

The Croce-Collingwood Theory as Theory

Croce's *Aesthetic*, published one hundred years ago, was the most celebrated work of its time in aesthetics.¹ Collingwood's *Principles of Art* (1938) was not quite so influential, but was probably the most important aesthetic treatise to appear in English between Burke's and those of such recent figures as Gombrich, Wollheim, and Goodman.² One hundred years is not a long time in the world of ideas. But the Croce-Collingwood theory of art is now distinctly out of favor. (I will follow Hospers in calling it this.)³ Its central ontological claim—that the work of art is an ideal or imagined object—is widely held to be implausible. And its claim that art is essentially expression will seem to many to be not only sentimental and out of date, but straightforwardly refuted by such allegedly inexpressive examples as the *Goldberg Variation* No. 1 or Mondrian's *Compositions of the 1920s*. Even Collingwood's seemingly more modest argument that Art is not Craft—so often the only representative of the Croce-Collingwood point of view whose study is recommended to students—is generally thought to be a failure, and only of marginal interest in any case.

I think these works have in general been both misunderstood and misevaluated in recent Anglo-American philosophy, at least among mainstream aestheticians. As I see it, there are two interconnected reasons. The first is the presently widespread general skepticism about substantive aesthetic theories first articulated conspicuously in the late 1950s by such figures as Weitz, Kennick, Passmore, and Hampshire, and that has reached a certain institutional maturity (shall we say) in the reflexive or recursive theories of such figures as Danto, Dickie, Levinson, and others.⁴ This is not the place to argue this in detail, but there is, I think, good reason, despite the cogency

of these developments, to maintain the importance of substantive aesthetic theories of the kind that I am about to discuss. Take Weitz's claim that Art is a family resemblance concept, that no condition is necessary and sufficient for something's being a work of art. I think Weitz was substantially correct, if the claim is one about the conventional meaning or use of the word "art."⁵ Nor do I suppose that the actual extension of the term might conceivably depart from its putative extension, due to either widespread failure to grasp the concept actually expressed by the term or a mismatch between the word's conventional meaning and the nature of the phenomenon. However, the apparent diversity of art, to which Weitz's claim owes much of its initial appeal, may be exaggerated and misleading. The significance we attach to certain sorts of objects may be distorted by our theoretical obsessions: Worrying over definitions, we naturally look to the peripheries of art for test cases, hence naturally to such celebrated mavericks as Duchamp's *Fountain*. Yet the accepted status of many such objects as art may admit of special sociological explanation, in such a way that they do little to disturb the conviction that art has, so to speak, a center that is sufficient for the existence of art, but a condition for the possibility of works outside the center.⁶ Thus, consider the general idea of an inductive theory of art, according to which something is a work of art if and only if it bears a certain institutional/intentional relation (or its ancestral) to a certain base class (which may comprise either works of art, persons, or other objects such as institutions). Such a theory must specify a basis. But if it does this merely by referring to some actual class of objects or activities, then even if the theory is extensionally adequate with respect to human history, it is modally and perhaps

geographically either impotent or incorrect: either it tells us that nothing outside the actual history of Earth can be a work of art, or it tells us nothing about objects outside that history. It may be a vain ambition, but so it may be with many other philosophical ambitions: philosophically, one wants a conceptual elucidation of the basis, some articulation of the origin or center of the phenomenon that explains why such an expansive concept should ever have been so peculiarly significant. The role for a substantive theory of art has been more tightly circumscribed, but not cancelled.

The second reason—most acutely in Collingwood's case—is that it has too readily been assumed that what is at issue is a question of something like conceptual analysis, when what these figures advance are not analyses but substantive theories (Croce, for his part, observes testily that “to classify is not to think philosophically”; *PP*, p. 23).⁷ Those theories may be wrong, but they cannot be refuted by showing, for example, that a correct analysis of our actual concepts *art*, *expression*, and *emotion*—based largely on the putative extensions of those concepts—reveals that it is not true that art is the expression of emotion. Since “Art,” “expression,” and “emotion” for these figures are theoretical terms, such pronouncements can only be evaluated by considering the theories as attempts at explanation.⁸ To suppose otherwise would be like supposing that Thales's declaration that everything is water might have been refuted by pointing out that everyone knows that stone, for example, is not water. And even if, at a deeper theoretical level, the theory fails to describe something exemplified by every work of art, successful elucidation of some relatively basic or essential region of art might make such extensional inadequacies seem comparatively unimportant.

