidences," although Collingwood used the plural form above (page 13, "evidences of religion") and will do so again on page 20.

[10] The quotation is perhaps Collingwood's own translation; for the published translation that I found [19, p. 98] reads:

> It is a constantly recurring trait in mystics and pietists that the more they withhold (or believe themselves to withhold) their own thinking and willing, the more they attribute a divine origin to their inner experiences.

Collingwood's ensuing comments suggest that "retain" may be the better word than "withhold," since withholding one's powers sounds like declining to use them. According to the title page of Höffding's book, he is "Professor in the University of Copenhagen, author of *Outlines of Psychology*, *History of Modern Philosophy*, *Philosophical Problems*, etc." *Wikipedia* gives his dates as 1843–1931 and his name as Harald Høffding.

ing only occurs in persons whose will is really in process of decay. But if the suggestion is intended, it is quite indefensible. The weak man, like Shakespeare's Henry VI., may have this feeling; but St. Paul had it even more strongly, and he was certainly not a weak man.

[**454**] This feeling of obsession by a divine power is in fact only an extreme form of the sensation, which everybody knows, that we are surrounded by spiritual forces which by suggestion or other means influence our wills for good. And the same feeling, both in its rudimentary and extreme forms, exists with regard to evil forces.[11] Children come quite naturally to believe in good and bad angels which draw them in different directions; and this belief may pass through all stages of intensity until we think of our own personality, not as a free will balancing and choosing between suggestions presented to it by angels of light and darkness, but as shrunk to a vanishing-point, the moment of impact between two gigantic and opposed forces. Man becomes the merely sentient battlefield of God and Satan.

The case which immediately concerns us is that of the soul overwhelmed by a spirit of evil; and this is equally familiar to psychology. As the saint represents himself the passive instrument of God, so the sinner feels that he is the passive instrument of the Devil. The saint says with St. Paul: "I live, and yet not I but Christ liveth in me."[12] The sinner replies,

[11] If the feeling of obsession is the same, be the possession by a good or evil force, then what is the difference between good and evil? The beginning of Collingwood's answer will be hinted at in the next section, (*b*), page 21.

[12] The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, chapter 2:

> 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of

from the same source: "It is no more I that do it, but Sin that dwelleth in me."[13]

Here, then, is the first group of evidence for the existence of the Devil; and we must try to determine what it is worth. It will be noticed that the same type of experience serves as evidence in one case for the existence of the Devil, and in the other for the existence of God. We believe in the Devil (it is suggested) because we immediately experience his power over our hearts; and we believe in God for the same kind of reason. But psychology itself, which collects for us the evidence, warns us against this uncritical use of it.[14] It may be that the whole feeling is a morbid and unhealthy one; or it may be that in one case it is natural and healthy, and in the other unnatural and [**455**] morbid. Psychology can describe the feelings which people actually do have; but it cannot tell us whether the feelings are good or bad, trustworthy or misleading, sanity or mania.[15] Telepathy, self-hypnotism, subconscious cerebra-

> the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

[13] The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, chapter 7:

> 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Collingwood capitalizes "Sin," but it is not so in the edition of the King James Bible that I am using [6].

[14] Compare the warning in the *New Leviathan* against uncritical use of etymology [14, p. 281]:

> **34. 21.** Etymology by itself tells us very little about the meaning of a word like 'civilization', and what little it tells us is not trustworthy.
>
> . . . .
>
> **34. 26.** Etymology, in fact, is a good servant to the historical study of language; but a bad master.
>
> **34. 27.** It is a good servant when it helps to explain why words mean what in fact they do mean.

See also note 30, page 26, on a use of the rhetorical form of 34. 26.

[15] More precisely, feelings as such are not good or bad; *thoughts* about

tion, force of education or environment—these and a thousand other explanations are from time to time adopted; and each is, within the limits of psychology, possible, none certain. In point of fact, the psychologist takes whichever view for the moment suits him as a working hypothesis, but the supposed explanation is never more than this, and is generally much less.[16] So the really vital point in the argument is a gap which can only be bridged by the gossamers of flimsiest speculation.

(ii.) Visions of the Devil

The second group of evidence appears at first sight more conclusive. The visions of God, of Our Lord, of angels and of saints which are found in all types of Christianity (and similar visions seem to occur in all other religions) are parallel to visions, no less authentic, of fiends and demons and of the Devil himself.* These sensational forms of religious experience often

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* It is not necessary to encumber the text with instances of such famil-

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them may be good or bad. An example of such thoughts is given by Maugham in *The Razor's Edge* [23, Ch. 5, (*i*), p. 150]:

> I dawdled over my work in Paris. It was very agreeable in the springtime, with the chestnuts on the Champs-Elysées in bloom and the light in the streets so gay. There was pleasure in the air, a light transitory pleasure, sensual without grossness, that made your step more springy and your intelligence more alert. I was happy in the various company of my friends and, my heart filled with amiable memories of the past, I regained in spirit at least something of the glow of youth. I thought I should be a fool to allow work to interfere with a delight in the passing moment that I might never again enjoy so fully.

I think also of Luther Ingram, in his 1972 recording of a song written by Homer Banks, Ray Jackson, and Carl Hampton (`www.songfacts.com`): "If loving you is wrong, I don't want to be right." This note continues in the Appendix, page 59.

[16] Psychological phenomena—*feelings*—explained by "the Devil" might also be explained by telepathy and so forth; but it takes a criteriological science to prove that one explanation or other is the correct one.

seem to carry special weight as evidence of the reality of spirits other than our own; but here too the whole argument turns on their interpretation. Are they, in the language of popular philosophy, "subjective" or "objective"?[17]

In order to answer this question, an attempt is sometimes made to analyse them with a view to discovering what they owe to tradition, to the education or surroundings of the person who sees them.[18] Thus it is found that a vision of the

iar experiences; but I should like to refer here, since it has only appeared in a review, to the case of a Roman Catholic priest, described in a series of his own letters in the *British Review*, vol. i. No. 2 (April 1913), pp. 71-95. "On one occasion, when I had retired for the night, a being appeared who addressed me using the most vile language and rehearsing for me in a terrible manner many incidents in my past life. . . . I jumped up and ran at it, making a large Cross in the air, when the figure melted away like smoke, leaving a smell as if a gun had been discharged. . . . When it reappeared I began to recite sentences of the exorcism, and it seemed to me that when I came to the more forcible portions of it the voice grew less distinct. As I proceeded and also made use of holy water the voice died away in a sort of moan. . . . The voice claimed to be that of Lucifer."

[17] Again, as in note 6 (page 13), the popular is suspect. I recall being suspicious of the supposed distinction between the "subjective" and the "objective," before I first read Collingwood. (What I read first was *The Principles of Art* [10], at age 22, in the copy lent me by my high-school art teacher.)

[18] Understood in terms of Collingwood's later work, this attempt at analysis fails for not being properly *historical,* in the sense of, for example, *An Autobiography* [11, ch. X, pp. 110–112], where Collingwood describes his theory of history as follows:

> I expressed this new conception of history in the phrase: 'all history is the history of thought.' You are thinking historically, I meant, when you say about anything, 'I see what the person who made this (wrote this, used this, designed this, &c.) was thinking.' Until you can say that, you may be trying to think historically, but you are not succeeding. And there is nothing except thought that can be the object of historical knowledge. Political history is the history of political thought: not 'political theory', but the thought which occupies the mind of a man engaged in political work: the formation of a

Devil is accompanied by [**456**] a smell of brimstone, and that one's patron saint appears in the clothes which he wears in the window of one's parish church. But these details prove exactly what the interpreter chooses to make them prove. To the simple, they are corroborative; they prove that the apparition is genuine. To the subtler critic they are suspicious; they suggest that the alleged vision is a merely "subjective" reproduction of traditional images. But the critic is at least no better off than the simple believer. For if my patron saint wishes to appear to

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> policy, the planning of means to execute it, the attempt to carry it into effect, the discovery that others are hostile to it, the devising of ways to overcome their hostility, and so forth . . . Military history, again, is not a description of weary marches in heat or cold, or the thrills and chills of battle or the long agony of wounded men. It is a description of plans and counter-plans: of thinking about strategy and thinking about tactics, and in the last resort of what men in the ranks thought about the battle.

I pause here to recall from note 2, page 10, that Collingwood himself did not experience the "thrills and chills of battle." Nonetheless, he has now acknowledged the "men in the ranks." He continues:

> On what conditions was it possible to know the history of a thought? First, the thought must be expressed: either in what we call language, or in one of the many other forms of expressive activity . . . Secondly, the historian must be able to think over again for himself the thought whose expression he is trying to interpret . . . If some one, hereinafter called the mathematician, has written that twice two is four, and if some one else, hereinafter called the historian, wants to know what he was thinking when he made those marks on paper, the historian will never be able to answer this question unless he is mathematician enough to think exactly what the mathematician thought, and expressed by writing that twice two are four. When he interprets the marks on paper, and says, 'by these marks the mathematician meant that twice two are four', he is thinking simultaneously: (a) that twice two are four, (b) that the mathematician thought this, too; and (c) that he expressed this thought by making these marks on paper . . .

Likewise, it would seem, in reading the letters quoted in Collingwood's last footnote, we are not going to understand them unless we have the experience of being believers like the priest. Or are visions of the Devil too far down the scale of thought from $2 \times 2 = 4$? In any case, Collingwood concludes:

> This gave me a second proposition: 'historical knowledge is the re-enactment in the historian's mind of the thought whose history he is studying.'

me, why should he not choose to appear in a form in which I can recognise him? And if I see the Devil and smell brimstone, may not the coincidence with tradition be due to the fact that when the Devil appears he really does smell of brimstone?

