

THE SPECTATOR-PARTICIPANT PROBLEM
A CRITICAL STUDY
OF OBJECTIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY
IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

A THESIS
PRESENTED TO
the Faculty of the Department of Philosophy
University of Manitoba

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Arts

by
Edward Hugh Wallace

April 1948

BL
27
.U59
1948
v. 5

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED . . .	1
II. HENRI BERGSON'S THEORY OF METAPHYSICAL INTUITION	8
III. THE PROBLEM IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY . . .	27
G. W. F. Hegel	32
Arthur Schopenhauer.	40
Benedetto Croce.	45
Charles Beard	50
Theodore C. Smith	54
Charles Beard	56
Lord Acton	59
R. C. Collingwood.	60
F. J. C. Hearnshaw	73
IV. THE PROBLEM AND AN ANSWER.	76
BIBLIOGRAPHY	81

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

The term "spectator-participant problem" does not refer to any very new or modern problem of thought and action but rather, it refers to a problem which has long been known to exist in the thoughts of men. The problem is one of a basic conflict between theory and practice in some respects, but more broadly between the objective and the subjective approach to life in general and to philosophy and history in particular. It is a conflict which arises each time man makes any attempt to judge or describe one of his fellows. The conflict appears in all ranges of experience and is therefore one of which we as thinking beings must take cognizance.

In any act of representation - verbal description or artistic reproduction - two fundamental methods lie open to the one making the representation. He is aware that there is an object which he is attempting to describe or portray and thus he can either strive to represent or reproduce that object as it actually exists and is presented to his view without any colouration or modification from his own personality, or else he can strive to represent that object as he sees it in the light of his own knowledge and experience. The first

approach is, of course, the objective approach, and the second is the subjective. The first seeks to negate the personality which is doing the representing and the second seeks to embellish and enrich the object by reference to the personality of the one concerned. The objective approach attempts to get at the truth of the matter, while the subjective approach, though none the less concerned with the truth, realizes the impossibility of ever really getting outside of itself, and therefore seeks to obtain as great a degree of truth as is possible through the medium of a human mind with all its complexities.

The title of this paper is derived in part from an article written by Professor T. A. Goudge, "The Spectator Fallacy" printed in the Journal of Philosophy for January 1, 1942. In his discussion Goudge attempts to discredit the well-established notion that the philosopher is some sort of disembodied spirit who lives in an "ivory tower" and, in the words of Plato, is "the spectator of all time and all existence".¹ By the majority of men this statement is taken to mean that the primary relation of the philosopher to the world in which he is forced to live is one of "detached contemplation". He is constrained by their thinking to adopt

¹ Republic Book 6

the position of an onlooker, or "spectator", and only in so doing will he be able to theorize successfully as to the nature and content of life. Goudge holds this whole opinion to be false and the problem to which such a position gives rise he calls "the spectator fallacy".

Goudge then proceeds to give the widely accepted distinction between theory and practice - a distinction which leads easily into such fallacious thinking as outlined above. To most people theory refers to the purely mental operations of thought or reflection, while practice involves actual physical, motor activity by which some changes in the immediate environment are affected. Humanity in general tends to place more significance upon the latter - the practical side of life - than on the former, - the theoretical. While man is in the first instance a motor-being, that is, his purpose seems primarily to be the actual physical transformation in one way or another of this, his universe, we tend to forget or at best minimize the mental, theoretical processes which govern and direct this motor activity. We are all well acquainted with the old maxim that we should practise what we preach, yet more often than not, what we practise tends to become divorced from what we preach. Herein lies the great danger of the spectator fallacy - the theories of man cease to

be given validity in terms of their operation in fact. We disassociate our ideas from our actions and make neither responsible to the other.

Gouge claims much of the blame for this division can be laid at the feet of the philosophers themselves whose professional utterances often tend to be at complete variance with their own conduct. They give the reader an impression of complete detachment from the world. They construct theories which, in themselves have a certain merit, yet when referred to the world of experience are completely invalidated due to a basic inconsistency with both their own and others actions. Professor Broad has referred to these as "silly theories", and such a theory is "one which may be held at the time when one is talking or writing professionally, but which only an inmate of a lunatic asylum would think of carrying into daily life".² He cites as examples here the very extreme schools of behaviorism and certain "ideal" systems of philosophy.

The inference, of course, is fairly obvious, and it is from this that the suggestion comes for the second part of the title of this paper. The remedy for the spectator fallacy lies in practice, in participation in the actual working out of

² Gouge, op. cit., p.16

the theories. Herein lies an excellent test of their validity, i.e., if they can have a basis in experience. The mutual conditioning then of theory and practice constitutes the panacea for the ills herein mentioned.

However this is only a small part of our particular problem and has been cited by way of introduction and explanation of our title. Professor Goudge has utilized Plato's term "spectator" in the sense of a detached "ivory tower" meditator, while in reality, I believe Plato had a much wider meaning in mind when he used the term. Plato's philosopher was truly to be a participant in every sense of the word, for he was to be the "philosopher-king" and when the republic would be set up the philosopher would play the most integral part in its organization. By a shift of emphasis then, we find Plato's "spectator" becoming our "participant". Who then is to play the part of our spectator? Here we fall into line with Professor Goudge's usage but we further look for information in Henri Bergson's ideas of metaphysical intuition.

Bergson, as we shall see, develops a theory of metaphysical intuition (which theory is not altogether new to philosophy) in which the knowing mind seeks to place itself wholly and completely within the object to be known. The

purpose of this is to exclude all extraneous thoughts and notions so as to gain knowledge that is complete and immediate. Though this theory seems to imply direct participation, for our purposes it must be called a spectator theory because it excludes all participation in the subject by the mind of the knower. He must keep himself completely out of the picture in an effort to become one with his object. Then too, intuition in the Bergsonian sense, results in a severing or departmentalizing of the process under consideration. In the study of history, for example, intuition is akin to the theories of the objective historians of the nineteenth century, who tried to see things as they actually happened, and attempted to keep themselves completely out of the study.

Now that we have our terms explained, to which field of thought will we apply them? To my mind the field of history and historiography is a very real example of the presence of a spectator-participant problem. In the writing of history, among many others there are two very prominent schools of thought. The first is the objective school, to which I apply our term "spectator". The historians who subscribe to this way of thinking regard themselves as passive spectators of the game of history, to which game they bring no preconceived

notions, no subjectivity - nothing but the blank, fact-hungry stare of the spectator. In direct contrast to this we have the historians of the subjective or participant school, who regard history as the creation of their own minds, who feel that to give history life and meaning is to give it the personality of their interpretation. They regard themselves as active agents in the stream of history, a stream to which they find it impossible to come in any other guise than that of themselves, fallible men but with a wealth of experience to guide their deliberations.

Such is the content of the problem. In the following pages I propose to examine various philosophies of history from this standpoint and attempt to draw some conclusions for the future. To provide a philosophic basis for our study, I will begin with a consideration of Henri Bergson and his theory of the metaphysical intuition, for in this theory there is much which is closely allied to the objective approach to history - the "spectator" point of view.

CHAPTER II

HENRI BERGSON'S THEORY OF METAPHYSICAL INTUITION

Henri Bergson, a French philosopher, is known principally for his monumental work called "Creative Evolution", a work in which philosophy is combined with biology to give a pattern or system whereby he shows that man has undergone and constantly is undergoing a process of evolution, the impulse of which comes from a life force, called the "élan vital". Along with the theory of evolution, Bergson has developed a theory of intuition - "metaphysical intuition" as he calls it, and in a lecture entitled "Introduction to Metaphysics" given in 1911, this theory is set forth. In the light of our ensuing discussion of historiography, an examination of this doctrine will prove of great benefit, from the point of view of the relation of the historian to his subject.

In his essay Bergson begins by outlining two basic ways which we have of knowing anything. The first is a type of circumnavigation, in which the knower approaches his object from all possible points of view, and attempts to go all around the subject. The method employs points of view and depends for much of its knowledge on symbols - representations of the real object. Bergson illustrates this first method by an analogy with the way in which we know the characters of a novel or a

play. We know them from our own point of view and by means of the various artistic symbols - gestures, speeches, actions - which give us a familiarity with that person. This knowledge he terms "relative" for it is only had mediatedly and by means of relationships with other things.

The second type or method of knowing implies a complete entering into the object of knowledge. This employs no points of view nor does it depend on any symbols or relationships. It is a knowledge immediately gained, where nothing interposes between the knower and the object to be known. The analogy of the novel and the stage is here also employed. How much greater would our appreciation of various characters become if we were to become one with them, to see things through their eyes and think out problems with their minds! This is where intuition enters for it is only by an effort of intuition that we can achieve such a unique projection of mind. This second way of knowing is termed "absolute" for we know the object absolutely, immediately, without benefit or hindrance of anything coming between us and the object known. We enter into it "by an effort of imagination", we grasp it from within, "in what it is itself".

In delineation of character in a novel, the author attempts by means of his descriptions to describe in its

entirety the character concerned. This is really futile, says Bergson, when you compare the results of such a method to those which would be obtained if the reader could for an instant make himself at one with the character being studied. In such a situation the reader would get his knowledge of the character directly from its source, from the essential nature of that person. No action of his would have to be explained by reference to other things because the reader is part of him and such reference would be superfluous. The impression given would be one of completeness and wholeness.

By means of the relative way of knowing an entirely different view is had each time some new characteristic is added to those already known for then the frame of reference becomes larger and the total picture takes on new meaning. Thus all these traits and characteristics are signs or symbols by which the author makes the character known to the reader, and each time signs or symbols are employed the reader immediately is placed outside the character and he becomes an observer or a spectator. He is unable to grasp the thing in its essence or "absoluteness". Thus, according to Bergson's way of thinking, any description, any history, or any analysis is of necessity pitched on the level of relative knowledge, for it is only by means of a complete coincidence with the character that we can

possess or obtain absolute knowledge.