My aims in what follows are not only expository and critical, but also defensive. I wish to provide the sympathetic and reasonably thorough understanding that the Croce-Collingwood theory has too seldom been granted in recent aesthetics (for brevity, I will, where not seriously misleading, speak freely of a single theory).⁹ Still, the exposition will have to be both selective and sketchy; most glaringly, I will leave aside the claim, so dear to our two theorists but insupportable to us, that Art and Language are essentially a single phenomenon.¹⁰ Remaining are the two

distinctively Croce-Collingwoodian claims that I shall call the Expression Thesis and the Ideality Thesis: that art is expression and that the work of art is an ideal object. Discussion of the first will contain most of the exposition of the theory; without actually endorsing either Croce's account of expression or Collingwood's, and without poring over too much textual detail, I will try to reconstruct the theoretical substance of the claim according to each figure in such a way as to show why they cannot so easily be dismissed, for example, by citing counterexamples. By contrast with the first claim, the second has received at least one genuinely penetrating criticism, that in Richard Wollheim's *Art and Its Objects*. Although, ultimately, I think it is successful, the criticism stands in need of refinement and supplementation. But the untenability of the Ideality Thesis is not, I will suggest, a mortal failing for the theory as a whole.

I. THE EXPRESSION THESIS

We ordinarily think of expression as aimed at the communication of the subjective dimension of a mental state—paradigmatically its emotive dimension. To express is to make the subjective dimension of a mental state manifest in some intersubjectively perceivable medium, thereby enabling a suitably equipped audience to recover it. The intended recovery requires not merely the identification or recognition of the expressed content, but sympathy or empathy with it; a kind of imaginative acquaintance with what it is like to undergo it oneself. The medium thus appears to be accidental, if not to expression itself, then to its purpose: The ontological status of the expressed content is indifferent to it, and its function is only that of a communicative vehicle, in much the way that utterances of declarative sentences are sometimes held to convey the real stuff of communication, namely, thoughts or propositions.

The Expression Thesis, understood according to that ordinary conception, has the fatal defect of implying that the work of art, in principle, can be translated: its content could be embodied, not merely in numerically distinct physical works, which is plausible, but in perceptually discernable works. The Ideality Thesis enables Croce and Collingwood to avoid that implication: since

the work of art is not what Collingwood calls the “bodily work of art,” but rather the “total imaginative experience” the bodily work engenders in a suitably equipped audience, there is no implication that the content of the work is separable from its perceptual content. But not only does this appear to resign the fate of the Expression Thesis to that of the more controversial Ideality Thesis; it tells us nothing about what expression is, and does nothing to assuage the difficulty presented by apparent counterexamples. Not only does it seem untrue that every work of art expresses emotion; among works that do express emotion, artistic value correlates at most only weakly with expressiveness. Our task, then, is to estimate the force of those objections once we understand the Expression Thesis as the theoretical claim that Croce and Collingwood intended it to be.

II

To do so, we must first understand the Croce-Collingwood theory of art as being enmeshed in a general metaphysics of mind. Our two figures do not subscribe to the same metaphysics of mind, but their agreement on this score is more significant, for our purposes, than their differences. Though neither philosopher can happily be classed as “Kantian,” this common ground involves the distinctively Kantian rejection of the mind-as-theater conception shared by such figures as Descartes and Hume (*PA*, pp. 171, 186–187, 192–194, 202–224, 252–254; *SM*, pp. 63 ff; *Logic*, pp. 218–231; *Aes.*, pp. 1–11 and 17).¹¹ This rejection is summed up by the doctrine of *spontaneity*: insofar as the mind is aware or understands, it is not the passive recipient of the content of a state of understanding or awareness, and that content cannot be understood as a mere logical construction from something passively imbibed from without; rather it actively creates that content. The creative act is what Kant called *synthesis*: States of understanding or awareness do take shape in response to sensory affection, but sensory items can figure in those states only insofar as the mind engenders the total state of awareness as a certain kind of unified, structured whole, where those unifying principles and forms are supplied by the mind itself. The particular mental organ that does this is the *imagination*: out of a contingent flux of sensory input, it deliv-

ers experience in the form of nonconceptual representations—unified states with necessary formal characteristics that can constitute the contents of experience and the objects of thought (for Kant, all empirical representations must be spatio-temporal and causally ordered; Croce denies there is any one formal feature that every intuition must have, but for our purposes we can leave that departure, along with many others, aside).