Thus the discussion as to the subjective or objective nature of these visions is involved in an endless obscurity, and whatever answer is given depends on a private interpretation of the facts, which is at once challenged by the opponent. Psychology can collect accounts of visions; but to decide whether they are real or illusory is outside its power. Such a decision can only be reached in the light of critical principles which psychology itself cannot establish. There is nothing in a vision itself, and therefore there is nothing in a thousand visions, to guarantee its truth or falsity; and therefore the uncritical use of such things as evidences is no more than a delusion.[19]

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[19] After examining the matter for two chapters in *The Principles of Art* [10, chh. VIII & IX, pp. 157–194], Collingwood will conclude:

> This, then, is the result of our examination. Sensa cannot be divided, by any test whatever, into real and imaginary; sensations cannot be divided into real sensations and imaginary sensations. That experience which we call sensation is of one kind only, and is not amenable to the distinctions between real and unreal, true and false, veridical and illusory. That which is true or false is thought; and our sensa are called real or illusory in so far as we think truly or falsely about them. To think about them is to interpret them, which means stating the relations in which they stand to other sensa, actual or possible. A real sensum means a sensum correctly interpreted; an illusory sensum, one falsely interpreted. And an imaginary sensum means one which has not been interpreted at all: either because we have tried to interpret it and failed, or because we have not tried. These are not three kinds of sensa, nor are they sensa corresponding with three kinds of sensory act. Nor are they sensa which, on being correctly interpreted, are found to be related to their fellows in three different ways. They are sensa in respect of which the interpretive work of thought has been done well, or done ill, or left undone.
>
> The common-sense distinction between real and imaginary sensa is therefore not false. There is a distinction. But it is not a distinction among sensa. It is a distinction among the various ways in which sensa may be related to the interpretive work of thought.

(*b*) The Devil as a hypothesis to explain evil

There is, however, a second and less crude method of using psychological data.[20] How, it is asked, do we account for the existence of all the world's evil? We are conscious in ourselves of solicitations and temptations to sin; and even if we are not in these temptations directly conscious of the personal presence of a tempter, we cannot account for their existence except by assuming that he is real. We do not, according to this argument, claim direct personal knowledge of the Devil, but we argue to his reality from the facts of life. [**457**] There must be a Devil, because there is so much evil in the world.[21] We know that our own sins make others sin, and it seems only reasonable to suppose that our sins may in turn be due to an Arch-Sinner, whose primal sin propagates itself in the wills of those who come under his malign influence.

Everything, we believe, must have a cause;[22] and in assigning it to its cause we have, so far as we can ever hope to do so, explained it. A thing whose cause we have not discovered is, we say, unexplained, and one which has no cause is inexplicable; but we refuse to believe that anything is in the long run

[20] It would seem that the first method of using psychological data is just to interpret it according to whatever hypothesis one chooses: perhaps as evidence of devils, or of unconscious influences. Then the second method is to ask why the data should exist at all, regardless of any interpretation one puts on them.

[21] Today, in this argument, the Devil may have been replaced by the Unconscious.

[22] In *An Essay on Metaphysics* [13, ch. XXXIII, pp. 328–337], Collingwood will trace this belief to a misguided fealty to Kant. Since Newton, physicists have not believed it, at least not in the traditional sense: they look for *laws,* not causes.

inexplicable.[23] Evil then—so we argue—must have a cause; and the cause of evil in me can only be some other evil outside myself.[24] And therefore we postulate a Devil as the First Cause of all evil, just as we postulate a God as the First Cause of all good.

But the parallel here suggested is entirely misleading. God and the Devil are not twin hypotheses which stand or fall together. God, as present to the religious mind, is not a hypothesis at all; He is not a far-fetched explanation of phenomena. He is about our path and about our bed; we do not search the world for traces of His passing by, or render His ex-

[23] Collingwood might seem to agree with this refusal. In the contemporaneous *Religion and Philosophy* [8, pp. 196–197], he observes,

> But monism properly understood is only another word for the fundamental axiom of all thinking, namely that whatever exists stands in some definite relation to the other things that exist.

And yet, saying that everything is related to everything else is not the same as saying it has a cause. But neither, apparently, is it the same as *explaining* everything, since as Collingwood will say below on page 26, "evil neither requires nor admits any explanation whatever."

[24] In fact, the cause need not be outside oneself. From *An Essay on Metaphysics* [13, ch. XXX, pp. 294 f.]:

> A man is said to act 'on his own responsibility' or 'on his sole responsibility' when (1) his knowledge or belief about the situation is not dependent on information or persuasion from any one else, and (2) his intentions or purposes are similarly independent. In this case (the case in which a man is ordinarily said to exhibit 'initiative') his action is not uncaused. It still has both a *causa quod* and a *causa ut*. But because he has done for himself, unaided, the double work of envisaging the situation and forming the intention, which in the alternative case another man (who is therefore said to cause his action) has done for him, he can now be said to cause his own action as well as to do it. If he invariably acted in that way the total complex of his activities could be called self-causing (*causa sui*); an expression which refers to absence of persuasion or inducement on the part of another, and is hence quite intelligible and significant, although it has been denounced as nonsensical by people who have not taken the trouble to consider what the word 'cause' means.

istence more probable by scientific inductions.[25] Philosophy may demand a proof of His existence, as it may demand a proof of the existence of this paper, of the philosopher's friends or of the philosopher himself; but the kind of certainty which the religious mind has of God is of the same kind as that which we have of ourselves and of other people,[26] and not in any

[25] In short, not all thinking is an attempt to do natural science as it is understood today. The belief that it *is* such an attempt is what causes such anthropological confusions as are discussed in Chapter IV, "Art as Magic," of *The Principles of Art* [10].

[26] For Collingwood, certainty of others parallels certainty of ourselves. This is disputed. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [20] recognizes a "problem of other minds," which

> is the problem of how to justify the almost universal belief that others have minds very like our own. It is one of the hallowed, if nowadays unfashionable, problems in philosophy . . .
>
> The epistemological problem is produced by the radical difference that holds between our access to our own experience and our access to the experience of all other human beings. We often know directly that we are in a certain mental state. Typical cases would be where we are in serious pain, are itching, are smelling a rose, seeing a sunflower, are depressed, believe that today is Tuesday, and so forth. We do not always know directly that we are in the mental state we are in but what is striking is that we never have direct knowledge that other human beings are in whatever mental state they are in.

What is rather striking is the begging of the question of whether there are other minds at all, in order to say that we have no direct knowledge of them. (Since current writers often forget the original meaning of "begging the question" in the sense of appealing to what is to be proved, I note Collingwood's use of the term on page 39.) It seems to me that, except in unfortunate cases, the child knows directly that it is loved by its parents; thus, in the terms of the *Stanford Encyclopedia,* the child has direct knowledge of the mental state of its parents. If Collingwood were writing in the style of the *Encyclopedia,* he might describe his theme as the problem of how to justify popular belief in a Devil. The real problem is rather to understand what the belief *is,* be it in a Devil or in other minds, as Collingwood says at the beginning of this chapter and repeats at the beginning of the next. Collingwood pursues the understanding of other minds in *The New Leviathan,* as for example in Chapter VII, "Appetite" [14, p. 47]:

> **7. 1.** THERE are things which often receive the name of feeling by synecdoche or ellipsis . . . , though in fact they are not feelings at all but complex things consisting of feelings and ghosts of feelings . . . combined into a certain

way similar to the gradually strengthening belief in a hypothesis. The two kinds of belief must not be confused. I do not consider the existence of another mind like my own as a highly probable explanation of the voice I hear in conversation with a friend; to describe my belief in such terms would be entirely to misrepresent its real nature. The Devil may be a hypothesis, but God is not; and if we **[458]** find reason for rejecting the above argument for the reality of the Devil we have not thereby thrown any doubt on the reality of God.[27]

The belief in a Devil is supposed to be a hypothesis. But is it a good hypothesis? Does it explain the facts?

There are two questions to which we may require an answer. First, how do I come to think of this sin as a possible thing to do? Secondly, why do I desire to do it? To the first question

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pattern by the practical work of consciousness.

7. 11. Such a thing is *hunger* . . .

. . . .

7. 14. But actually a hungry man thinks of two different feeling-states, compares them to the disadvantage of the one and the advantage of the other, and struggles to escape the one and realize the other.

7. 15. The one is a feeling-state that involves emptiness; the other a feeling-state that involves repletion.

[27] God is not an assumption, but a foundation of thought. By Collingwood's account in *An Essay on Philosophical Method* [17, pp. 124 f.],

> Divesting [Anselm's] argument of all specially religious or theological colouring, one might state it by saying that thought, when it follows its own bent most completely and sets itself the task of thinking out the idea of an object that shall completely satisfy the demands of reason, may appear to be constructing a mere *ens rationis*, but in fact is never devoid of objective or ontological reference.
>
> . . . Clearly [the Ontological Proof] does not prove the existence of whatever God happens to be believed in by the person who appeals to it . . .
>
> Reflection on the history of the Ontological Proof thus offers us a view of philosophy as a form of thought in which essence and existence, however clearly distinguished, are conceived as inseparable. On this view, unlike mathematics or empirical science, philosophy stands committed to maintaining that its subject-matter is no mere hypothesis, but something actually existing.

the hypothesis does supply an answer: but no answer is really needed. My own faculties are sufficient, without any diabolical instruction, to discover that on a given occasion I might do wrong if I would.[28]

To the second and much more important question the hypothesis of a Devil supplies no answer at all; and to conceal this deficiency it raises two other questions, each equally hard, and each in point of fact only a new form of the original problem. If evil can only be explained by postulating a Devil, in the first place, what explains the sins of the Devil himself? Secondly, granted that there is a Devil, why do people do what he wants them to do? The first of these questions is not answered by saying that the Devil's sin is a First Cause and needs no explanation; that is, that it was the uncaused act of a free being. The same is obviously true of our own actions; and it was only because this account of them seemed insufficient that we felt compelled to postulate a Devil. But if it is insufficient in our case, how can we guarantee its sufficiency in his?

The other question is even more unanswerable. If the Devil, by some compulsive power, forces us to act in certain ways, then these acts are not our acts, and therefore not our sins; and if he only induces us to act, the question is, why do we let ourselves be induced?[29] If there is a Devil who wants me to do something wrong, his desire is impotent until I choose

[28] How much of a sinner does Collingwood think he is? Jesus recommended praying, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13). Folk wisdom says, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." Collingwood seems to say that the sinner or the horse can find temptation or water on his or her own.