Absolute knowledge can only be had by means of intuition, while relative knowledge is to be had by analysis:

We call intuition here the sympathy by which one is transported into the interior of an object in order to coincide with what there is unique and consequently inexpressible in it. Analysis, on the contrary, is the operation which reduces the object to elements already known, that is, common to that object and to others.... Analyzing then consists in expressing a thing in terms of what it is not. All analysis is thus a translation, a development into symbols, a representation taken from successive points of view from which are noted a corresponding number of contacts between the new object under consideration and others believed to be already known. In its eternally unsatisfied desire to embrace the object around which it is condemned to turn, analysis multiplies endlessly the points of view in order to complete the ever incomplete representation, varies interminably the symbols with the hope of perfecting the always imperfect translation. It is analysis ad infinitum.¹

While the above description makes clear the workings of analysis, it also serves by way of contrast to make more explicit the workings of intuition. However, it is of the utmost importance at this point to make clear exactly what is and what is not implied in the term "intuition". In a short but excellent treatise entitled "The Aesthetic Theory of Bergson", by Arthur Szathmary, it is made very certain both what we are and what we are not to read into the term:

To the question, then, whether intuition is to be taken in the vague inward sense we must reply in the negative.

¹ Bergson, The Creative Mind, p. 190

When Bergson says that in order to perceive an object 'absolutely' we must 'place ourselves within it', he obviously does not mean this in any literal sense. He does not mean that we are to become one with the object by some kind of spiritual projection of ourselves. But what we may interpret him to mean by such statements is this: In the act of intuition there is an internal response, which arises from the direct feeling of the qualities of an object. This response is a part of the 'inner life'; but it must not be overemphasized at the expense of the 'outer' presentations. Both elements are integral to the experience of intuition. In this light, intuition appears again as an aesthetic notion, and we are saved from the dark confusions of mystical interpretation.²

As we shall shortly see, this is in some respects the approach that Collingwood makes to history. However there is a very fundamental difference, a difference which must not be overlooked. While Bergson completely excludes any interpretation on the part of the knowing mind, Collingwood maintains the personality of the historian in the process of knowing. Collingwood seeks to re-think the thoughts of the agents, while Bergson attempts to see the complete personality of the agent.

Bergson continues with an explanation of just what means must be employed to grasp this intuitive vision of things:

If there exists a means of possessing a reality

² Szathmary, *op. cit.*, p. 28

absolutely, instead of knowing it relatively, of placing oneself within it instead of adopting points of view toward it, of having the intuition of it instead of making the analysis of it, in short, of grasping it over and above all expression, translation or symbolical representation, metaphysics is that very means. Metaphysics is therefore the science which claims to dispense with symbols.³

The process of knowing by means of an intuition, claims Bergson, is especially valuable and in fact indispensable when dealing with ideas in a process or ideas of duration, such ideas, for example, as one encounters when considering history. These types of ideas can only be viewed with any degree of objectivity by means of an intuition of them. Concepts or images are inadequate representations of that which the intuition affords. When concepts or images are formed in such a situation, each retains of the object or idea under scrutiny only those characteristics which it has in common with others of the same order, and each expresses only those characteristics by which a comparison may be made with others closely associated to them.⁴

But as the comparison has brought a resemblance, and as a property seems very much as though it were a part of the object possessing it, we are easily persuaded that by juxtaposing concepts to concepts we shall recompose the whole of the object with its parts and obtain from

³ Bergson, op. cit., p. 191

⁴ Ibid., p. 196

it, so to speak, an intellectual equivalent.⁵

We think that by assiduously gathering together various ideas or concepts which have a bearing upon the object, we are thereby forming a truly accurate representation or picture of it. It is in such thinking that we are committing an error, for no matter how accurate and intimate these concepts may appear, they yet remain nothing more than an artificial representation of the real. General and impersonal aspects are all that these concepts can symbolize and, as Bergson adds, "therefore it is vain to believe that through them one can grasp a reality when all they present is its shadow".⁶

A concrete example of how such fallacious thinking can be applied is taken from psychology. In psycho-analysis, the psychologist seeks to probe into the innermost recesses of the patient's being and personality, with a view to obtaining an extraordinary appreciation of his essential nature. However, to do this, the analyst attempts to isolate certain pertinent aspects of the patient's makeup, in order to view each separate state more completely. In so doing the psychologist tends to disregard all the multifarious shadings and emphases of the whole personality which cannot do anything but effect that

⁵ Loc. cit.

⁶ Ibid., p. 196

particular aspect under consideration. Thus, according to Bergson, the psychologist is guilty of the crime of expecting an unusually comprehensive view by lining up particular states, one beside the other, in a semi mechanical fashion.

To further substantiate his argument Bergson presents an analogy of the artist, who is busy making sketches of particular aspects of the city of Paris. He might choose to sketch Notre Dame, the Louvre, Montmartre, La Place de la Concorde - each of which to him represents Paris. He has seen Paris both as a single comprehensive whole and in its particular, minute aspects. Therefore it is possible for the artist to go from these particular, isolated sketches to an appreciation or idea of the whole of Paris. However, the case is entirely different for the person who has never seen Paris, and who can only look at these particular sketches. It is utterly impossible for this person to have any comprehensive appreciation of Paris as a single entity, with only these sketches as food for his thought. To him these sketches can represent nothing more than Notre Dame, the Louvre and so on.

The point is made and stressed repeatedly that true reality is only to be grasped by intuition, and not by a handling or manipulation of concepts, nor is it possible to go from concepts to intuition.

But the mistake is to believe that with these schemas one could recompose the real. It cannot be too often repeated: from intuition one can pass on to analysis, but not from analysis to intuition.⁷

By analysis, of course, is meant the critical examination of concepts, in much the same way as is done by the psycho-analyst in his work. The same point is re-affirmed a few pages further on.

It is to forget that if metaphysics is possible, it can only be an effort to re-ascend the slope natural to the work of thought, to place oneself immediately, through a délation of the mind, in the thing one is studying, in short, to go from reality to concepts and not from concepts to reality.⁸

To sum up his discussion of the metaphysical intuition, Bergson outlines in a progressive series the various principles or assumptions upon which rests his theory of the method of this intuition. I will mention very briefly the essence of each principle.

I "There is an external reality which is given immediately to our mind."⁹

II "This reality is mobility." This is to say that everything is flowing or is in motion, with the result that

7 Ibid., p. 213

8 Ibid., p. 216

9 Ibid., p. 222

there are no states or fixed points.

III Therefore our minds which require something more solid upon which to base any knowledge must imagine or create such "states" and "things".

IV "It is understood that fixed concepts can be extracted by our thought from the mobile reality; but there is no means whatever of reconstituting with the fixity of concepts the mobility of the real."¹⁰

V "The demonstrations which have been given of the relativity of our knowledge are therefore tainted with an original vice: they assume, like the dogmatism they attack, that all knowledge must necessarily start from rigidly defined concepts in order to grasp by their means the flowing reality."¹¹

VI "To philosophize means to reverse the normal directions of the workings of thought." This means that the philosopher momentarily halts the flow, at least in his own mind, in order to examine these states or things mentioned above. However, as is pointed out in IV above, it is impossible to replace these states into the flow from

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 224

¹¹ Loc. cit.

which they were extracted. They remain forever imaginary states, creations of the philosopher's mind. Nevertheless, as is pointed out in VIII below, it is possible for the mind to go from the concepts - fixed states - to the moving process, leaving the particular concepts out of the process still, but the result is only relative knowledge.

VIII "Relative knowledge is symbolic knowledge through pre-existing concepts, which goes from the fixed to the moving, but not so intuitive knowledge which establishes itself in the moving reality and adopts the life itself of things. This intuition attains the absolute."¹²

Bergson had this idea that life was a "flowing reality" with which one unconsciously moves along. Knowledge is obtained when we realize or appreciate the reality in its motion and such knowledge can be achieved in two ways. The first gives rise to relative knowledge and is grasped by means of concepts, or states, or arrested fragments of the motion. These fragments remain external to all future motion. The second gives rise to absolute knowledge and is grasped by means of intuitions, by which we consciously move along with the stream, and we gain insights into the ultimate nature of

¹² Ibid., p. 227

reality. It is, very obviously, this second type of knowledge which Bergson advocates as being of a higher value than any other type. It is more valuable because of its ultimate and absolute nature. It arises out of direct, metaphysical association with the real and thereby retains something of what it itself has experienced. It is to be had by intuition, the process by which the knowing mind becomes at one with the object to be known. It is not by any manner of means to be thought of as a strange and mystical transmutation of one personality into another, or of a personality into the being of an inanimate object.

Let it be said, in conclusion, that there is nothing mysterious about this faculty. Whoever has worked successfully at literary composition well knows that when the subject has been studied at great length, all the documents gathered together, all notes taken, something more is necessary to get down to the work of composition itself: an effort, often painful, immediately to place oneself in the very heart of the subject and to seek as deeply as possible an impulsion which, as soon as found, carries one forward of itself. This impulsion, once received, sets the mind off on a road where it finds both the information it had gathered and other details as well; it develops, analyzes itself in terms whose enumeration follows on without limit; the farther one goes the more is disclosed about it; never will one manage to say everything; and yet, if one turns around suddenly to seize the impulsion felt, it slips away; for it was not a thing but an urge to movement, and although indefinitely extensible, it is simplicity itself. Metaphysical intuition seems to be something of the same kind.¹³

¹³ Bergson, op. cit., p. 236

That which corresponds to the notes and documents which are laboriously gathered during the period of research is, of course, the conscious (and subconscious) collection of experiences and observations which were made while the subject was being studied and also by means of a "reflection of the mind on the mind". Intuition is not to be regarded lightly or as the creature of a day but rather something which is achieved only by long "comradeship with its superficial manifestations", ("its" referring to the subject under consideration).

In his essay called "Philosopher Intuition", also printed in "The Creative Mind", Bergson makes direct reference to the writing of the history of philosophy. When we deal with a philosopher and his thoughts and writings, we go to various documents and sources and attempt to piece together his actual thoughts.

We therefore set to work, we go back to the sources, we weigh the influences, we extract the similitudes, and in the end we distinctly see in the doctrine what we were looking for: a more or less original synthesis of the ideas among which the philosopher lived.¹⁴

By a continuing process of study and impregnation we are thus able to reach a point where all the parts fit harmoniously together and they are resolved into one unified whole - a single point. However there is a very grave danger which we must be careful to guard against. This pit-fall is

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 127

pointed out in the following quotation:

And it is not a question simply of assimilating the outstanding facts; it is necessary to accumulate and fuse such an enormous mass of them that one may be assured, in this fusion, of neutralizing by one another all the preconceived and premature ideas observers may have deposited unknowingly in their observations.¹⁵

Though the importance to historiography of the above statement will be pointed out later in this paper, it will not be amiss to say a word here. This idea has much wider implications than merely those to the writing of history. Are we not often told that this must be the watchword of anyone who attempts to criticize in any capacity the work of another or to evaluate external objects, events and situations? This constitutes a very strong argument for the objective approach to anything and it is objectivity which Bergson seeks to obtain through the intuition, for in the extreme degree of sympathy and association required in any act of metaphysical intuition, there is perforce an abnegation of self and a swallowing up of personality in the self and personality of the person, event or object being intuited.