The experience delivered by the imagination, however, lies beneath the understanding or intellect, the domain of logic. The imagination delivers to consciousness the possible subjects of judgments, but the imagination does not itself deal in concepts, the predicates of judgments. Concepts are essentially general, and intuition is always particular; it *individualizes*, as Croce puts it. Further—and here the excursus would be too lengthy to try to articulate why—this awareness must be reflexive: it must involve *self-consciousness*, where by this we mean that the subject is at least implicitly aware of himself or herself as having the intuition.

With this much in place, then, we can appreciate already the point of a claim that both Croce and Collingwood insist upon repeatedly: the expression of an intuition is identical with the having of it (*PA*, pp. 109–124, 202–24, and 234–241; *Aes.*, pp. 8–11; *PP*, pp. 73–75; *EA*, pp. 24–33; *EB*, pp. 225–227; *TAE*, pp. 261–263).¹² For expression is the formation—the realization as formally articulate and, hence, available to self-consciousness—of essentially individual contents of experience. But such a thing just is an intuition, and an intuition is, by definition, a constituent of conscious experience. So there is no such thing as an unexpressed intuition. Expression is that activity of the imagination that delivers awareness of a particular to a self-conscious subject. Indeed it might more aptly have been called the *realization* of intuition rather than its expression.

III

Our next step is to understand the ways in which our two figures envisage emotion or feeling as entering into expression. Although that process, as just outlined, is a perfectly general feature of the mind, not confined to artists, the use of the word “expression” is hardly justified if the

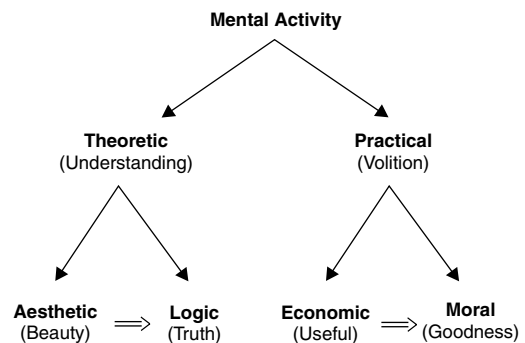
phenomenon described bears no discernible relation to expression as ordinarily conceived, by which we mean a process that manifests, in a quite special way, the artist's personality, specifically her or his emotions. And in fact both Croce and Collingwood do affirm that Art is specifically concerned to express emotion or feeling. Where, then, does it enter in?

It is here, in fact, that the Croce-Collingwood enterprise is most conspicuously theoretical as opposed to analytical. Croce and Collingwood employ concepts of *emotion* that depart, both extensively and intensively, from the ordinary concept. The ordinary concept is not that of something we should expect to find at the center of a metaphysics of mind, but only, perhaps, in ethics and empirical psychology (and, of course, the concept of emotion, and that of a given particular emotion, can be subjected to philosophical analysis). The ordinary concept is that of certain, highly distinctive mental states involving a pronounced affective character, states whose occurrence is inessential to consciousness in a way that that of perceptual states is not. Every conscious state is or involves a perceptual state, but not every conscious state is or involves an emotional state; indeed there could be, and perhaps there are, human beings whose existence is generally unemotional. Insofar as we are concerned with such garden-variety emotions as sadness and anger, that is certainly true: it is not the case that we are, at every waking moment, afflicted with such an emotion. For both Croce and Collingwood, however, emotion is an intrinsic feature of every experiential state: An adequate philosophy of mind must build it into the ground plan of the mind—alongside sensation and thought—not merely append it as part of the superstructure. They hold this view not on the basis of what would surely be a doubtful introspective or empirical observation, but on the basis of a theory of what sort of thing an emotion is.