[29] By the account in *An Essay on Metaphysics* [13], this "inducing" is a *causing* in the original sense of "cause." It does not imply a *dividing* of responsibility, but a sharing.

to fall in with it. And therefore his existence does nothing [**459**] whatever to explain my sin. The hypothesis of a Devil explains nothing; and if the fact which it is meant to explain, the fact of evil, requires an explanation, then the Devil himself requires an explanation of the same kind.

The truth is that evil neither requires nor admits any explanation whatever. To the question, "Why do people do wrong?" the only answer is, "Because they choose to." To a mind obsessed by the idea of causation, the idea that everything must be explained by something else, this answer seems inadequate. But action is precisely that which is not caused; the will of a person acting determines itself and is not determined by anything outside itself. Causation has doubtless its proper sphere. In certain studies it may be true, or true enough for scientific purposes, to describe one event as entirely due to another. But if the Law of Causation is a good servant, it is a bad master.[30] It cannot be applied to the activity of the will without explicitly falsifying the whole nature of that activity. An act of the will is its own cause and its own explanation; to seek its explanation in something else is to treat it not as an act but as a mechanical event.[31] It is hardly surprising that such a quest should end in a confusion greater than that in which it began. Evil, like every other activity of free beings, has its source and its explanation within itself alone. It neither need nor can be explained by the invocation of a fictitious entity such as the

[30] Compare one of the sentences of the *New Leviathan* quoted in note 14, page 16: "Etymology . . . is a good servant to the historical study of language; but a bad master."

[31] It will be argued in *An Essay on Metaphysics* [13] that the use of the language of causation in physics is itself the result of anthropomorphism: if we think things in nature must happen by causes, it is by analogy with our causing one another to do things.

Devil.

II. Critical Analysis of the Conception of a Devil

In the absence of any results from the method of evidence and hypothesis, we must turn to the only other alternative, the simpler though perhaps more difficult method described above as the method of criticism. Instead of asking whether or not the Devil exists, we must ask what we understand by the Devil, and whether that conception is itself a possible and reasonable one. When we have answered these [**460**] questions we shall perhaps find that the other has answered itself.

(*a*) As an Absolute evil will—

To this critical procedure it may be objected at the outset that the method is illegitimate; for it implies the claim to conceive things which in their very nature are inconceivable. Infinite good and infinite evil are, it is said, beyond the grasp of our finite minds; we cannot conceive God, and therefore neither can we conceive the Devil. To limit infinity within the circle of a definition is necessarily to falsify it; any attempt at conception can only lead to misconception.

Even if this objection were justified, instead of being based on a false theory of knowledge, it would not really affect our question. If the Devil is inconceivable, then we have no conception of him, or only a false one; and there is an end of the matter. But any one who maintains his existence does claim to have a conception of him; he uses the word Devil and presumably means something by it. The objection, if used on behalf of a believer in the Devil, would be no more than a confession that he attaches no meaning to the word and therefore does not believe in a Devil at all. So far as he does believe, his belief is a conception and can therefore be criticised.

(i.) An Absolute good (= divine) will conceivable

Now the idea of God as an omnipotent and entirely good being is certainly conceivable. It is possible to imagine a person who possessed all the power in existence, who could do everything there was to be done, and who did everything well. Whether this conception can be so easily reconciled with others, we do not ask; we are only examining the idea itself. Further, it is an essential element in the conception of God that He should be not perfectly good alone, but also the sole and absolute source of goodness; that He should will not only good but all the good there is. Now it is essential to grasp the fact that whether such a will as this is conceivable or not depends on whether good things are all compatible with one another, or whether **[461]** one good thing may exclude, contradict, or compete with another good thing. If they are all compatible, if the "Law of Contradiction," that no truth can contradict another truth, applies *mutatis mutandis* to the sphere of morality,[32] then all individual good things are parts of one harmonious scheme of good which might be the aim of a single perfectly good will. If, on the other hand, one good thing is incompatible with

[32] The Law of Contradiction *should* apply to morality, if logic and ethics are the sciences of theoretical and practical thought respectively, as in note 15, page 16, continued in the Appendix, page 59.

another, it follows that they are not parts of a single whole, but essentially in conflict with one another, and that therefore the same will cannot include, that is cannot choose, all at once. For instance, granted that A and B cannot both have a thing, if it is right that A should have it and also right that B should have it, God cannot will all that is good; for one mind can only choose one of two contradictory things.

It seems to be a necessary axiom of ethics that on any given occasion there can only be one duty.[33] For duty means that

[33] Why "seems to be necessary" and not simply "is necessary"? In any case, here are some of the ideas that Collingwood will develop ultimately in Chapter XVII, "Duty," of *The New Leviathan* [14, pp. 119–22]:

> **17. 15.** When 'due' and 'duty' first appeared in English . . . they found Germanic synonyms derived from the verb 'owe' already established; in particular the past tense 'ought', where the same reference to a logically past act of incurring debt is implied.
>
> . . . .
>
> **17. 17.** In modern English, consciousness of obligation is distinguished from other forms of consciousness by the name 'conscience' . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> **17. 32.** . . . an obligation may be distributed over various agents. B may 'hold himself responsible' for a debt incurred by A . . .
>
> **17. 33.** A still further complication is possible. B finds himself under an obligation; he ascribes its origin to an act on the part of A; he regards it as discharged by a third person C . . .
>
> **17. 34.** The importance of this case in the history of the European conception of duty will appear if we call A Adam, B the believer, and C Christ . . .
>
> **17. 35.** This is the idea of the Atonement, which has sometimes been denounced as a legal quibble forced upon an alien and inappropriate context. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The idea is an integral part of the ordinary moral consciousness, at least in Christendom; it is perplexing only to a man who is too weak in the head to follow the logic of a case where an obligation is distributed over three agents.
>
> . . . .
>
> **17. 5.** The special characteristics of duty are (1) determinacy and (2) possibility.
>
> **17. 51.** Duty admits of no alternatives . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> **17. 54.** Here duty differs both from right and from utility, each of which is what is called a many-one relation; the ground fits so loosely on the consequent that it fits a number of different alternatives equally well (or equally badly) and never allows you to say about any 'That and no other is the foot

which a man ought to do; and it cannot conceivably be a duty to do something impossible.* Therefore if I have two duties at the same time, it must be possible for me to do both. They cannot contradict one another, for then one would be impossible and therefore not obligatory. There can be a "conflict of duties" only in the sense that from two different points of view each of two incompatible things seems to be my duty; the conflict disappears when I determine which point of view ought to be for the moment supreme. This does not mean that there is a greater duty which overrides the less; for the distinction between doing and not doing, and between "ought to do" and "ought not to do," is not a question of degree. The one is simply my duty, and the other not my duty. No doubt the latter might have been my duty in a different situation; and it is often distressing to see what good things we might have done [**462**] if the situation, created perhaps by our own or another's folly, had not demanded something else. But here again there are not two duties; there is one and only one, together with the knowledge that in other conditions some other duty would have taken its place.

If it is true that my duty can never contradict itself, it is equally true that my duty cannot contradict any one else's. A

* It is sometimes perhaps a duty to try to do an impossible thing. But in that case the claims of duty are satisfied by the attempt; and to attempt the impossible is not necessarily itself impossible.

> that the shoe fits.'
>
> **17. 55.** Hence dutiful action, among these three kind of rational action, is the only one that is completely rational in principle; the only one whose explanations really explain; the only one whose answer to the question: 'Why did I do that action?' (namely, 'because it was my duty') answers precisely that question and not one more or less like it.

I note Collingwood's "populism": ridiculing the intellectual who does not understand morality as ordinary folks are said to do.

may feel it his duty to promote a cause which B feels it right to resist; but clearly in this case one must be mistaken. Their countries may be at war, and they may be called upon by the voice of duty to fight each other; but one country—perhaps both—must be in the wrong.[34] It is possibly a duty to fight for one's country in a wrongful cause; but if that is so it is one's duty not to win but to atone in some degree for the national sin by one's own death.[35]

A real duty, and therefore a real good, is a good not for this or that man, but for the whole world. If it is good, morally good, that A should have a thing, it is good for B that A should have it. Thus all moral goods are compatible, and they are therefore capable of being all simultaneously willed by a single mind. So far, then, the idea of God seems to be a consistent and conceivable notion. Is the same true of the idea of the Devil?

(ii.) but not an Absolute evil will

The Devil is generally regarded as being not only entirely bad, but the cause of all evil: the absolute evil will, as God is

[34] See note 2, page 10.
Both countries are, if not "in the wrong," at least responsible, because each side has given up on dialectic, by the account the *New Leviathan* [14, pp. 230–1]:

> **29. 83.** Men who make war are already accustomed to handle the problems of their social life and the problems of their internal politics in a dialectical spirit. Making war or acquiescing in war means departing from that dialectical spirit and replacing it by an eristical spirit when it comes to a problem of external politics.
>
> **29. 84.** Acquiescing in war, or allowing it to be forced upon one, no less than making it, or forcing it upon others.
>
> **29. 85.** A war is not, like a nursery quarrel, a disaster whose fault can be laid entirely at the door of the party which 'began it'. The proposal to punish 'the aggressor' was another of the many blunders made by the League of Nations (29. 69).

[35] Did Robert E. Lee do his duty?

the absolute good will. But a very little reflexion shows that this is impossible. Good cannot contradict good, just as truth cannot contradict truth; but two errors may conflict, and so may two crimes. Two good men can only quarrel in so far as their goodness is fragmentary and incomplete; but there is no security that two absolutely bad men would agree. The reverse is true; they can only agree so far as they set a limit to their badness, and each undertakes not to thwart and cheat the other.[36] Every really good thing in the world harmonises with every other; but [**463**] evil is at variance not only with good but with other evils.[37] If two thieves quarrel over their plunder, a wrong is done whichever gets it, but no one Devil can will

[36] Says Socrates in the *Phaedrus* [27, 255B]:

> For it is a law of fate that evil can never be a friend to evil
> and that good must always be a friend to good.
> *οὐ γὰρ δή ποτε εἵμαρται* [a] *κακὸν κακῷ φίλον*
> *οὐδ᾽ ἀγαθὸν μὴ φίλον ἀγαθῷ εἶναι.*

The Greek uses two negations to make a positive:

> For it is allotted that neither bad ever be friend to bad,
> nor good not be friend to good.