Does intuition, then, result in a complete lack of interpretation and personality in seeking to reach absolute

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 236

objectivity? In seeking to comprehend the absolute inner nature of the person or object, is the relationship to and the effect upon the intuiting subject to be completely forgotten? These are two of the problems to be considered with reference to history and historiography, the answers to which may or may not appear satisfactorily in the ensuing pages.

Before embarking upon our discussion of the "Spectator-Participant Problem" and its relation to the writing of history, let us see where Bergson is led with his theory of the intuition. We are told repeatedly, both by Bergson himself and by his commentators, that intuition is no "divine science" or "black art", and I have tried above to make this point clear. However, even though intuition does not find its end in mysticism, it does tend to leave one stranded in a world of metaphysics. Intuition fulfills the desire to gain an intimate and objective knowledge of things, yet intuition does not succeed in making this knowledge valid for life without the modifying influence of the intellect. Intuitions are only isolated steps in the formation of comprehensive knowledge, and the intellect fulfills the function of bringing all the particular items of knowledge - each gained intuitively - into a harmony.

What therefore can be the importance to life of both intuitional and intellectual knowledge and of the two which is more effectual? The answer to the first question is that the combination of the two gives us knowledge for action. However, in answer to the second question, intellectual knowledge is more important and effectual for life than is intuitional because it offers us an unlimited range of activity. Intuition takes us up into the heights but from there we must return to life and living.

We are continually confronted with the need of action; while we live there is this unceasing demand to act. There seems to be only two ways in which we may be qualified to meet this demand: one is by direct intuition, which drives us to act in one path and one only; the other is by the intellect, which ranges before us our experience and enables us to choose from many possible courses the one that offers the best hope of success.¹⁶

Though at first glance it seems that Bergson was strictly a theoretical philosopher, it should now be noted that the claim is made that he attempts to apply these theories to the practical needs of life. Carr brings this out in the above quotation and so does Szathmary, as will be noted in the quotation following:

This aesthetic intuition, however, is not confined to the arts. According to Bergson, it is capable of expression in fields not generally open to it. Apart from its appearance in all artistic pursuits, it is conceivable that it may become the source of all

¹⁶ Carr, H. Wildon, Henri Bergson: The Philosophy of Change, p. 68

philosophical investigation. Such a philosophy would use the instrument of intellect to show the inadequacy of formal intellectual frameworks. By means of aesthetic intuition, which receives its impetus from intellect, it will grasp its content; it will cease being 'formal', and will lead into the 'proper domain of life'.¹⁷

This may seem like a reversal of the process, making intellect the handmaiden of the intuition, yet it will be observed that Szathmary places in italics the phrase "which receives its impetus from intellect". Intuition, with assistance and inspiration from the comprehensive, harmonious view presented by the intellect, is able to grasp content. Intuition supplies content while the intellect constructs the framework.

As a conclusion to our study of Bergson and his theory of intuition, let us see how Bertrand Russell in his "History of Western Philosophy", regards Bergson and his theory. Russell credits (or discredits as the case may be) Bergson with being an advocate of a "practical philosophy", one which "regards action as the supreme good, considering happiness an effect and knowledge a mere instrument of successful activity".¹⁸ Rather disparagingly Russell remarks, attempting to substantiate his remark with a quotation from Bergson:

¹⁷ Szathmary, op. cit., p. 22

¹⁸ Russell, op. cit., p. 792

Instinct at its best is called intuition. 'By intuition ... I mean instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely.'¹⁹

His whole attitude towards Bergson's philosophy is summed up in the conclusion of the chapter:

The good which Bergson hopes to see realized in the world is action for the sake of action. All pure contemplation he calls 'dreaming,' and condemns by a whole series of uncomplimentary epithets: static, Platonic, mathematical, logical, intellectual. Those who desire some prevision of the end which action is to achieve are told that an end foreseen would be nothing new, because desire, like memory, is identified with its object. Thus we are condemned, in action, to be the blind slaves of instinct: the life-force pushes us on from behind, restlessly and unceasingly. There is no room in this philosophy for the moment of contemplative insight when, rising above the animal life, we become conscious of the greater ends that redeem man from the life of the brutes. Those to whom activity without purpose seems a sufficient good will find in Bergson's books a pleasing picture of the universe. But those to whom action, if it is to be of any value, must be inspired by some vision, by some imaginative foreshadowing of a world less painful, less unjust, less full of strife than the world of our everyday life, those, in a word, whose action is built on contemplation, will find in this philosophy nothing of what they seek, and will not regret that there is no reason to think it true.²⁰

What, then, are we to think of Bergson and intuition? Regarding Russell's criticism, he might very well be justified as criticizing the lack of ideals in Bergson, yet I can

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 793

²⁰ Ibid., p. 810

hardly see the justification for his statement that Bergson lacks anything remotely connected to "the moment of contemplative insight when, rising above the animal life...." and so on. Is not this "moment" an intuition in the highest Bergsonian sense of the term, and is it not by means of such moments or intuitions that we "become conscious of the greater ends that redeem man from the life of the brutes"?

Then too, it is strange to find Russell criticizing Bergson for being the exponent of a "practical philosophy." Metaphysical intuition hardly bears this out, for it is difficult to see how Bergson's theory can become the practical mode of thinking on the part of mankind as a whole. Bergson makes an effort to develop his theories into something within range or scope of the practical yet I do not think he achieves any large measure of success on this point.

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEM IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

As outlined in Chapter II, Bergson claims there are two ways of knowing any fact - object, event, personality. The first knows relatively, according to points of view, interpretation, and is based on symbols, relationships or images. The relative approach may also be termed subjective, for it depends upon personal interpretation, and is consequently prey to subjective bias and prejudice. The second method claims to know absolutely, without benefit of points of view or interpretation, and uses no symbols or images, but knows intimately, internally, immediately. This of course is the objective approach to knowledge in which the personality of the knowing self is negated in favour of a passionless receptivity to facts exactly as they are presented to the mind. This objective or absolute knowledge is obtained by means of metaphysical intuition, whereby the knower seeks to make himself one with the thing to be known in order to know it completely.

The connection between the two ways of knowing and the subject of historiography should be obvious enough at this point, and so let us see how these two contrasting and

opposing approaches have been reflected in historical writing of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In general the historian's approach to his subject can be fairly definitely classed as either subjective or objective, relative or absolute as the case may be. A very noted contemporary exponent of the former is Charles A. Beard, whose economic interpretation of history has made him the object of extreme criticism from opposing camps. Representative historians of the latter type are Leopold von Ranke (who was really the originator of objective theory regarding historiography) and Theodore Clarke Smith, American historian who very stoutly defends the objective position as against that of Beard.

Before beginning in detail the examination of various historiographical theories, let us take a closer look at the problem in general, and see just what it is we are trying to prove or disprove. As the title suggests we are examining two contrasting positions - that of the spectator as against that of the participant, and we are trying to discover just how this conflict is represented in the writing of history, with the goal in mind of being able, finally, to arrive at some fairly definite conclusions. Let us look, then, at our two contestants.

First, the spectator. What he is should be self-evident, as in modern times more and more people are becoming spectators, with a corresponding drop in the number of participants. The primary quality of a spectator is passivity. He comes to be entertained, to witness, to be shown things, and he should be prepared to accept things as they are presented to him, without trying to change them or place any subjective interpretation upon them. In this case, of what is he the spectator? In this discussion, the spectator is the historian, and he is looking at the past with the idea in mind of recording it as it actually happened so that others may know it also. In so far as past events are concerned he must be passive since he cannot take any part in their execution for the simple reason that they occurred in the past. He must be a dispassionate observer, one who looks upon these events as objective realities, who completely transcends his own personality so as to be able to report them objectively, without any colouring from his own experience. There is absolutely no place for interpretation in the mind of our spectator-historian. He must seek to place himself in the event by an effort of intuition in the Bergsonian sense, and thus come to appreciate it in its entirety.

You might argue that as intuition implies participation in the events themselves, therefore our historian would no longer be a passive spectator but an active participant. However, I think that in view of what will be said by way of describing the character and personality of the true participant this objection will prove invalid.

What then, is the participant and what is his essential nature and function? In the first instance he is the exact opposite of passive. Activity is his first quality, and, in particular, activity in the business at hand. He comes not to receive but to give entertainment, not to be amused but to amuse, not to be shown but to show. He is not indispensable to the business of living, but he seeks to make the whole process just that much better by virtue of his participation in it. From the standpoint of the historian, he does not seek to project himself into past events, but merely to be a participant in the whole stream of events - past, present and future. He attempts to view the facts of history not as cold, isolated entities important in themselves, but as warm, involved, vibrant parts of the process which is history - themselves participants in the steady unfolding of events. He presents history not as it really happened, but as he conceives it to have happened, coloured by his own interpretation.

of it, evaluated in terms of his own experience, for he is equally as much a part of history as is Caesar or Napoleon or any of the others. The present is as much a part of history as was the past. The historian cannot place himself on a mountain-top, away from his life and himself so as to view history objectively, so as to impartially re-enact the events of the past, to re-enter the occurrences by an effort of intuition, because it is impossible for him to take himself out of the process in which he is existing, a process of which he is an integral part, a process which is history, just as it is impossible for a drop of water to remove itself from the stream of which it is a part. If all drops of water took themselves out of the stream in order to observe its passing, then the stream would cease to exist. If all historians divorced themselves completely from the process which they are describing, then there would be no history. This is the nature and function of the participant.