The context is that the beloved in time admits the lover to his company. See note 45, page 40.

[37] Same with barbarism in the *New Leviathan* [14, p. 348]:

> **41. 76.** For barbarism implies not only a quarrel between any barbarist and any civilized man; it also implies a quarrel between anyone barbarist and any other; and that any state of harmony between them is merely this quarrel suspended.

This is why barbarism fails in the long run. ¶ To be at variance with an evil would seem to be good; but then this too conflicts with the notion of absolute evil.

[a] The verb is the perfect passive of *μείρομαι*, according to Liddell and Scott [22], who also quote this very passage as an example of the meaning: "it is allotted, decreed by fate." The reference to *μείρομαι* is given under *εἵμαρται*, though I found it first in the *Pocket Oxford Classical Greek Dictionary* [24].

both these wrongs. The idea of a Devil as a person who wills all actual and possible evil, then, contradicts itself, and no amount of psychological evidence or mythological explanation can make it a conceivable idea.

(*b*) As an entirely evil will. Evil is neither—

Our first notion of the Devil must be given up. But we might modify it by suggesting that the Devil does not will that either thief should get the plunder; he desires not our success in evil projects, but simply our badness. He incites the two to fight out of pure malice, not with any constructive purpose but simply in order to make mischief. That one thief should succeed prevents the other thief from succeeding; but there is nothing in the mere badness of the one incompatible with the mere badness of the other. And the badness of each is quite sufficiently shown in the attempt, whether successful or not, to defraud the other.

This brings us to a different conception of the Devil as a person who does, not all the evil there is, but all the evil he can. He is an opportunist; when thieves can do most harm by agreeing, he leads them to agree; when by quarrelling, he incites them to quarrel. He may not be omnipotent in evil; whatever evil he brings about is at the expense of other possible ills; but at least he is consistently wicked and never does anything good. Is this second idea more conceivable than the first? In order to answer this question we must enquire briefly into the character and conditions of the evil will.

There are two well-established and popular accounts of evil, neither of which is entirely satisfactory. Sometimes evil is said to be the mere negation of good; nothing positive, but rather a deficiency of that which alone is positive, namely goodness; more commonly [**464**] good and evil are represented as different and opposed forces.

(i.) negation of good

The first view contains elements of real truth, and is supported by such great names as that of Augustine, who was led, in his reaction from Manichaeism, to adopt it as expressing the distinctively Christian attitude towards evil.

This view is generally criticised by pointing out that as evil is the negation of good, so good is the negation of evil; either is positive in itself but negative in relation to the other. This criticism is valid as against the verbal expression of the theory,[38] though it does not touch the inner meaning which the theory aims at expressing.[39] But unless this inner mean-

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[38] *If* evil is simply the negation of good, then there is no way to *distinguish* good from evil, since every judgment is equivalent to a negation, namely the negation of its own negation. Symbolically, every statement σ is equivalent to the negation $\neg\tau$ of some statement τ, namely the negation $\neg\sigma$ of σ: in short, σ is equivalent to $\neg\neg\sigma$. An example of this equivalence was in note 36, page 33. However, good will be described in the next subsection so as to make it indistinguishable from bad; see note 44, page 39. So perhaps the real objection now is to allowing bad to be called positive in itself. See the *New Leviathan*:

> **24. 68.** According to Hobbes (though Hobbes seems hardly to have recognized Plato's work on the subject) *a body politic is a dialectical thing,* a Heraclitean world in which at any given time there is a negative element, an element of non-sociality which is going to disappear, or at least is threatened with abolition by the growth of the positive element; and a positive element, an element of sociality.
>
> . . . .
>
> **29. 52.** Dialectic is not between contraries but between contradictories (24. 68). The process leading to agreement begins not from disagreement but from non-agreement.

[39] There is a three-fold distinction between (1) the "verbal expression" of a theory, (2) the theory itself, and (3) the "inner meaning" of the theory.

ing is thought out and developed with much more care than

Collingwood will mention a similar distinction in *The Idea of History* [12, p. 275]:

> Confronted with a ready-made statement about the subject he is studying, the scientific historian never asks himself, [1] 'Is this statement true or false?', in other words 'Shall I encorporate it in my history of that subject or not?' the question he asks himself is: [3] 'What does this statement mean?' And this is not equivalent to the question [2] 'What did the person who made it mean by it?' although that is doubtless a question that the historian must ask, and must be able to answer.

I have added the numbers to indicate the correspondences that I see. Strauss quotes the latter two of Collingwood's three sentences, and then says [32, pp. 580–1],

> But this admission is much too weak. The answer to the question "What did the person who made the statement mean by it?" must precede the answer to the question "What does this statement mean within the context of my question?" For "the statement" is the statement as meant by the author. Before one can use or criticize a statement, one must understand the statement, *i.e.* one must understand the statement as its author consciously meant it. Different historians may become interested in the same statement for different reasons: the statement does not alter its authentic meaning on account of those differences.

Strauss explicitly has in mind the statements of the classical historians. Collingwood's own illustration of his remarks is a murder mystery concocted by himself. 1. The rector's daughter says she is the murderer. This is false as a ready-made statement. 2. What the daughter *means* by the statement (though she does not mean to tell the inspector) is that her young man is the murderer. She is trying to cover for him. 3. She is mistaken; the truth is that the rector is the murderer. This is the real or inner meaning of the daughter's statement. The inspector is able to realize the truth, only after figuring out the daughter's meaning that she suspects her young man.

The inspector does not care what the daughter thinks as such. However, if we are reading Herodotus, we may care more about what he *thinks* happened in the Persian Wars, than about what "really" happened. Maybe this is because we are just interested in Herodotus as a person; or maybe we are interested in later thinkers, on whom the main influence of the Persian Wars is what Herodotus thinks of them.

At present we care about the theory of evil that the likes of Augustine have tried to express; but this is mainly because that theory will be a is generally the case, the view of evil as merely negative expresses nothing but a superficial optimism, implying that any activity is good if only there is enough of it, that only small and trivial things can be bad, and (in extreme forms of the theory) that evil is only evil from a limited and human point of view, whereas to a fuller and more comprehensive view it would be non-existent.[40] These sophistical conclusions are so plainly untenable that they force the mind to take refuge in the opposite view.[41]

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clue to the real truth about the Devil.

[40] "Superficial optimism" is Collingwood's way of describing Augustine's theory of evil, which is imperfectly expressed as the negation of good. The real theory, as suggested by Collingwood, is more that evil is a *deficiency* of good. In standard terms, evil is the *absence* or *privation* of good. The *Wikipedia* article called "Absence of Evil" quotes Augustine [1]: "For what is that which we call evil but the privation of good?" The same idea is attributed to Augustine in a *Guardian* article [5]. Here Clare Carlisle responds to the same kind of popularly "scientific" approach that Collingwood does at the beginning (page 13):

> Any defence of Augustine's position has to begin by pointing out that his account of evil is metaphysical rather than empirical. In other words, he is not saying that our experience of evil is unreal. On the contrary, since a divinely created world is naturally oriented toward the good, any lack of goodness will be felt as painful, wrong and urgently in need of repair. To say that hunger is "merely" the absence of food is not to deny the intense suffering it involves.
>
> One consequence of Augustine's mature view of evil as "non-being", a privation of the good, is that evil eludes our understanding . . . Augustine emphasizes that evil is ultimately inexplicable, since it has no substantial existence . . .

But then Carlisle would seem to contradict this, suggesting that Augustine's theory *is* empirical:

> Surprisingly, though, the basic insight of Augustinian theodicy finds support in recent science.

However, it is not clear that Carlisle has grasped Augustine's "basic insight." If evil is inexplicable, then in particular science is not going to explain it. What Carlisle goes on to describe seems more like the fallacious theory in Collingwood's next subsection. See note 42.

[41] The claim seems to be that Augustine's theory, developed in reaction to Manichaeism, has inadequacies that drive thinkers to the refinement

(ii.) nor the opposite of good

Good and evil, according to this view, are different and opposed forces. If the opposition is imagined as existing between an absolute good will and an absolute bad (as for instance in Manichaeism) we have already shown that it cannot be maintained, for an absolute bad will is inconceivable. The crude antithesis of Manichaeism therefore gives place to a different kind of opposition, such as that between body and soul, desire and reason, matter and spirit, egoism and altruism, and so on *ad infinitum.*[42] To criticise these in detail would be tedious; it is perhaps enough to point out the fallacy which underlies all alike. That which acts is never one part of the self; it is the whole self. It is **[465]** impossible to split up a man into two parts and ascribe his good actions to one part—his soul, his reason, his spirit, his altruistic impulses—and his bad ac-

of Manichaeism that will be described in the next subsection.

[42] Egoism and altruism are the ends of a spectrum. Thus the theory now being expounded resembles that described by Clare Carlisle in the continuation of the last quotation in note 40:

> In his 2011 book *Zero Degrees of Empathy,* Cambridge psychopathology professor Simon Baron-Cohen proposes "a new theory of human cruelty". His goal, he writes, is to replace the "unscientific" term "evil" with the idea of "empathy erosion": "People said to be cruel or evil are simply at one extreme of the empathy spectrum," he writes . . .
>
> Loss of empathy resembles the Augustinian concept of evil in that it is a deficiency of goodness—or, to put it less moralistically, a disruption of normal functioning—rather than a positive force. In this way at least, Baron-Cohen's theory echoes Augustine's argument, against the Manicheans, that evil is not an independent reality but, in essence, a lack or loss.

Carlisle does recognize that there are issues here, to be taken up in the following week's article. I would observe that Baron-Cohen's theory suffers the criticism that Collingwood is about to give. More simply, to replace evil with a "scientific" concept is to decline to study evil as such.

tions to another.[43] Each action is done by him, by his one indivisible will. Call that will anything you like; say that his self is desire, and you must distinguish between right desires and wrong desires; say that it is spirit, and you must add that spirit may be good or bad. The essence of his good acts is that he might have done a bad one: the essence of his bad, that he—the same he—might have done a good.[44] It is impossible to distinguish between any two categories one of which is necessarily bad and the other necessarily good. We constantly try to do so; we say, for instance, that it is wrong to yield to passion and right to act on principle. But either we beg the question by surreptitiously identifying passion with that which is wrong and principle with that which is right, or we must confess that passions may well be right and that principles are very often wrong. The moral struggle is not a struggle between two different elements in our personality; for

[43] The other part of a person, to which bad actions are attributed, may often be the body. The culmination of Collingwood's thought here may be in *The New Leviathan* [14]:

> **1. 83.** Man as body is *whatever the sciences of body say that he is.* Without their help nothing can be known on that subject: their authority, therefore, is absolute.
>
> **1. 84.** Man as mind is *whatever he is conscious of being.*
>
> . . . .
>
> **2. 4.** The truth is that there is no relation between body and mind. That is, no direct relation; for there is an indirect relation.
>
> **2. 41.** 'The problem of the relation between body and mind' is a bogus problem which cannot be stated without making a false assumption.
>
> **2. 42.** What is assumed is that man is partly body and partly mind. On this assumption questions arise about the relations between the two parts; and these prove unanswerable.
>
> **2. 43.** For man's body and man's mind are not two different things. They are one and the same thing, man himself, as known in two different ways.

[44] In this case there is no distinguishing bad from good, just as in the interpretation suggested in note 38, page 35, of the objection to the "verbal expression" of Augustine's theory.

two different elements, just so far as they are different, cannot ever cross each other's path.[45] What opposes desires for evil

[45] The inadequacy of such an account of moral struggle is perhaps hinted at by Plato's Socrates, even as he introduces such an account, namely the "Chariot Allegory" (described in *Wikipedia* under that title) of the *Phaedrus* [27, 246A]:

> Concerning the immortality of the soul this is enough; but about its form we must speak in the following manner. To tell what it really is would be a matter for utterly superhuman and long discourse, but it is within human power to describe it briefly in a figure; let us therefore speak in that way. We will liken the soul to the composite nature of a pair of winged horses and a charioteer . . .

If it does not ultimately make sense to explain moral struggle as the result of a divided soul, it is still useful, as Jonathan Haidt observes in *The Happiness Hypothesis* [18, pp. 2–4]:

> Human thinking depends on metaphor. We understand new or complex things in relation to things we already know. For example, it's hard to think about life in general, but once you apply the metaphor "life is a journey," the metaphor guides you to some conclusions: You should learn the terrain, pick a direction, find some good traveling companions, and enjoy the trip, because there may be nothing at the end of the road. It's also hard to think about the mind, but once you pick a metaphor it will guide your thinking. Throughout recorded history, people have lived with and tried to control animals, and these animals made their way into ancient metaphors. Buddha, for example, compared the mind to a wild elephant . . .
>
> Plato used a similar metaphor in which the self (or soul) is a chariot, and the calm, rational part of the mind holds the reins . . .
>
> Freud, Plato, and Buddha all lived in worlds full of domesticated animals. They were familiar with the struggle to exert one's will over a creature much larger than the self. But as the twentieth century wore on, cars replaced horses, and technology gave people ever more control over their physical worlds. When people looked for metaphors, they saw the mind as the driver of a car, or as a program running on a computer . . .
>
> Modern theories about rational choice and information processing don't adequately explain weakness of the will. The older metaphors about controlling animals work beautifully. The image that I came up with for myself, as I marveled at my weakness, was that I was a rider on the back of an elephant . . .

I would note two things.

1. Collingwood objects to a two-part soul; but Haidt prefers it to Plato's and Freud's three-part souls.

2. Controlling an animal is not just harder (if it really is) than controlling a machine. It is different, even though people do anthropomorphize or rather *animate* their machines. See for example the *Onion* [30, p. 144]:

is not reason, but desires for good. What opposes egoism—a false valuation of oneself—is not altruism but, as Butler long ago pointed out, a higher egoism, a true valuation of oneself.

Evil, and therefore the Devil, is not a mere negation, not the shadow cast by the light of goodness. Nor is it identical with matter, body, desire, or any other single term of a quasi-Manichaean antithesis. It is something homogeneous with good, and yet not good; neither the mere absence of goodness nor the mere presence of its opposite. We do evil not through lack of positive will, nor yet because we will something definitely and obviously different from good. The first alternative breaks down because doing wrong is a real activity of the will; the second because doing wrong for the sake [**466**] of wrong, if it happens at all, is a very small part of the evil

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Point-Counterpoint: Technology
My Computer Totally Hates Me! (by Vicki Helmholz)
God, Do I Hate That Bitch (by Dell Dimension 4100)

In *The First Mate's Log,* Collingwood himself treats an uncooperative engine as a demonic force [16, p. 77]:

> Talking of wind brings me back to the Diesel. At Prote Channel, the wind failing, we tried to start it. Like the much-enduring god-like Odysseus, it thought of something else, and sprang a new one on us by losing all its compressed air in the twinkling of an eye through the exhaust valves, in a single emphatic hiss.

This shows how machines can be harder to control than animals. From reading *Childcraft* [7] in my own childhood, I recall that, well before then, milk was delivered to houses by horse-drawn carriage. The horses were able to follow the milkman down the street as he walked from door to door. The delivery truck of the milkman of my own childhood could not similarly follow him. He had to go back and drive it himself. He could not develop the same *understanding* with his truck as with his horses. Devotees of technology may say that such understanding will again be possible, by means of computers. But would such computers ever really be like the London cab-horse Strawberry in *The Magician's Nephew* of C. S. Lewis [21, pp. 117 ff.]?

that actually exists.

(iii.) but the counterfeit of good. Hence it depends on good, and total badness is impossible. The evil will is self-contradictory

It is surely the case that the immense majority of crimes are done under a kind of self-deception. We persuade ourselves that this act, which is generally considered a crime, is really when properly understood, or when seen in the light of our peculiar circumstances, a fine and praiseworthy act. Such a plea is not in itself wrong. It is a duty, indeed it is the spring of all moral advance, to criticise current standards of morality and to ask whether this may not be a case where the current rule fails to apply.[46] But though this criticism is not necessarily wrong but is the very essence of right action, it is not necessarily right but is the very essence of evil.[47] To set oneself against current beliefs and practices is the central characteristic of all heroes, and it is equally the central characteristic of all criminals; of Christ and of Lucifer. The difference is not psychological; it is not that the hero has noble and ex-

[46] This is because conformity to a *rule,* that is, being *right,* is only a partial explanation for action, as in note 33, page 30. However, Collingwood is not at present distinguishing *verbally* between dutiful and right action. See also note 59, page 53.

[47] Criticizing standard morality is not *necessarily* a duty. If action according to rule is thought of as being *caused* by the rule, then it is not really action, and so it is not good or evil ("action is precisely that which is not caused," page 26). Usually, by following rules, we live on autopilot, so to speak. Good or evil arises when we question what we are doing, though the question may only be implicit in an action that violates the rule. (We may also question the rule, decide that it is good, and continue to follow it.)

alted sentiments while the criminal gives way to ignoble and debased passions. The essence of crime is the pride of Lucifer, the feeling of nobility and exaltation, of superiority to convention and vulgar prejudice. When we do wrong, we believe, or persuade ourselves, that the opinion which is really the right one, really the expression of moral truth, is a mere fiction or convention; and we represent ourselves as rebels and martyrs for a noble cause.[48]

It may be that some crimes have not this characteristic. At times, perhaps, we act wrongly in the clear understanding that we are doing wrong, while still attaching the right meaning to that word. But when we say, "I know it is wrong, but I intend to do it," we generally mean by "wrong" that which is commonly called wrong; wrong in public opinion, but to our own superior understanding right. Or, what is really the same

[48] These ideas are echoed by Robert Pirsig in *Lila* [26, pp. 129–31] in his consideration of a nineteenth-century Pueblo Indian in Zuñi, New Mexico:

> . . . He thought a better name for him might have been *sorcerer,* or *shaman,* or *brujo,* a Spanish term used extensively in that region that denotes a quite different kind of person. A *brujo* is not a semi-mythical, semi-comic figure that rides a broomstick but a real person who claims religious powers; who acts outside of and sometimes against the local church authorities.
>
> . . . .
>
> The tribal frame of values that condemned the *brujo* and led to his punishment was one kind of good, for which Phaedrus coined the term "static good." Each culture has its own pattern of static good derived from fixed laws and the traditions and values that underlie them. This pattern of static good is the essential structure of the culture itself and defines it. In the static sense the *brujo* was very clearly evil to oppose the appointed authorities of his tribe. Suppose everyone did that? The whole Zuñi culture, after thousands of years of continuous survival, would collapse into chaos.
>
> But in addition there's a *Dynamic* good that is outside of any culture, that cannot be contained by any system of precepts, but has to be continually rediscovered as a culture evolves. Good and evil are not *entirely* a matter of tribal custom. If they were, no tribal change would be possible, since custom cannot change custom. There has to be another source of good and evil outside the tribal customs that produces the tribal change.

thing, we admit that it is "morally wrong" but hold that it has a value other than, and transcending, that of morality; a meaningless phrase if we recollect [**467**] that morality is simply that kind of value which actions possess, so that to judge them by another standard is impossible. Any other standard we apply is morality under another name.*

The essence of evil, then, is that it should set itself up not in opposition, open and proclaimed, to good as good; but that it should set itself up to be the good, standing where it ought not in the holy place and demanding that worship which is due to good alone. Evil is not the absence of good nor yet the opposite of good; it is the counterfeit of good.†

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* People say, for instance, "So-and-so ought to think less about morality, and more about his neighbours' happiness," or the like. But this language means that to consult his neighbours' happiness is a moral duty which So-and-so has been neglecting. Here, as in the similar case of polemics against "morality," the word is misused for "that which people wrongly imagine to be morality." Those writers who expect or exhort mankind to develop into a life beyond good and evil do not quite realise that they regard it as a good thing to be "beyond good and evil." To believe that any standard is the right one to act upon implies believing, or rather is believing, that it is a moral standard.