It must be remembered that in this paper we are discussing the method of historiography rather than its content and for this reason many otherwise significant historians have been omitted. I have chosen a fairly representative group of historians - chiefly philosophic, because they have given more concrete expression to the

methods employed than have the ordinary political historians. Also the method of historiography seems to me properly to be the realm of the philosopher. He it is who can see through the problem and who is capable of prescribing an adequate and proper method. Too often history has been written purely from the point of view of justifying certain contemporary theories and it has been used as a tool towards the realization of narrow, esoteric ends. Then too, in many instances, history has been written without any conscious realization or recognition of method. There has been a goal in view but the method of attaining that goal has been unconsciously accepted. It has been a case too often of the end justifying the means.

With these thoughts in mind let us begin our "Study of History" with an examination of Hegel's theories as set forth in a series of lectures first given in the years 1822-1823, on the subject "The Philosophy of History". According to Hegel, the philosophy of history is nothing but "the thoughtful consideration of it."¹ We may counter that thought seems to run contrary to that which constitutes the basis of history - fact, yet if history is to have a more

¹ Hegel, Philosophy of History, p. 8

then superficial significance, mere mechanical repetition of facts will not suffice. Hegel thought that a degree of objectivity is desirable as will be seen from the following quotation:

But as it is the business of history simply to adopt into its records what is and has been, actual occurrences and transactions; and since it remains true to its character in proportion as it strictly adheres to its data, we seem to have in Philosophy a process diametrically opposed to that of the historiographer.²

Hegel didn't regard this last as necessarily true, as he proceeds to show. Philosophy does not alter the process of history but rather ^{adds} ~~adds~~ to it certain abstract or metaphysical ideas - such ideas as transcend "actual occurrences and transactions." Most important among these ideas is that of reason. "The only thought which Philosophy brings with it to the contemplation of History, is the simple conception of Reason; that Reason is the Sovereign of the World; that the history of the world, therefore, presents us with a rational process."³

Regarding the historian's attitude towards his subject, Hegel adds:

We might then announce it as the first condition to be observed, that we should faithfully adopt all that is historical. But in such general expressions themselves, as "faithfully" and "adopt", lies the ambiguity. Even

² Ibid., p. 9

³ Loc. cit.

the ordinary, the "impartial" historiographer, who believes and professes that he maintains a simply receptive attitude; surrendering himself only to the data supplied him - is by no means passive as regards the exercise of his thinking powers. He brings his categories with him, and sees the phenomena presented to his mental vision, exclusively through these media. And, especially in all that pretends to the name of science, it is indispensable that Reason should not sleep - that reflection should be in full play. To him who looks upon the world rationally, the world in its turn presents a rational aspect. The relation is mutual.⁴

Thus Hegel takes his stand on the side of the participant in historiography and makes it quite clear that interpretation - i.e. reflection, should play an integral part in the writing of history. The facts of history are subordinated to the thoughtful consideration of them and history then becomes really an account or a record of thoughts and motives, as Collingwood says, rather than a record of facts and events as they actually occurred in time. We will take a closer look at Collingwood and his opinions of Hegel later.

Benedetto Croce adopts a rather pessimistic attitude towards Hegel's views on history and he sees very little that is of lasting value in them. He considers there is too much philosophical thought introduced with the result that history, instead of being factual and objective becomes abstract and subjective.

⁴ Ibid., p. 11

History, herein differing from art, presupposes philosophical thought as its condition; but like art, it finds its material in the intuitive element. History, therefore, is always narration, and never theory and system, though it has theory and system at its foundation.⁵

This is what history should be according to Croce, yet, history as he thinks, in the hands of Hegel, becomes something less than history. A philosophy of history, when considered as something obtained as a result of philosophic abstraction, constitutes a negation of history, because then the only true history would be that obtained by a philosophical consideration of historical narrative, and the other history cannot be true as it was deduced by means of a method which is unable to achieve the same kind of truth as that derived by philosophical methods.

The idea of a philosophy of history is the non-recognition of the autonomy of historiography, to the advantage of abstract philosophy. Whenever such a claim is made, one seems to hear the bells tolling for the death of the history of the historians.⁶

Thus Croce paints a rather black picture as the result of Hegel's intrusion into the realm of history.

Hegel hands over to romance, that is, to a form of art, the facts which do not seem to him historical - we should say all facts; and since art was for him a provisional form, this is another way of shewing the evil fate of

⁵ Croce, B., "What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel," p. 135

⁶ Ibid., p. 137

history at the hands of Hegelian philosophy. It is a strange fact that the same philosophy, which, in virtue of one of its logical doctrines, had so effectively vindicated the value of history, of the res gestae⁷ found, as the result of another of its logical doctrines, that it could not recognize the value of the historia rerum gestarum⁸ and so of the same res gestae. Famished for history, nourished on history, Hegel's philosophy, without understanding that it did so, yet advocated fasting. And the contradiction blazed in the light of the sun, before the eyes of all the world; for, as there issued from the school of Hegel a series of great writers of history, so there came forth from the same school the most petulant and comic depreciators of history and of fact that the world has ever seen.⁹

Can this criticism be accepted and can it be justified?

I think that acceptance and justification depend upon whether or not I accept the theory of history according to Croce. We find here two radically opposing points of view, which are irreconcilable, and therefore I feel Croce's criticisms should be accepted for what they are worth.

R. C. Collingwood in his book "The Idea of History" defends Hegel's position regarding historiography and sums up Hegel's attitude succinctly.

...the philosophy of history is for him not a philosophical reflection on history but history itself raised to a higher power and become philosophical as distinct from merely empirical, that is, history not merely ascertained as so much fact but understood by apprehending the reasons why the facts happened as they did.¹⁰

7 "facts of history"

8 "narration or discussion of the facts"

9 Ibid., p. 149

10 R. C. Collingwood, "Idea of History" p. 114

In the hands of Hegel history becomes a branch of philosophical inquiry. It remains not just a disinterested enumeration of events but as Collingwood says it is raised into a higher order and takes on a new significance. Through the eyes of the philosopher history constitutes the recording of events, plus the motives and conflicts which underlay these events in so far as such abstract considerations are possible to be ascertained.

It is peculiar to history that the historian re-enacts in his own mind the thoughts and motives of the agents whose actions he is narrating, and no succession of events is an historical succession unless it consists of acts whose motives can, in principle at least, be thus re-enacted.... Thus Hegel's conclusion is right, that there is no history except the history of human life, and that, not merely as life, but as rational life, the life of thinking beings.¹¹

Emphasis on the rationality of history is the constantly recurring theme which appears in Hegel's historical lectures. It is this element which he sees in history, and it is the philosophical approach that opens his eyes to its presence. Hegel is a participant in the best sense of our usage of the term for he seeks a complete understanding of past events by a knowledge of why they occurred. It is of course impossible to fully appreciate the whole manifold of motives under stress of which events occurred in one way and not another, yet by means of close examination of documents and other sources it is possible to obtain a

¹¹ Ibid., p. 115

reasonably accurate picture not only of what occurred but just why it occurred in the particular way that it did. It is the spectator who strives, by means of intuition, to know only what happened, while the participant wants also to know why it happened.

Hegel considered that the essence of history is thought, because the historian cannot understand events as such, and further he cannot even be certain that these events occurred exactly as reported. The only way in which actions, as represented in events, can be understood is in so far as they are external manifestations of thoughts. In order to reconstruct a historical event it is necessary also to reconstruct the points of view with which the parties concerned regarded the situation. It is of a very limited value to know that General Smith attacked the enemy on a certain date with disastrous results to his own forces unless the historian is able to gain an appreciation of the motives that lay behind his decision. "Here again Hegel was certainly right; it is not knowing what people did but understanding what they thought that is the proper definition of the historian's task."¹²

According to Hegel, history is the embodiment of reason, as we have already pointed out, for events are the results of activated passions, and these "passionate actions"

¹² Loc. cit.

are governed and controlled by reason. The historical process is a strictly logical one and Hegel believes that all developments are always necessary and never accidental. This process in which man finds himself and his forebears, called history, ends with the present. History ends with the present moment and though there will probably be a future with its consequent history it is entirely beyond our knowledge to say what it will be. Though we may determine apparent laws from our own history it is not for us to say that these laws will be operative in the future. Thus we must live in the present, though taking admonition from the past, and any preparations we make for the future have no guarantee of fulfillment.

Collingwood's final word on Hegel is that he is at his best when dealing with philosophy and the philosophical nature of history. However when he extends his activities into the realm of history per se he loses his accustomed brilliance. Collingwood's criticism is that he deals too narrowly with political events and underestimates their significance. However the importance of Hegel's work to historiography and to philosophy cannot be underestimated as he it was who effectively introduced philosophy into the study of history. His method too is extremely significant for in this generation

it has come to be the basis for most historical writing. During the later nineteenth century, under the excitement created by von Ranke and the positivist school, Hegel's method lay in disrepute but with the revival of interest in interpretative history Hegel once again comes forward with valuable suggestions.

Arthur Schopenhauer, a German philosopher of the mid-nineteenth century, in his great work "The World as Will and Idea" has two sections regarding historical method. In the first of these, the author is discussing poetry and makes a comparison between it and history.

The poet from deliberate choice represents significant situations; the historian takes both as they come. Indeed, he must regard and select the circumstances and the person, not with reference to the inward and true significance, which expresses the Idea, but according to the outward, apparent, and relatively important significance with regard to the connection and the consequences. He must consider nothing in and for itself in its essential character and expression, but must look at everything in its relations, in its connection, in its influence upon what follows, and especially upon its own age.¹³

Schopenhauer here comes out definitely for the subjective, participant historical method, for who is ^{it} that deduces "relations," "connections," and "influences" but the historian himself. The responsibility of getting at the true

¹³ Schopenhauer, "The World as Will and Idea" I, p.316

worth of history thus rests solely on the shoulders of the historian who makes up his own mind as to relative importance of facts etc. of history. Schopenhauer himself saw the impossibility of truly objective history when he accepted the inadequacy of the historian to know everything about an event because he cannot have read or discovered everything relating to it.

Schopenhauer realized the difficulty connected with history because at the first glance it and all humanity seem an unintelligible morass as a result of their multiplicity and magnitude. The one saving grace is science, which assumes control over this unintelligibility and imparts to it order by arranging and classifying. The sciences tend to group themselves together and on a plane which is above the real world of things, but even so philosophy finds itself above them because it is the most general and most rational type of knowledge. It is, however, impossible that history ever become a science because history cannot know the particular by means of the general and universal. History must apprehend the particular directly. Science assumes the right to speak of those things which always are, while history can only treat that which was and now is no longer. In history all generalizations are purely subjective and

therefore cannot constitute a valid basis for prediction.

Since now history really always has for its object only the particular, the individual fact, and regards this as the exclusively real, it is the direct opposite and counterpart of philosophy, which considers things from the most general point of view, and has intentionally the general as its object, which remains identical in every particular; therefore in the particular philosophy sees only the general, and recognizes the change in its manifestations as unessential....¹⁴

Schopenhauer then continues with a discussion of the content of history. In artistic productions the material or raw material is the idea, while in science the concept replaces the idea. In both the above cases, that being dealt with remains constant in the same manner. However, the raw material of history, as he points out, is never constant.

The material of history, on the other hand, is the particular in its particularity and contingency, which at one time is, and then for ever is no more, the transient complexities of a human world moved like clouds in the wind, a world which is often entirely transformed by the most trifling incident. From this point of view the material of history appears to us as scarcely a worthy object of the serious and painful consideration of the human mind, the human mind which, just because it is so transitory, ought to choose for its consideration that which passes not away.¹⁵

Are we to gather from the above quotation that Schopenhauer would have us give up the study of history

¹⁴ Ibid. III p. 223

¹⁵ Ibid. III p. 224

merely because it deals with mutable facts and events? No, as he adds, because it is only from one point of view that we have examined it. The very fact that history deals with transient and contingent particulars makes room for the notion of progress in the appraisal of the past. Were past events to remain static and immutable all progress would be impossible. At this point Schopenhauer makes reference to Hegel and his philosophy of history. Regarding the attempt to view the history of the world universally, as a planned, organic whole, Schopenhauer regards the whole attempt with scorn, as something "specially introduced by the Hegelian pseudo - philosophy, everywhere so pernicious and stupefying to the mind."¹⁶ The Hegelians are said to regard the philosophy of history as the chief end and highest good of philosophy, taking as proof for their contention the statement of Plato that philosophy takes as the object of its "devotions" only that which is unchangeable and always remains. Schopenhauer states his belief in a philosophy of history as follows:

The true philosophy of history consists in the insight that in all these endless changes and their confusions we have always before us only the same, even, unchanging nature, which today acts in the same way as yesterday and always; thus it ought to recognize the identical in

¹⁶ Loc. cit.

all events, of ancient as of modern times, of the east as of the west; and, in spite of all difference of the special circumstances, of the costume and the customs, to see everywhere the same humanity.¹⁷

What then is the function of history?

Only through history does a nation become completely conscious of itself. Accordingly history is to be regarded as the rational consciousness of the human race, and is to the race what the reflected and connected consciousness is to the individual who is conditioned by reason, a consciousness through the want of which the brute is confined to the narrow, perceptible present.¹⁸

It must be noted that Schopenhauer regards history as a "rational consciousness"¹⁹ and not merely a "consciousness" of the past. Thus we must approach the facts of history in a rational frame of mind, prepared to treat them rationally, to weigh and evaluate them according to the highest reasoning that is within us. In the hands of men like Schopenhauer, history becomes a vibrant, dynamic appreciation of the long years of process which have led up to this present moment. How differently it is treated by such men as Benedetto Croce, whom we turn now to discuss.

Benedetto Croce, an Italian philosopher of the

¹⁷ Ibid., III p. 227

¹⁸ Ibid., III p. 228

¹⁹ Italics mine

present century, adopts an attitude which seems to be midway between spectator and participant. In the writing of history, it is the historian's duty to seek the "reality" that is in history rather than the "value" which we tend to place upon events and facts which seem significant to us who have no direct knowledge of them. To quote Croce himself, from his book on "The Theory and History of Historiography,"

History should not be either German or French, Catholic or Protestant, but it should also not pretend to apply a more ample conception to the solution of these or similar antitheses, as the philosophers of history had tried to do, but rather should neutralize them all in a wise scepticism or agnosticism, and attenuate them in a form of exposition conducted in the tone of a presidential summing-up, whose careful attention is paid to the opinions of opposed parties and courtesy is observed toward all.²⁰

It is difficult to fully appreciate here the exact position Croce adopts with reference to our spectator-participant delineation. It would seem that when he stresses the need for a realization of the "reality" rather than the "value" of history he is approaching very nigh unto the objective position, yet when he speaks as above of the need for a "presidential summing-up" type of history we begin to doubt our first reaction. For my own part I find it very difficult to conceive of a history wherein "careful attention

²⁰ Croce, The Theory and History of Historiography, p. 290

is paid to the opinions of opposed parties," for is it not a well-known fact that these "opposed parties" each have a different set of historical values and will concede the significance of nothing foreign to their way of thinking to the opposing school. Therefore it seems that Croce is advocating a "middle-of-the-road" objective history which leaves everything relating to value and significance up to the reader, and seeks to write history as it happened and without "benefit" of bias one way or the other.

Croce makes mention of the work of Leopold von Ranke, the greatest exponent of objective history during the nineteenth century. He set himself out to give to the world an account of history as it had actually occurred.

In his first book he protested with fine irony that he was not able to accept the grave charge of judging the past or of instructing the present as to the future, which had been assigned to history, but he felt himself capable only of showing "how things really had happened."²¹

Croce has the feeling that Ranke, in his books, was successful in maintaining a position fairly close to the "middle-of-the-road" demarkation, and, as Croce remarks, (with an emphasis which seems somewhat amusing) "without even letting appear his own religious or philosophical convictions."²² Why this expression appears so will be brought out fairly clearly in the succeeding chapter. Suffice it to say here that Ranke had a far reaching

²¹ Ibid., p. 291

²² Ibid., p. 292

influence which can still be felt, an influence which has had repercussions in many circles as we shall see when we come to discover the position of Charles A. Beard and the American Historical Association.

To return to our discussion of Croce, let us look at the treatment given him by H. Wildon Carr. Carr begins his discussion of Croce's philosophy of history by identifying philosophy with history and placing history entirely within the mind. History never actually happened. It is always happening now. All history is contemporary history and its time is now.

History is the most concrete form in which reality is presented to consciousness. History, therefore, in the form of judgment, that is, not in the form of particular narrative but in the form of judgment of fact, historical judgment, is the highest form of philosophy itself and identical with it. This implies that the events which make up the course of history are in their nature ideal; they are the expression of mental activity; nothing which is in the true sense history is extrinsic to mind.²³

Therefore history loses its concreteness and becomes the verbal representations of ideas and ideals, of which the facts as they occurred were the mechanical, physical expressions of the ideas. History then becomes the recording and judging of ideals rather than bare facts as the objective historians would have us believe.

²³ Carr, H. Wildon, Philosophy of Benedetto Croce, p.189

Carr continues: "the act of thinking is always philosophy and history at one and the same time; history is, in fact, identical with the act of thinking itself."²⁴ This, then, is the basis of Croce's position regarding history. Carr doesn't think the above is particularly obvious or self-evident because the popular notion of history seems to run wholly in an opposite direction. According to Carr the layman regards history as a treatment or a handling of acts and occurrences which are separate and distinct entities, having no organic interconnection or interpenetration. The layman believes that certain events happened in the past and that a person - called a historian - merely makes up a "pure chronicle" of these events, a chronicle which is divorced from all meaning and/or significance.

We are all aware, says Carr, that after a battle has been fought, we are dependent for our knowledge of the events connected with that battle upon certain written documents and unwritten traditions which describe them to us, and which, as we will all agree, require a certain skill and intellectual ability to properly interpret. It is the historian's job, then, to interpret these documents and traditions, and the ideal qualifications for the job are that

²⁴ Ibid., p. 195

he be as "disinterested and dispassionate" as is possible. Such an attitude is ideal, and greatly to be desired, but as Carr points out, after admitting this desirability, the layman immediately jumps to the conclusion that the historian is looking for events which are to be accepted entirely without interpretation and that they should be selected on a basis of purely extrinsic value. The popular notion is that meaning and purpose are foreign to the province of the historian because such meaning and purpose are extrinsic attributes ^{of} ~~to~~ the events. If such is the case then, it would seem logically to follow that the philosopher, whose concern seems only to be with such abstractions, is the least able person to deal with history.

However, here it is that Carr makes very clear the fact that Croce's conception of history is radically opposed to the "popular notion" which Carr has just outlined.

History is the form in which the full reality of existence is presented to consciousness. History is not the story of life but the story immanent in the fact that life is an unfolding and an expression. History presents to us life or mind in its reality, and, therefore, history and philosophy are in their essence identical.²⁵

The popular notion that history consists in a factual record of events as things in themselves is a negation of the very essence of these events.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 194

Deprive an event of its meaning, that is, deprive it entirely of the spiritual character which connects it with human action, leave it its bare existence as fact, - movement of physical elements, or abstract mathematical relations, - and you take from it everything which constitutes history, everything distinctive of history, you leave nothing which for a historian is anything.²⁶

It should be seen now that Croce cannot be definitely pigeon-holed in one classification or another. He tends to seek "realities rather than "values" - values having a moral connotation in the sense of the belief that there are to be found in history certain moral values and purposes which are at work throughout all time. In this respect he tends towards the objectification of history, yet he immediately prevents us from completely tagging him thus by his criticisms of popular lay notions of history and the function of historians. On the other hand he cannot be classed on the subjective side of our ledger because he advocates a disinterested search after the truths of history, a seeking which has been divested of all passion and interest and which has become an almost unconscious on-going movement.

To turn now to a very positive affirmation of both the subjective and the objective positions, let us consider the argument carried on in the pages of the American Historical Review between Charles A. Beard and Theodore Clarke Smith in the years 1934 and 1935. Beard, one of America's most

²⁶ Ibid., p. 196

distinguished historians of the present day, in an article entitled "Written History as an Act of Faith"²⁷ discusses at some length this very important problem of the objective view of history. He claims that many philosophers, who actually have little real acquaintance with the subject, make an attempt to expound the basic, inner secret of history, that which gives it impetus and dynamic. As an example Beard makes reference to Hegel and his Introduction to his lectures of the philosophy of history. In Hegel's case the secret is reason.