† It goes without saying that counterfeit goods or false ideals, like true ones, are seldom the peculiar property of any one individual; they are often, though of course not necessarily, common to a family or class or sex or nation. This fact has, however, no bearing on the point at issue; and is only quoted here because of a false value very often attached to it. The ideals I act on are, wherever I get them from, mine; that they should happen to be shared by others is irrelevant. But, it is said, I get them as a matter of fact from others; I have them because others have them; the influence of a corrupt public opinion is of the utmost importance in any concrete account of the evil will.—This language is so common that it is worth while to point out the fallacy it contains. It is another instance of a fictitious entity (in this case "Society") posing as the "explanation" of evil. The alleged explanation contains (1) a vicious circle and (2) a fatal

Now if this is so, it follows that nobody can be entirely and deliberately bad. To be enslaved by a counterfeit of goodness we must know goodness itself; there must be an element of real good in a will before it can ever become evil. And that element of good persists throughout, and is the basis of all hopes of redemption. The force and life of evil comes from the positive experience of good which underlies the evil, [**468**] which alone makes evil possible. Therefore the Devil, just as he cannot will all the evil there is, cannot be fundamentally and perfectly wicked; he is not a wicked angel but a fallen angel, preserving in his fall the tattered remnants of the glory that was his, to be at once the foundation and the abatement of his badness. It is this contradiction in the nature of the evil will that Dante has in mind when, coming to the centre

gap. (1) "Society" consists of Tom, Dick and Harry: if I "get my ideals" from them, where do they "get" theirs from? Presumably from me; unless it is supposed that ideals never change at all, but are simply transmitted *en bloc* from generation to generation. (2) If other people's ideals are bad, they may on that account equally well reproduce themselves in me, or rouse me to reject them. Man's relation to his moral environment is just as much negative as affirmative; and therefore no detail of his moral character can ever be explained by reference to such environment.[49]

[49] The idea is also expressed in *The Principles of History* [15, pp. 100f.]:

> If the reason why it is hard for a man to cross the mountains is because he is frightened of the devils in them, it is folly for the historian, preaching at him across a gulf of centuries, to say 'This is sheer superstition . . . ' Sheer superstition, no doubt: but this superstition is a fact, and the crucial fact in the situation we are considering. The man who suffers for it when he tries to cross the mountains is not suffering merely for the sins of his fathers who taught him to believe in devils, if that is a sin; he is suffering because he has accepted the belief, because he has shared the sin. If the modern historian believes that there are no devils in the mountains, that too is only a belief he has accepted in precisely the same way.

and heart of the Inferno, he finds its lord not triumphant, not proud and happy in his kingdom, but inconsolably wretched.

> Con sci occhi piangeva, e per tre menti
> Gocciava 'l pianto e sanguinosa bava.*

And Milton knows that Satan's mind, in the thought of lost happiness and lasting pain, was filled with torments of huge affliction and dismay; confounded though immortal.

(*c*) The Devil is neither—

In these and kindred accounts of the Devil we recognise a very real and profound truth. But of what kind is this truth? Is it a true portrait of an actual, historical person called Lucifer or Satan who at some time in the remote past rose against God and set himself up as leader of an angelic rebellion? Or is it the true description of a real spirit who, whatever his past history, lives and rules the forces of evil now? Or lastly, is its truth mythical truth? Is Satan simply the type of all evil wills?

(i.) a historical person (Lucifer) nor

In answer to the first of these questions we can only say that such a thing may well have happened. There may have been, at some definite time in the past, war in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon and his angels. We know of countless people who have at various times set up false ideals of truth and of right, and have worshipped those false gods,

* *Inferno*, c. xxxiv. lines 53-4. "With six eyes he wept, and down three chins trickled his tears and blood-stained slaver." Stained, that is, with

instead of the true God. And it may be that there [**469**] was once a person, not a human being but a being of some kind, whose rebellion was of surpassing magnitude and weight, like Arianism among the Christian heresies; and that his name has somehow come down to us as Lucifer. If this is presented as mere history it is not possible to prove or disprove it. But in speaking of the fall of Lucifer do we really mean this, and only this?

It would appear that we mean both more and less. Less, because we hardly believe that Lucifer's fall took place at any actual date. It was "before the beginning of the world"; it has no definite place in our time-series. To ask its date seems incongruous, not because we have no evidence for dating it, but because we do not regard it as quite an event in history. But we also mean more; for we regard Lucifer or the Devil not as a character in past history only, a pretender like Perkin Warbeck,[50] but as a spiritual force about us here and now. His fall is somehow repeated and represented, not merely imitated, in the apparition and collapse of any great force working for evil. There may have been a historical Lucifer, but it is not he, it is no historical person simply as such, of whom we speak as the Devil.[51]

(ii.) a supreme evil will now actual

Is he then the supreme evil power? Is he the Manichaean anti-God whose spirit informs the communion of sinners as

the blood of the traitors whose limbs he was mangling. *Paradise Lost*, c. 1.

[50] Perkin Warbeck (c. 1474–1499), pretender to the English throne during the reign of Henry VII (*Wikipedia*).

[51] But then, as Collingwood will say in such later works as *An Autobiography,* history is not the study of the past as such, but of the remains of the past in the present.

the Holy Spirit informs the communion of saints? No; for we have already seen that there can be no supreme power which directs and controls all the forces of evil. That army is one without discipline, without a leader; the throne of the kingdom of evil is empty, and its government is anarchy.[52] Evil wills exist, but they owe no allegiance to any supreme spirit. They worship evil, they worship the Devil; but their worship is idolatry because they themselves create its god. If the Devil were a real ruler, then worship of him would be within its limits a true religion; but it is false religion, the worship of a phantom.

(iii.) but a myth (type) of all evil wills or devils

[**470**] It remains that we should regard the Devil as a myth. This does not mean that the descriptions of him are untrue, or that they are the product of that fancy whose creations are neither true nor false but merely imaginary. A myth is capable of, and is judged by, a certain kind of truth. Mythology is to the naïve consciousness a form of history; the myth of Herakles to a simple-minded Greek was the biography of a real person. But, as such, it was false. Mythology does not contain historical truth, though it presents itself in a historical form. The truth it contains may perhaps be described as typical truth. Herakles is the type of all strong men who devote their strength to the bettering of human life; and the truth of the myth lies precisely in this, that the story truly presents the real character of the type. This is the difference between mythology and art, the work of the imagination. The mythical person is never quite an individual. He is always something of an abstraction,

[52] Compare the account of fascism and Nazism in *The New Leviathan* [14].

a type rather than a person. In art, on the other hand, the person is not a type but an individual.[53] Hamlet is not typical of any class of men, as Herakles is; he is simply his unique self. An art which forgets the individual and presents the type, an art which generalises, has forgotten its artistic mission and has become mythology.

The Devil is in this sense a myth. He rebels against God and sets himself up for worship, because all evil is rebellion against the true good and the worship of false ideals, of counterfeit goods, of idols. He rules over the kingdom of darkness, and yet his rule is only a mockery, because there is no real unity in evil, though there is a fictitious and spurious unity. He is a laughing-stock to the saints, because evil once seen as evil has no more power over the mind; it only controls those who worship it, who reverence it as good.[54] He torments souls in hell, and is himself tormented, because the evil will is divided against itself and can never reach the unity and harmony which alone characterise [**471**] the good. His strength lies in his infinite disguises; he comes in countless alluring forms, which at the word of power vanish leaving his own naked horror of impotent rage, because evil is never seen as evil by its worshippers; they clothe it in all the forms of beauty and sincerity and virtue, which must be torn away by the wind of truth leaving the idolater face to face with the reality of the thing

[53] To depict a type as such would be craft, a planned activity, and thus not art, by *The Principles of Art* [10].

[54] Compare how barbarism loses power in the *New Leviathan*:

> **41. 7.** What ensures the defeat of barbarism is not so much the enormous diversity of existing civilizations, too numerous for any conqueror to dream of overcoming; it is the literally infinite possibility of varying the nature of the thing called civilization, leaving it recognizable in this diversity; a possibility which will be exploited as soon as success in a barbarian attack stimulates the inventive powers of civilization to look for new channels of development.

he has worshipped till he turns from it in loathing.[55] Christian demonology is a storehouse of observations, not as to the life-history of a single Devil or even of many devils, but as to the nature, growth and development of the evil will.

Are there, then, no spiritual forces which influence man for evil? Are the malign spirits which surround us with temptations a mere mythological description of our own inner wickedness?

There certainly are spiritual forces of evil. But by "spiritual" we do not necessarily mean other than human; still less do we refer to a class of ambiguous beings sometimes physical and sometimes "dematerialised"; the "spirits" of vulgar superstition. There may be personal minds other than those we know as God, man and the lower animals; and if so, they are doubtless good or bad. But, as we saw, no such beings need be postulated to account for human sin; nor would they account for it, if they existed. The spirits whose evil we know are human spirits; and the forces of evil with which we are surrounded are the sins of this human world. The Devil is an immanent spirit of evil in the heart of man, as God is an immanent spirit of goodness. But there is this great difference, that God is transcendent also, a real mind with a life of His own, while the Devil is purely immanent, that is, considered as a person, non-existent.

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[55] Again compare the *New Leviathan*:

> **41. 62.** Where the barbarist scores is at the beginning of his career. His plans have been matured in a peaceful world; when they begin to yield him a harvest, it is from his enemies' point of view too late; they are a world of unprepared victims.
>
> **41. 63.** He has one advantage over his victims, and only one: their unpreparedness. This advantage can be protracted for as long as he can keep the situation fluid. What he must not allow is that the ice should pack round him.