Beard believes that the term "history" really refers to thought or reflexion about the past, and not just to the actuality and the record or specific knowledge of it. The question is raised by Beard as to whether any thought about the past constitute the actuality of it, or rather merely thought and nothing more. The answer is implied in the ensuing discussion. Beard feels that when the question comes down to basic facts, there is nothing in history which can be stated as uncontestably true, for all our knowledge of the past arises out of human records, writings, monuments, and we can never be absolutely certain that these things can be implicitly relied upon. All of them have been created by

²⁷ American Historical Review, XXXIX January, 1934

men, - all fallible and capable of a fabrication of the truth. Then too, any written records which we may possess are the work of individuals and consequently subject to the vagaries of their personalities. As Beard makes very emphatic, all students of history should be aware that their contemporary historians and colleagues in interpreting history and in selecting and ordering their materials and points of view are influenced by "biases, prejudices, beliefs, affections and general upbringing and experience, particularly social and economic...."²⁸

It should be self-evident to anyone who rationally approaches the problem that the facts or events of history do not present themselves automatically in the exact order in which they occurred, but rather they are arranged and ordered by the historian according to his conception of their true chronological order. Here Beard mentions the "schoolmen" of the nineteenth century with their conception of a history - cold, factual, objective, and their greatest exponent Von Ranke. According to Beard, their idea that the historian can become a disembodied spirit when dealing with human affairs is most definitely antiquated. "Once more, historians recognize formally the obvious, long known

²⁸ Beard, op. cit., p. 220

informally, namely, that any written history inevitably reflects the thought of its author in his time and cultural setting."²⁹

Here Beard very satirically remarks:

It is almost a confession of inexpiable sin to admit in academic circles that one is not a man of science working in a scientific manner with things open to deterministic and inexorable treatment, to admit that one is more or less a guesser in this vale of tears.³⁰

The present day trend towards a scientific approach to everything attempts to make history deterministic according to physical laws of causation or to laws of biological evolution. We are in the midst of a movement which sees value in reducing everything to scientific laws, one which subjects everything to scientific scrutiny. Beard's answer to this movement is the note upon which he ends this first article:

Any selection and arrangement of facts pertaining to any large area of history ... is controlled inexorably by the frame of reference in the mind of the selector and arranger.³¹

This places the responsibility upon the shoulders of each individual historian and contradicts the myth which claims there is one absolute history which all must strive to understand and reproduce.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 221

³⁰ Ibid., p. 222

³¹ Ibid., p. 227

Writing in the American Historical Review of April, 1935, Theodore Clarke Smith, more or less in answer to Beard, defends the objective or spectator position of the historian. His main argument for this is that all writers of history do not think alike and if they were each allowed to write history as they saw it, then we would have a multitude of histories, each bearing only slight resemblance to any of the others. In some instances, the nature of the sources under consideration made possible a variety of differing conclusions - each quite accurate and justifiable. However in such isolated instances, it was the duty of the historian to be very certain that his difference of opinion did not arise out of "local feeling, or race, religion, or class prejudice."³²

Smith concludes with the statement that the historical writing of the period under consideration was dominated by one ideal - that of a supreme effort to reach the objective truth of history. However, rather a sour note is sounded when Smith refers to the case of a former president of the American Historical Association, James Harvey Robinson, who recanted his former position in support of objective history and turned in favour of subjective or participant history. "What onlookers call 'impartial history' and professionals

³² Smith, T. C., "Writing of American History in America, from 1884 to 1934," American Historical Review, XL 3, April, 1935, p. 443

call 'objective' is merely history without an object." Smith of course cites this as an example of very misguided thinking in historical circles, yet to me it seems to constitute a very strong indictment of the very thing Smith is attempting to defend.

Charles Beard writes a direct reply to Smith entitled "That Noble Dream," and contained in the Review of October of the same year. In his discussion of the attitude taken by Smith, Beard seriously questions, "is it possible for men to divest themselves of all race, sex, class, political, social and racial predilections and tell the truth of history as it actually was? Can Mr. Smith's noble dream, his splendid hope, be realized in fact?"

Beard claims that such an attitude as adopted by Smith is based upon five definite assumptions, the validity of which Beard would question. Writers of "objective" history assume:

- 1 that history has an existence, quite independent of the mind of the historian,
- 2 that it is possible for the historian to face or know directly this "object or series of objects," and can describe them as they actually existed, (in this instance, Beard states in a footnote that if the above

be so, then there is only one possible treatment of the past. To think of writing a new or another history of a period would be preposterous as everything possible has been said by the first objective historian.)

3 that it is possible for the historian to completely purge himself of all personality in order to view history impartially, "somewhat as the mirror reflects any object to which it is held up"

4 that many facts of history have an inner organization which the historian can accurately grasp by means of inquiry and observation,

5 and that certain "substances" of this history can be grasped in themselves by purely rational or intellectual efforts, and that these "substances" have nothing transcendental in them, i.e., God, spirit.

Beard condemns objective history because it rejects philosophy, it ignores all fundamental problems, it takes on the implications of "empiricism, positivism and that rationalism which limits history to its experiential aspects."³³ Beard believes that even though von Ranke disclaimed all bias and partiality, he wrote history from the point of view of a pantheist of a certain type. He claimed to see the "moving

³³ Beard, Charles A., "That Noble Dream," American Historical Review (October 1935)

finger of God" throughout all history. Von Ranke, one of the most outspoken and passionate advocates of objective history "may be correctly characterized as one of the most 'partial' historians produced by the nineteenth century" and Beard proceeds to give concrete evidences of the validity of his claim.

Beard sums up his refutation of objective history with a question, the answer to which I will attempt to set forth in outline form as Beard gives it. The question is this: "Can the human mind discover and state the 'objective truth' of history as it actually was?" Beard's argument in support of a negative answer to the question is outlined below.

- 1 The common sense view of history is that the idea of past history as actuality exists entirely outside the mind of the contemporary historian.
- 2 The historian must see the actuality of history through the medium of documentation. He is unable to view this actuality objectively in the same way as a chemist views a test tube.
- 3 In fact only a small portion of what actually happened can be obtained from these documents, monuments, relics, etc.
- 4 The historian deals only partially with a partial record of events and personalities.

5 It is impossible that total actuality be factually known to any historian. History or rather the past as it actually was can never be known entirely.

6 Events and personalities of history involve of necessity certain ethical and aesthetic considerations.

7 Any hypothesis or conception of the past is of necessity merely an interpretation.

8 The historian does not bring to his materials a perfectly clean mind ready to mirror history as it actually happened. "Whatever acts of purification the historian may perform, he yet remains human, a creature of time, place, circumstance, interests, predilections, culture."³⁴

9 Into the choice of topics, selection of materials, places of emphasis, the historian's personality enters, either surreptitiously or not, but it always finds its way in, indeed it is never out of the picture.

Thus we see that Beard places himself unequivocally on the participant side of our problem. It is significant to note also that Beard interprets history from the point of view of economic determinism, a situation which draws forth much adverse criticism.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 83

In regard to economic interpretation, it is interesting at this point to look at W. Watkin Davies' criticism of Lord Acton, as contained in "The Politics of Lord Acton," Hibbert Journal, XLV (October 1946) Acton always held that men should never be judged according to the accepted moral standards of their own times in so far as the historian is able to appreciate them, but rather according to "one unbending standard of right and wrong, and that the highest known."³⁵

The following quotation reflects Acton's position and that of others of the day towards a situation which has almost completely reversed itself.

In common with all members of the Whig aristocracy to which he belonged, Acton had no understanding of the vast urban lower classes which were slowly but steadily rising to power during his life-time; and who, after toying for a generation or so with theories of international socialism, would end by capturing the State, and using it to shower material benefits upon themselves; and in consequence of so doing, convert the new democracy into National Socialists. Such a portent lay beyond the widest horizons of men like Acton. Indeed, at no time did Acton pay much attention to the economic factors in history. That was a defect in an English historian of fifty years ago; though now, when the pendulum has swung so decidedly in the direction of the economic interpretation, we might perhaps be justified in regarding it as a shining virtue! At any rate, he who reads history with the conviction that man lives by bread alone will be provided with much food for thought if he will sit for awhile at the feet of so great a champion of the spirit as Lord Acton.³⁶

³⁵ Davies, W. Watkin, "The Politics of Lord Acton" Hibbert Journal, XLV October 1946

³⁶ Ibid., p. 30

R. C. Collingwood, a contemporary philosopher of the "anti-realist" school, takes history and the philosophy of history as his chief spheres of activity. His purpose in so doing was "in the main an attempt to bring about a rapprochement between philosophy and history."³⁷ In the preface to Collingwood's book, "The Idea of History" the editor, T. M. Knox, sets forth what could be called Collingwood's creed:

In The Idea of Nature Collingwood laid down his own test for detecting the greatness of a philosopher. The grand manner in philosophy "is the mark of a mind which has its philosophical material properly controlled and digested. It is thus based on width and steadiness of outlook upon its subject-matter... it is marked by calmness of temper and candour of statement, no difficulties being concealed and nothing set down in malice or passion. All great philosophers have this calmness of mind, all passion spent by the time their vision is clear, and they write as if they saw things from a mountain top".³⁸

Could this not be laid down as the basic requirement of all great historians, that they should "see things clearly and see them whole?" Collingwood here is a good example of the line of poetry which says "what oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed." This comes very close to what Beard wanted to say, yet couldn't due to a lack of facile expression. The idea, however, is much the same in the two men. Though basically agreed on some points Beard and Collingwood cannot

³⁷ R. C. Collingwood, An Autobiography, p. 21

³⁸ Ibid., p. xx

be said to both hold identical notions as to actual method and content of historiography. Beard is the economic determinist who exemplifies many of Collingwood's theories yet Collingwood could not ascribe to such a direct bias in interpretation. Collingwood is the philosopher who takes all knowledge as his province and who thus brings his peculiar experience to bear upon the problems of history.

In the introductory chapter of "The Idea of History" Collingwood discusses the term "philosophy of history" in the light of its background and particular meaning and significance. The origin of the term has been ascribed to Voltaire, who meant by it a critical or scientific history as opposed to mere chronicling of events, a type of history in which the historian brought his own mind to bear upon the retelling of the stories and legends found in the old books. Later on it was used by Hegel and others in the nineteenth century to mean a universal or world history. The third use was by the positivist historians and philosophers of the nineteenth century who regarded it as referring to the discovery of general laws in history which were supposed to govern the course of events. In each instance the particular conception of philosophy in turn governed the conception of the philosophy of history - for Voltaire, philosophy meant independent, critical thinking, for Hegel philosophy meant thinking about the world as a whole, while for the positivists

it meant discovery of universal laws governing all realms of thought and action.