Nor is it even entirely true to say that the Devil is immanent. For that would imply that evil is a principle one and the same in all evil acts; and this it cannot be, for while good acts all form part of one [**472**] whole of goodness, evil acts have no parallel unity. There is no communion of sinners; they live not in communion with one another, but in mutual strife. There is not one immanent Devil, but countless immanent devils, born in a moment and each in a moment dying to give place to another, or else to that re-entering spirit of good which is always one and the same.[56]

The devils within us are our own evil selves. But this does not mean that they cannot come, in a sense, from without. When one man infects another with his own badness, it is quite literal truth to say that a devil goes from one to the other; and there may be a kind of unity, a kind of momentary kingdom of evil, when the same devil seizes upon a large number of people and they do in a crowd things which no man would do by himself.[57] There may even be a more lasting kingdom

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[56] Compare the language of *The New Leviathan* [14, p. 33]:

> **5. 5.** Another ambiguity about feelings is that they are *evanescent.* They are things that begin to perish as soon as they begin to exist. They may be described as one of his princes, we are told, described the life of man to King Edwin: 'like the swift flight of a sparrow through the hall wherein you sit at supper with your commanders and ministers, a good fire in the midst, while storms of rain and snow rage abroad; the sparrow, flying in at one door and out at once from the other, vanishes from your eyes into the dark winter night from which it came. So the life of man appears for a short space, but what went before, and what is to come after, we know not at all' (Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* 11. xii).

[57] Compare *The Principles of Art* [10, p. 230]:

> There is a kind of emotional contagion which takes effect without any intellectual activity; without the presence even of consciousness. This is a familiar fact, alarming because it seems so inexplicable, in man. The spread of panic through a crowd is not due to each person's being independently frightened, nor to any communication by speech; it happens in the complete absence of

where an institution or a class keeps alive for generations a false ideal. And since evil influences may affect us from books, from places, from the weather, we tend naturally to think of devils as inhabiting these things. Are we here back again in mythology? There really is a devil—a spirit of evil—in a bad person; is there one, in the same sense, in a wood or in the east wind?

It is a difficult question to answer, since it depends on how far each of these things has a self, and how far the selfhood which to us it seems to have is really conferred upon it by our own thought. To us the east wind is a definite thing; and so to us it can be a devil. But is it a definite thing to itself? Is the influence it exerts upon us its own influence, or is it only the reflexion in it of our own nature? Perhaps it is best to leave the question open.[58] There may be devils in places and in things which we generally regard as inanimate; but those which we know exist in the human mind. Of these the Devil of orthodoxy is a type or myth; a myth not in the colloquial sense in which the word means a fiction or illusion, but in the [**473**] proper sense which we have explained above. And the truth of the orthodox belief consists in the fact that it does with perfect accuracy describe the real nature of the evil will. But as soon as the mythical nature of the belief is forgotten, as

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these things, each person becoming terrified simply because his neighbour is terrified.

[58] In the last chapter, "Miracle," of *Religion and Philosophy* [8, p. 212], Collingwood concludes that everything that happens is an act of will:

> Granted—and by now we seem bound to grant—that a ball, let drop, falls in virtue not of an inexorable law but of a volition, and that the volition might will otherwise, we may still say that the possibility of a ball's thus changing its habits need not seriously disturb our practical calculations.

soon as the Devil is taken not as a type of all evil wills but as their actual supreme ruler, then the step has been taken from truth to superstition, from Christianity to Manichaeism.[59]

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[59] By the account in *Speculum Mentis* [9, pp. 122–127], religion confuses the myth for the idea behind it:

> The key to the comprehension of religion is a principle which in religion itself exists only implicitly. This principle is the distinction between symbol and meaning.
>
> Religion is a structure of sensuous or imaginary elements, like art, and—for that matter—like every other form of consciousness. These elements in religion take the form partly of mythological pictures and narratives, partly of acts of worship; these two being the objective and subjective sides of the same reality . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> If . . . we say, 'To-day I will glorify God by weeding my garden or playing tennis instead of going to church,' . . . our parish priest will reply that God has appointed his own means of grace, which to neglect is to neglect God . . . for we have been trespassing on the implicitness of the religious symbol and so breaking away from the religious attitude. This is in itself a legitimate act . . . But if it shelters itself under the cloak of religion, it becomes hypocritical . . . It is irreligion arguing in the name of religion.
>
> But the strange thing is that this very attitude, irreligion appearing in the guise of religion, is typical of religion itself in its highest manifestations. The great saints really do find God everywhere . . .

The underlined sentence is an echo of one from page 42 above, "It is a duty, indeed it is the spring of all moral advance, to criticise current standards of morality."

III. Application to Prayer—

(*a*) Idolatry or devil-worship is the worship of the immediate self as it is (creation of a god in man's image)

How does all this affect the theory and practice of prayer? "The Devil" in any given case is simply the person who is sinning; the wickedness into which he has made himself. Therefore devil-worship is first and primarily self-worship. Self-worship is not necessarily bad; the "religion of humanity" may mean the worship of God as revealed in and through human goodness. But in that case it is not mere self-worship, but the worship of the God immanent in ourselves. Worship of the self pure and simple must always be devil-worship, for it is only the bad self that can be called self pure and simple. The good self is always something more than self; it is self informed and directed by the spirit of God. Man is only alone in the world when he has expelled the spirit of God from his heart and lives a life of evil; for there is no great central power of evil upon which he can then depend as in the alternative case he depends on God. The vacant sanctuary can only be filled with an idol created by man for his own worship; and this idol is the Brocken-spectre on the fog, the gigantic shadow of man himself when he turns away from the sunlight.

Idolatry, self-worship and devil-worship are one and the same thing; and they are identical with evil in general. For that false ideal which, in evil, takes the place due to the true ideal or

God, is always our self, or rather a magnified reflexion of our self. Intellectual evil consists in setting up that which I believe as the standard of truth, whereas I ought rather to test and [**474**] if necessary reject my beliefs by comparing them with reality.[60] Moral evil consists not so much in yielding to desires which I know to be wrong as in erecting my moral standards and judgments into the sole test of rightness. In every case alike evil arises when man takes himself, exactly as he stands, for the measure of all things; for in that case he is setting up a god in his own image and worshipping idols.

(*b*) True worship is self-creation in the image of God

True religion lies not in making God in our image, but in making ourselves in God's image; for God alone exists, and

[60] This is why I think the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* in its article on Aesthetics [31], is misleading to suggest that Collingwood "took art to be a matter of self-expression," even though Collingwood does say, in *The Principles of Art* [10, p. 151],

> By creating for ourselves an imaginary experience or activity, we express our emotions; and this is what we call art.

Creating *for* ourselves is not expression of our *selves* as opposed to reality. Collingwood sketches the distinction here in *Religion and Philosophy,* in the chapter called "Matter" [8, p. 93], concerning this as distinguished from mind:

> A boot is more adequately described in terms of mind—by saying who made it and what he made it for—than in terms of matter. And in the case of all realities alike, it seems that the materialistic insistence on their objectivity is too strong; for it is not true that we are unable to alter or create facts, or even that we cannot affect the course of purely "inanimate" nature. Materialism, in short, is right as against those theories which make the world an illusion or a dream of my own individual mind; but while it is right to insist on objectivity, it goes too far in describing the objective world not only as something different from, and incapable of being created or destroyed by, my own mind, but as something different and aloof from mind in general.

man is only struggling into existence for good or evil. In order to attain to any existence worth having, we must bear in mind that truth, reality, God, are real things existing quite independently of our individual life and private opinions; and an opinion is no less private if it happens to be shared by the whole human race. The type of all false religion is to believe what we will to believe, instead of what we have ascertained to be true; supposing that reality must be such as to satisfy our desires,[61] and if not, go to, let us alter it. This is no ultimate, inexplicable fact; it follows necessarily from the truth that man's nature is as yet unformed, incomplete; it is, in the great phrase of an English philosopher,* "in process of being communicated to him"; and in that incomplete shape it is incapable of being the standard of anything. It is itself in need of a standard, and that standard, which for science is Reality,

* T. H. Green.

[61] Religion seems often condemned on the grounds that a cruel God does not deserve worship. Such condemnation would seem to be based on the presumption that belief is an act of will. By one account—probably inaccurate—the Yazidis belie this presumption, but face reality in the most practical way, even if they do believe in a principle of evil. In *On Horseback Through Asia Minor* [4, p. 257], a first-person account of a journey taken in 1876 by a British military officer, Captain Frederick Burnaby writes:

> The Yezeeds' religion, if such it may be called, is based upon the following dogma: that there are two spirits—a spirit of good and a spirit of evil. Allah, the spirit of good, can do no harm to any one, and is a friend to the human race. The spirit of evil can do a great deal of harm, and he is the cause of all our woes. From this starting-point the Yezeeds have been brought to believe that it is a waste of time to worship the spirit of good, who will not hurt them, and that the proper course to pursue is to try and propitiate the spirit of evil, who can be very disagreeable if he chooses. To do so they never venture to make use of the name of the devil, as this they believe would be an act of disrespect to their infernal master.

Burnaby does go on to attribute his information to Turks; it is repudiated by a Yazidi host.

for religion is God.

Man's life is a becoming; and not only becoming, but self-creation. He does not grow under the direction and control of irresistible forces. The force that shapes him is his own will. All his life is an effort to attain to real human nature. But human nature, since man is at bottom spirit, is only exemplified in the absolute spirit of God. Hence man must shape himself in God's image, or he ceases to be even human and becomes diabolical. This self-creation must also be [**475**] self-knowledge; not the self-knowledge of introspection, the examination of the self that is, but the knowledge of God, the self that is to be.[62] Knowledge of God is the beginning, the centre and end, of human life.

(*c*) This implies knowledge of God, *i.e.* communion with Him or prayer

A painter makes his picture perfect by looking back from moment to moment at the vision which he is trying to reproduce.[63] A scientist perfects his theory by testing it at every

[62] Collingwood has an issue with introspection. See *The New Leviathan* [14, ch. XI, p. 77]:

> **11. 36.** The importance of the distinction between true and false desires becomes evident as soon as one reflects on the importance for all practical life of 'knowing what you want'. Someone completely in the grip of confusion might say: 'Important no doubt, but childishly easy: all you need is introspection (meaning reflection), and that gives you infallibly the right answer.' But reflection does not give you any answer at all, let alone an infallible one.
>
> **11. 37.** The 'Vanity of Human Wishes' does not lie in men's desiring what is not to be had or what, if obtainable, is unobtainable by themselves. It lies in their being mistaken as to what they want . . .