Collingwood uses the term "philosophy of history" in a manner differing from each of the above. First, what does he mean by the term "philosophy." Philosophy to Collingwood means reflection, reflective thought. "The philosophizing mind never simply thinks about an object, it always, while thinking about any object, thinks also about its own thought about that object."³⁹ Philosophy may be termed "thought about thought." For the philosopher fact is the mutual relation of the past and the thoughts about the past by itself. "Thought in its relation to its object is not mere thought but knowledge..." The philosopher asks himself how do the historians know, how do they arrive at an understanding of the past. It is the business of the historian to understand the facts of history in themselves, while the philosopher is concerned with these facts as known to the historian and what it is about these facts that makes it possible for them to be known by the historian.

The philosopher is concerned with the mind of the historian - not as being a complex of mental phenomena, but as a system of knowledge. The philosopher thinks about the

³⁹ Ibid., p. 1

past, but not in the same sense that the historian thinks about it, for to the philosopher the past is not simply a series of events but is a system of things known. "One might put this by saying that the philosopher, in so far as he thinks about the subjective side of history, is an epistemologist, and in so far as he thinks about the objective side a metaphysician...."⁴⁰ However Collingwood warns here that such an assumption would lead to a mistaken separation between the epistemological and metaphysical aspects of the work. "Philosophy cannot separate the study of knowing from the study of what is known."⁴¹

Collingwood then proceeds to ask why history is made a special study of philosophy. According to him, philosophy tends to concern itself with those particular aspects of the human self-consciousness with which men from time to time finds difficulty. In the early Grecian period the particular problem that disturbed people was mathematics. The Middle Ages found itself engrossed in problems of theology. In the years from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries men were busy laying the foundations of the natural sciences. During the eighteenth (and nineteenth) centuries critical thought turned towards history, but it was soon realized that the

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 3

⁴¹ Loc. cit.

theories of knowledge which were applicable to mathematics, theology and science would not apply to history. Therefore the philosopher's first task was to show that historical knowledge is possible and the second was a reorganization of all philosophy from a historical point of view. Considerable difficulty was experienced during this period by men who persistently attempted to apply such unrelated laws to history with the result that there was a growth of scientific history, theological history and other such histories. They attempted to apply the methods of the laboratory or the pulpit to the mutable, plastic materials of history, and time has shown their efforts to have been all but futile.

In the second section of his introductory chapter, Collingwood deals with the nature, object, method and value of history. As history is a special, particular form of thought, so persons attempting to answer the questions posed by history require special qualifications. First they must have had experience of the particular kind of thought found in history, - i.e., they must first be historians, and secondly they must have the ability and the inclination to reflect upon that experience. Thus they must be not only historians but also philosophers. Collingwood then outlines

briefly the answers to the questions, What is history? What does it do? How does it do it? and why? I have summarized his answers as follows:

a) definition of history - a kind of research or inquiry, a science in that it finds out things not previously known, that which finds answers to certain questions.

b) object - to find out the actions of human beings done in the past.

c) method - the interpretation of evidence.

d) value - it is for "human self-knowledge" it teaches what man has accomplished and thus what he is.

The four essential characteristics of history according to Collingwood are first, that it is scientific in that it begins by asking questions, secondly, that it is humanistic in that it asks questions about things done by men at determinate times in the past, thirdly, that it is rational in that it bases its answers on certain grounds, appeals to evidence for validation, and fourthly, that it is self-revelatory in that it exists in order to tell man what he is by telling him what he has done.

What has been said so far has been to briefly outline Collingwood's position with reference to history. Now let us look at his treatment of other historians and philosophers of

history with a view to gaining further insight into his own position.

In his discussion of Kant, Collingwood refers to him as a spectator of human events, which Kant regards as phenomena.

Kant begins his essay by saying that although as noumena, or things in themselves, human acts are determined by moral laws, yet as phenomena, from the point of view of a spectator, they are determined according to natural laws as the effects of causes. History, narrating the course of human actions, deals with them as phenomena, and therefore sees them as subject to natural laws.⁴²

This is quite in line with the positivist school in historiography and is a theory which Collingwood rejects. He makes no attempt to deduce laws from the events of history but rather he sees in these events merely the realization of human ideas and ideals, and it is these ideas and ideals which the historian should seek to comprehend and appreciate.

We have already dealt with his discussion of Hegel earlier in this chapter so I will here just emphasize some of the points upon which Collingwood agrees with Hegel. Collingwood's theory of the re-enactment of past thoughts is very important in any discussion of his philosophy of history and it comes out very clearly in his words on Hegel.

It is peculiar to history that the historian re-enacts in his own mind the thoughts and motives of the agents whose actions he is narrating, and no succession of events

⁴² Collingwood, *op. cit.* p. 94

is an historical succession unless it consists of acts whose motives can, in principle at least, be thus re-enacted Thus Hegel's conclusion is right, that there is no history except the history of human life, and that, not merely as life, but as rational life, the life of thinking beings.⁴³

Here again Hegel was certainly right; it is not knowing what people did but understanding what they thought that is the proper definition of the historian's task.⁴⁴

Collingwood's theories in this regard seem to lead him into the realm of intuition in the Bergsonian sense. This does not necessarily hold true as Collingwood did not believe in such a spiritual transformation or transmutation of the knower into the object known. Intuition is too much of a metaphysical concept to apply to Collingwood's appreciation of thoughts as they had been thought.

Then too, as has already been said, Collingwood retains the knowing mind and its interpretive powers in the process of re-enaction. The historian is never expected to transcend or negate himself in a desire to get at the thing as it really is.

Following the discussion of Hegel, Collingwood deals more generally with the trends of the nineteenth century. During this century history became a disinterested search for facts, swinging towards objective history. In so doing

⁴³ Ibid., p. 115

⁴⁴ Loc. cit.

it embodied the primary stage of positivism, that of a gathering of facts, and neglected the secondary, that of the determination of general laws from these facts. Historians adopted two rules in all their treatment of these facts, the first that each fact was a thing which could be ascertained by a separate cognitive act - thus the totality of history was sliced into an infinity of separate facts, and the second as follows:

Each fact was to be thought of not only as independent of all the rest but as independent of the knower, so that all subjective elements (as they were called) in the historian's point of view had to be limited. The historian must pass no judgement: he must only say what they were.⁴⁵

The inevitable result of this second rule was that it prevented historians from adding any constructive criticisms or judgments to the bare facts of history. "The refusal to judge the facts came to mean that history could only be the history of external events, not the history of the thought out of which these events grew."⁴⁶ Such a situation is the unavoidable conclusion to all attempts to remain a spectator in the writing of history.

Collingwood credits F. H. Bradley with the leading of the revolt against positivism in England. He began a severe examination of the existing critical methods on the basis of an assumption that critical history is possible and that to

⁴⁵ Collingwood, op. cit. p. 131

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 132

a certain extent all history is critical because no historian merely parrots the authorities as he finds them. Bradley believed that all critical history requires some criterion of judgment and he felt the criterion should be the historian himself. In so far as the historian is human he has human experiences and it is the knowledge gained from these many and varied experiences which the historian brings to his study. His background of experience is the basis upon which he makes judgments and in deciding the relative truth or merit of anything he refers it to his own experience. Bradley assumes that an acceptance of testimony implies a re-enactment within the historian's mind of the thoughts of the person concerned. In this, as we have already seen, Collingwood is in full agreement with Bradley.

In the treatment afforded Toynbee by our author Collingwood, we are given several glimpses in his, Collingwood's own position. His criticisms of Toynbee are especially interesting at this time because of the increased interest in Toynbee and his "Study of History." According to Collingwood, Toynbee's work constitutes a return to and a reaffirmation of the positivist principles so prevalent in the preceding century. Toynbee is said to attack history from the standpoint of science in that he deals with isolated

facts. He cuts up the field of history into separate and distinct divisions - according to cultures and races - each of which he claims to be self-contained. He claims, or so Collingwood reports, that each society is clear-cut and distinct from all its neighbours and there is no "shading-off" from one to another. Where any change does occur a new society is said to have been formed.

Collingwood regards these theories as naturalistic because the life of society is said to be a natural as opposed to a mental one. Of the sciences biology is most analogous to history. Toynbee has no sympathy for the theory held by Collingwood of the re-enactment of the past in the mind of the historian. Referring to Toynbee, Collingwood says:

He regards history as a mere spectacle, something consisting of facts observed and recorded by the historian, phenomena presented externally to his gaze, not experience into which he must enter and which he must make his own.... His whole scheme is really a scheme of pigeon-holes elaborately arranged and labelled, into which ready made historical facts can be put.⁴⁷

Collingwood takes this to mean that Toynbee separates each fact from its context and makes it something permanent in itself. He (Toynbee) seems to forget that history is a process - one in which something is always turning into something else. He is said to deny the continuity of the

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 163

process because of the series or group of unconnected facts.

Again referring to Toynbee:

He regards the historian as the intelligent spectator of history, in the same way in which the scientist is the intelligent spectator of nature: he fails to see that the historian is an integral element in the process of history itself, reviving in himself the experiences of which he achieves historical knowledge.⁴⁸

Thus, in Collingwood's words at least, we have a very definite statement of the spectator position and in the sense in which we are using the term. Toynbee seems to forget that he himself is a necessary part of that very history which he is writing.

Clement C. J. Webb reviews Collingwood's book in the Hibbert Journal of October, 1946.

For Collingwood genuine history is not a statement of what is already known, but an attempt to solve a question the answer to which is as yet unknown; a question, however, not relating, like those of natural science, to facts of every kind and the laws to which they are found by observation and experiment to be subject, but to human actions only; and to be answered not by reducing them to instances of some permanent and unchanging reality, such as has usually been designated by the word "substance" but by discovering, through the interpretation of evidence, unique and individual events, the tracing of which to the thoughts, volitions and emotions of the unique and individual men and women whose actions they were, will reveal to us what we ourselves are, who share their humanity and through our participation therein can enter into the thoughts, volitions and emotions by which their actions were brought about.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 164

⁴⁹ C. C. J. Webb, "R. C. Collingwood's 'The Idea of History'", The Hibbert Journal, XLV (October 1946) p. 84

This remains Collingwood's fundamental thesis, that the historian should try by every intellectual means at his disposal to reproduce in his own mind the actual thoughts of the agents of history.

Regarding the romantic movement towards the close of the eighteenth century, which heralded the onset of scientific history, Webb considers Collingwood's treatment of Hegel and his defence of this trend to be an "admirable" piece of work. Collingwood defends Hegel despite all the critics, even including Croce, whom Webb feels is the "most serious and systematic of all."⁵⁰

Webb's major criticism of Collingwood and his book is that he slights too greatly the part memory plays in the writing of history.

In his zeal to show that history is not, as Bacon suggested, the realm of memory, since, as is said in The Idea of History (p. 58), "the past only requires historical investigation so far as it is not and cannot be remembered," Collingwood had already come near to ignoring what is yet surely true, that memory must be the foundation of all history, which begins in one generation telling another what it remembers and hopes that posterity will not forget that it has been told.⁵¹

I think the critic here is either mistaken in his emphasis on memory or else he is imparting some unusual connotation to the term. To my mind memory plays a very

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 84

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 86

slight part at best in the method of the historian. He is not writing what he remembers but rather that which he knows and understands of what has been presented to him in the form of documents, relics, etc. Memory to me implies something too mechanical to be applied to the writing of history. The historian should not be expected to rely upon his memory for the material of his work, or else our history would be resting on extremely shifting and untrustworthy foundations.

In Collingwood we find what is probably the apex of contemporary philosophical thought regarding the problem of historical method. As I intend to make very clear in my final chapter, his position seems to reach the greatest heights of enlightenment, at least according to present standards and ways of thinking.

Writing in "An Outline of Modern Knowledge" F. J. C. Hearnshaw has an article entitled "The Science of History," in which he makes a general survey of historical thought and writing over the past two centuries. Hearnshaw begins by mentioning the very positive statement of Dr. J. B. Bury, made in 1903, that "'history is a science, no less and no more.'"⁵² However the naturalist philosophers reply that history is less than a science, because none of the events are ever repeated and thus no classification is possible.

⁵² F. J. C. Hearnshaw, "The Science of History," "An Outline of Modern Knowledge," p. 774

In contrast to the above claims the literary men assert that history is an art, that science can only supply at best the skeletal frame upon which the writer by means of his artistry drapes the clothes. "The passionless indifference of the man of science is out of place and intolerable in the case of the historian, who is dealing with the affairs of sentient souls...."53

Hearnshaw believes that in so far as history is a search for truth it can be classed along with the sciences. In the true sense of the word "history," it means an enquiry or "Knowledge gained by the process of enquiry.... The underlying idea is investigation, research, persistent pursuit of the truth."54 Thus in this sense the writing of history is necessarily scientific. Hearnshaw regards history as the science of criticism, and the material of history is the whole realm of human knowledge and experience. The aim of history is to explain the present, an idea which closely corresponds to Collingwood.

Historical enquiry... has inevitably to be undertaken in accordance with the ideas and the interests dominant at the moment of investigation: no historian can abstract himself from his environment. Nor, indeed, should he make any attempt to do so. For his purpose as a historian is precisely to attain to an understanding both of his environment and of himself. In short - as Professor Benedetto Croce has pointed out - in a real and not merely a paradoxical sense of the expression, all history is contemporary history, and all true historians are, willy-nilly, philosophers.55

53 Ibid., p. 774

54 Ibid., p. 776

55 Ibid., p. 777

Here again we find a strong reaction to the objective, spectator theory of history. The twentieth century philosophers and historians are leaning towards the subjective, participant way of thinking, and not without just cause.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEM AND AN ANSWER

Before attempting to give one possible answer to this problem let us recapitulate and review briefly what we have been saying. In Chapter One we explained the title and set forth the terms of the problem and how it appears in our experience. The second chapter was an explanation and discussion of Bergson's theory of metaphysical intuition, with some attempt to relate it to our whole problem. In the chapter immediately preceeding we have reviewed the subject of historiography and the philosophy of history, discussing several significant representatives of the two principle schools of thought on the subject.

We began by assuming that there is such a problem as the one we have been discussing, and that it has been plaguing the thought of philosophers and historians for years - even centuries. To analyze the problem into its simplest terms, I think it is a controversy over whether or not man should assume intelligence enough to be able to adequately and accurately pass judgment of someone or something else. It is basically a question of the dignity of man's intellectual abilities and capacities. The objective school does not feel man has intellect enough to be able to

interpret, criticize or judge the past and therefore he should seek to reproduce as closely as possible the past in its actuality. In direct contrast to this there are the philosophers and historians of the subjective school, who believe in the worth and dignity of their own and other's intellectual abilities to the extent that they see fit to criticize and pass judgment upon the past - in short, to create history.

Are these subjectivists, these "participants" wholly justified in their assumption? We have seen that certain eminent philosophers have held it their highest duty to keep their own personalities out of their work. They regard it as a sacred trust to reproduce in so far as they are able, actually what occurred in days gone by. All personality, interpretation, criticism must be ruthlessly expelled in order that they might gain an insight into the untarnished truth. Men like von Ranke and T. C. Smith, and many others, have striven bravely (if somewhat misguidedly) to tell us of the past in its actuality. They set a high goal for themselves but did not realize the futility of their task.

As has been pointed out many times in these pages man cannot get out of himself. No matter what he attempts to say, he says it as he has seen or understood it, in the light of the whole manifold of his own particular experience. His

experience has been like no other person's on this earth and therefore his point of view will be like no other person's. No matter how he attempts to deny himself he still remains the creature of his own past. Therefore the only logical position for us to adopt is that of the "participant," who sees everything in the light of what his experience has been. The wider the range of experience and the greater the development of the intellect, the greater will be the measure of truth in the work.

The proponents of objectivism make the claim that if the historian or the philosopher allows his own personality to enter the picture the product of any activity will be biased, prejudiced, and tinged with personal view-point. To a certain extent this criticism is valid and justifiable. It has been too often the case in the past and still is that history has been written with a very narrow and esoteric point of view and the result has been that we have had Socialistic history, Protestant history, nationalistic history, each dealing with the complex problems within a very limited scope. Nevertheless, provided the historians stick to the facts, their histories are as true as any one else's, but the point is that their account is not the whole truth. We all agree that there are

two sides to every question and no judgment can be valid without taking into consideration both possible points of view.

Is any purpose served by the writing of particularized, limited history? I believe it serves a great purpose. By the realization that these accounts are not the whole story we should come to the same conclusion that perhaps the accounts we give also are not the situation in its entirety. It is impossible for man to know everything that has happened in the long years of this earth's existence, and therefore any account, no matter how objective, will fall far short of perfection. When objective history is written, the reader invariably comes to certain conclusions and formulates certain judgments upon what he has read. Is not this equally as fallacious to the objective historian as is the attempt to write history from the standpoint of a well-educated, well-rounded and deeply experienced intellect?

The conclusion that I see, therefore, is that we should attempt to view history and all life from much the same standpoint as Collingwood does, bringing together constituent elements of objective facts with subjective interpretation. It is as equally futile to try to pass judgment upon historical figures without any knowledge or

understanding of their problems and ways of thought as it is to determine how and what these people thought merely for the sake of knowing it, without arriving at some positive conclusions therefrom.

The "spectator-participant" problem has not been settled and quite possibly it never will be as long as man persists in his inclination to go to extremes. The extreme on either side of the problem leads to a counterbalancing reaction towards the other, but perhaps in the fulness of time it really does not matter. That is no solution however. We must realize and ever be awake to the fact that there have been, are and will be many great minds on this earth - minds capable of "seeing things steadily and seeing them whole." Why then should we be afraid to trust in the judgments of these minds and to reap the incalculable rewards from so doing? Let us have faith in ourselves at least.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS.

Bergson, Henri, The Creative Mind. M. L. Andison, translator, New York: Philosophical Library, 1946.

Carr, H. Wildon, Henri Bergson: The Philosophy of Change. London: T. Nelson and Company, Ltd., 1919.

-----, Philosophy of Benedetto Croce. London: Macmillan and Company, 1927.

Collingwood, R. G., An Autobiography. New York: Penguin Books, 1939.

-----, The Idea of History. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946

Croce, Benedetto, Theory and History of Historiography. Douglas Arnstee, translator. London: George G. Harrap and Company Ltd., 1921.

-----, What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel. Douglas Arnstee, translator. London: Macmillan and Company, 1915.

Durante, Will, The Story of Philosophy. Garden City: Garden City Publishing Co. Inc., 1943. p. 336-349.

Hegel, George W. F., Philosophy of History. J. Sibree, translator. New York: The Colonial Press, 1900.

Mackintosh, R., Hegel and Hegelianism. Edinburgh: T. T. Clark, 1903.

Russell, Bertrand, A History of Western Philosophy and Its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day. New York: Simon Schuster, 1945. p. 798-810

Schopenhauer, Arthur, The World as Will and Idea. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp, translators, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Triebner and Company, Ltd., 1907.

Szathmary, Arthur, The Aesthetic Theory of Bergson.
Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937.

B. PERIODICAL ARTICLES

Beard, Charles A., "Written History as an Act of Faith,"
American Historical Review, XXXIX (January, 1934)

-----, "That Noble Dream" American Historical Review
(October, 1935)

Davies, W. Watkin, "The Politics of Lord Acton," Hibbert Journal, XLV (October, 1946)

Gouge, Thomas A., "The Spectator Fallacy," The Journal of Philosophy, XXXIX (January 1, 1942) 14-21

Smith, Theodore Clarke, "The Writing of American History in America, from 1884 to 1934," American Historical Review, XL (April, 1935)

Walsh, W. H., "R. C. Collingwood's Philosophy of History," The Journal of the British Institute of Philosophy, XXII (July, 1947)

Webb, Clement C. J., "R. C. Collingwood's 'The Idea of History,'" Hibbert Journal, XLV (October, 1946)

C. ESSAYS

Boodin, John Elof, "The Philosophy of History," Twentieth Century Philosophy. Dagobert P. Runes, editor.
New York: Philosophical Library, 1943

Hearnshaw, F. J. C., "The Science of History," An Outline of Modern Knowledge. Dr. William Rose, editor.
London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1931

D. ENCYCLOPEDIA ARTICLES

Bur, Henri and Lucien Febvre, "History," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, VII p. 356-368