[63] Collingwood refines this idea in *The Principles of Art* [10, p. 281]:

> The watching of his own work with a vigilant and discriminating eye, which

point by the facts of nature. So the religious life must come back again and again to the contemplation of its ideal in God. But God is a person, not a thing; a mind, not an object. We contemplate objects, but we do not contemplate persons. The attitude of one mind to another is not contemplation but communion; and communion with God is prayer. Prayer may not be the whole of religion, but it is the touchstone of it. All religion must come to the test of prayer; for in prayer the soul maps out the course it has taken and the journey it has yet to make, reviewing the past and the future in the light of the presence of God.

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decides at every moment of the process whether it is being successful or not, is not a critical activity subsequent to, and reflective upon, the artistic work, it is an integral part of that work itself. A person who can doubt this, if he has any grounds at all for his doubt, is presumably confusing the way an artist works with the way an incompetent student in an art-school works; painting blindly, and waiting for the master to show him what it is that he has been doing.

Compare the account of logic as educational in the note in the Appendix, page 62 in particular.

[Appendix]

This is the continuation of the editor's note 15, page 16. As Collingwood will say in *The Principles of Art* [10, p. 157],

> There is nothing in the case of feeling to correspond with what, in the case of thinking, may be called mis-thinking or thinking wrong.

As he tells it in that book and in *An Essay on Metaphysics,* psychology is the science of feeling, while ethics and logic are sciences of thought: practical thought and theoretical thought respectively. Moreover,

> a science of feeling must be 'empirical' (i.e. devoted to ascertaining and classifying 'facts' or things susceptible of observation), but a science of thought must be 'normative', or (as I prefer to call it) 'criteriological', i.e. concerned not only with the 'facts' of thought but also with the 'criteria' or standards which thought imposes on itself.

Thus *The Principles of Art* [10, p. 171 n.]; in the later *Essay on Metaphysics* [13, ch. X, pp. 106–111], Collingwood elaborates on the judgment of thought *by* thought. He contrasts it with the judgment of a physical process:

> Greek thinkers, and the same is true of medieval and even Renaissance thinkers down to the time of which I am speaking [in the sixteenth century], did not regard 'trying', or aiming at a definite end, as something peculiar to mind. They did not believe, as many people believed in the seventeenth century and later, that bodies merely functioned mechanically . . . What they regarded as peculiar to mind was not

> having ends but being aware of this and having opinions, in some cases knowledge, as to what its own ends were.
>
> . . . An organism unconsciously seeking its own preservation will simply on any given occasion either score another success or score for the first and last time a failure. A mind aiming at the discovery of a truth or the planning of a course of conduct will not only score a success or failure, it will also think of itself as scoring a success or failure; and since a thought may be either true or false its thought on this subject will not necessarily coincide with the facts. Any piece of thinking, theoretical or practical, includes as an integral part of itself the thought of a standard or criterion by reference to which it is judged a successful or unsuccessful piece of thinking. Unlike any kind of bodily or physiological functioning, thought is a self-criticizing activity. The body passes no judgement upon itself. Judgement is passed upon it by its environment, which continues to support it and promote its well-being when it pursues its ends successfully and injures or destroys it when it pursues them otherwise. The mind judges itself, though not always justly.

I would suggest that it is not so important that bodies do *not* judge themselves as that thoughts *do.* Presently Collingwood explains the intended meaning of "criteriological":

> . . . the word 'normative' may prove misleading. It conveys by its form the suggestion that the standard or criterion to which it refers is a criterion belonging to the practitioner of the science thus described, and used by him to judge whether the thinking which he studies has been well or ill done; as if it were for the logician to decide whether a non-logician's thoughts are true or false and his arguments valid or invalid, and for the student of ethics to pass judgement on the actions of other people as having succeeded or failed in their purpose. This suggestion is incorrect . . . To avoid that misleading

> suggestion I propose to substitute for the traditional epithet 'normative' the more accurate term 'criteriological'.

I think even this elaboration is not enough. If the logician's job were *simply* to assess the non-logician's thinking by the non-logician's own standards, then logic would be an empirical science. The logician must *identify* the non-logician's standards, which are not (or not fully) known to the non-logician himself (this is what keeps him or her from being called a logician). But we can recognize somebody else's standards as such, only if we have standards of our own. If the standards are not absolutely the *same,* at least they should be connected by an "historical process," in the sense of *An Autobiography* [11, p. 62]:

> . . . Plato's *Republic* is an attempt at a theory of one thing; Hobbes's *Leviathan* an attempt at a theory of something else.
>
> There is, of course, a connexion between these two things; but it is not the kind of connexion that the 'realists' thought it was. Anybody would admit that Plato's *Republic* and Hobbes's *Leviathan* are about two things which are in one way the same thing and in another way different. That is not in dispute. What is in dispute is the kind of sameness and the kind of difference. The 'realists' thought that the sameness was the sameness of a 'universal', and the difference the difference between two instances of that universal. But this is not so. The sameness is the sameness of an historical process, and the difference is the difference between one thing which in the course of that process has turned into something else, and the other thing into which it has turned.

This idea of connecting things by an historical process needs investigation in the light of such objections as Strauss's [32, p. 563]:

> If the modern Western historian studies Greek civilization, he may be said to re-enact the genesis of his own civiliza-

> tion . . . But the case of the modern Western historian who studies Chinese or Inca civilizations is obviously different. Collingwood did not reflect on this difference. He justly rejected Spengler's view that "there is no possible relation whatever between one culture and another." But he failed to consider the fact that there are cultures which have no actual relations with one another, and the implications of this fact: he dogmatically denied the possibility of "separate, discrete" cultures because it would destroy the dogmatically assumed "continuity of history" as universal history. [a]

Thus logic today (or "Western" logic) may have developed from Aristotle's; but apparently it did not develop from the Buddhist and Jain logic studied for example by Priest [28, 29]. One might however talk about two threads of thought that can be traced back to a common node, as the Sanskrit and Greek languages are traced back to Proto-Indo-European.

Without passing judgment on the study of Buddhist logic, I think logic must suppose that non-logicians of today, at least, can ultimately recognize the logician's standards as their own. Logic must seek this recognition and be judged on whether it achieves this recognition. Thus logic—and indeed any criteriological science—is fundamentally *educational.*

An example of an attempt at education in this sense is in Collingwood's 1935 essay, "The Historical Imagination," which was made into §2 of the Epilegomena of *The Idea of History* [12, pp. 231–49]. According to the "common-sense theory" of history,

> the essential things in history are memory and authority. If an event or a state of things is to be historically known, first of all some one must be acquainted with it; then he must remember it; then he must state his recollection in terms

[a] Strauss here cites *The Idea of History* [12, pp. 161–64 & 183].

> intelligible to another; and finally that other must accept the statement as true. History is thus the believing some one else when he says that he remembers something.

The person who tells us what he remembers becomes our authority; his words, a "sacred text." But this is not quite right:

> when we reflect on our own work, we seem to accept what I have called the common-sense theory, while claiming our own rights of [(1)] selection, [(2)] construction, and [(3)] criticism.

That is, (1) *we* decide which statements, and of whom, to accept as authoritative; (2) we fill in gaps in the existing historical accounts; and (3) we question the authorities, as in the following example:

> a commander's dispatches may claim a victory; the historian, reading them in a critical spirit, will ask: 'If it was a victory, why was it not followed up in this or that way?' and may thus convict the writer of concealing the truth.

Thus the common-sense theory has not found our real criterion:

> The historian's autonomy is here manifested in its extremist form, because it is here evident that somehow, in virtue of his activity as an historian, he has it in his power to reject something explicitly told him by his authorities and to substitute something else. If this is possible, the criterion of historical truth cannot be the fact that a statement is made by an authority. It is the truthfulness and the information of the so-called authority that are in question; and this question the historian has to answer for himself, on his own authority. Even if he accepts what his authorities tell him, therefore, he accepts it not on their authority but on his own; not because they say it, but because it satisfies his criterion of historical truth.

What is this criterion? According to Collingwood, Bradley, "the greatest English philosopher of our time," finds the criterion in "that our experience of the world teaches us that some kinds of things happen and others do not." This is what we use to *criticize* the authorities—(3) above. But the criterion is inadequate: it tells us only what *can* happen, and it tells us what can happen, only insofar as it is a *natural* occurrence, as opposed to an historical event. The laws of nature do not change, but what historical figures can do (such as expose infants by way of population control) does change.

Collingwood finds the criterion of historical truth in our ability to *construct* what the authorities do not tell us—(2):

> The historian's picture of his subject, whether that subject be a sequence of events or a past state of things, thus appears as a web of imaginative construction stretched between certain fixed points provided by the statements of his authorities.

Each of these fixed points—accepted as in (1) above—is a *datum*:

> . . . But when we ask what gives historical thought this datum, the answer is obvious: historical thought gives it to itself, and therefore in relation to historical thought at large it is not a datum but a result or achievement.
>
> . . . .
>
> His web of imaginative construction, therefore, cannot derive its validity from being pegged down, as at first I described it, to certain given facts . . . The criterion that justifies him in making [the statement of some fact] can never be the fact that it has been given him by an authority.
>
> This brings me back to the question what this criterion is. And at this point a partial and provisional answer can be given. The web of imaginative construction is something

> far more solid and powerful than we have hitherto realized. So far from relying for its validity upon the support of given facts, it actually serves as the touchstone by which we decide whether alleged facts are genuine . . .

In a word, the criterion of historical truth is our own imaginative construction of history (which may *begin* with what we ourselves experience, without having to rely on any other authority).

I don't know that Collingwood speaks of *normative* sciences as distinct from criteriological sciences; but medicine would seem to normative, because it seeks to establish its own norms for sickness and health. The body may be said to have its own standards, which medicine does well to pay attention to. For example, a fever expresses the body's judgment that its standards have been violated. However, the body's judgment can be in error: at least, the body's judgment of what should be *done* can be in error. It may be found medically necessary to lower a fever. The body's own "agreement" on this finding is not sought before action is taken.

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