The importance of this point in Croce's case has been obscured by his having neglected it in his *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article, which has probably been read far more widely among English-speakers than his earlier treatise, the *Aesthetic*.¹³ Nevertheless, it is crucial. According to his general Philosophy of Spirit, spiritual or mental activity divides first into two categories, distinguished by their characteristic mode of activity

(*Aes*, pp. vi–vii; *Logic*, chap. 1; *PP*, pp. 309–322): The theoretic faculty is the faculty of understanding; the practical faculty is the faculty of volition. These subdivide in turn: the theoretic into the aesthetic and logical, the practical into the economic and moral. Each of these four can be characterized according to their distinctive aim: the aesthetic seeks the Beautiful, the logical the True, the economic the Useful, and the moral the Good. And just as the object of the aesthetic is always something particular, whereas that of the logical is always something general or universal, so it is with respect to the economic and moral: whereas economic activity pursues particular ends, moral activity pursues universal ends. Accordingly, the logical and moral categories comprise higher-order activities whose materials, respectively, are supplied by the aesthetic and economic faculties (of course, in the style of the time, “logic” for Croce was a broad and substantive philosophical discipline, not formal logic, which Croce thought very little of). Thus, whereas Logic is the higher-order science of concepts, and the individual sciences those that bring first-order conceptual understanding to its highest pitch, Aesthetics for Croce is simply the higher-order science of the individual intuition, and Art is the activity that brings that faculty to its highest pitch. And just as, within the theoretic domain, intuition supplies the logical faculty with something to organize, to make sense of and adjudicate, so, within the practical domain, the economic—the sphere of desire—is related to the moral.

Given this background architectonic, Croce explains the usual emotions or feelings as features of the practical domain. The emotions are individuated, on the one hand, by pleasure and pain due to satisfaction and frustration of the



will, and, on the other, by the particular varieties of practical mental activity. But the adequacy of such a classification, for Croce, is explicable only on the assumption that an episode of emotion or feeling is actually *identical* with an episode of “appetition and volition for some individual end, apart from any moral determination” (*Aes.*, p. 75; *PP*, pp. 21–32, 305, and 357–358). It is a mode or moment of mental activity—which for Croce is ultimately volition—not merely an effect or accompaniment, as it is in the Empiricist tradition. It is certainly not to be identified with or individuated by its affective character, as if that were something that could adequately be conceived apart from particular varieties of mental activity. Feeling, in the end, is only a species of the more fundamental genus *will* (*PP*, pp. 357–358). Now Croce does not, so far as I know, make this point explicit, but it is crucial to this account of feeling that the approach is strictly phenomenological: volitional satisfactions and frustrations are the subjective experiences of these things, not episodes of success or failure as conceived from a separate objective point of view. It is not as if the will succeeds or fails in something, and then, as a consequence, a feeling arises of having succeeded or failed. Phenomenologically, volitional satisfaction or frustration is identical with the feeling of it. That is why feeling is both activity and affectivity.

Having introduced feeling in connection with the satisfaction and frustration of economic activity, Croce speaks without further ado of feelings of ethical, aesthetic, and intellectual satisfactions (*Aes.*, p. 76). The probable explanation is that, although it is true that the garden-variety emotions are found almost entirely within the economic domain, it is equally true that all mental activity, just by dint of being activity, is subject to success or failure, of going well or ill. But realizing an intuition is itself success in a certain species of mental action: unlike pure sensation, which is passive, intuition is intentional, the upshot of acts of attention. Thus, there must be a characteristic feeling associated with it. That, according to Croce, is the beautiful (*Aes.*, pp. 78–80; cf. *PP*, pp. 73–75). The pleasure we take in the beautiful is nothing but the spiritual satisfaction taken in the successful realization of an intuition, that is to say, in expression. Since a successful work of art is simply one that unifies a manifold of perception in a single intuition, it follows at

once that all successful works of art express feeling and all are beautiful.

In later writings (*EA*, *EB*, and *TAE*), Croce does not repeat the claim that art is especially concerned with beauty. This is almost certainly due to his antipathy toward the sort of aesthetic hedonism that might be attributed, say, to Hume: the aim of art must not be identified with the arousal of pleasure (Collingwood was no less vehemently opposed to what he characterized as the assimilation of art to craft). But he also became more explicitly concerned to conceive the work of art as expressing a particular content.¹⁴ The emphasis on beauty thus gives way to an emphasis on the intuition as a presentation of feeling, indeed as a symbol, in a special sense, of feeling:

What gives coherence and unity to the intuition is feeling: the intuition is really such because it presents a feeling, and can only appear from and upon that. Not the idea, but the feeling, is what confers upon art the airy lightness of the symbol: an aspiration enclosed in the circle of representation—that is art; and in it the aspiration alone stands for the representation, and the representation alone for the aspiration. (*EA*, p. 30 [in *EB*, Croce stresses that the intuition is always imbued with feeling, with “the pure throb of life.”])¹⁵

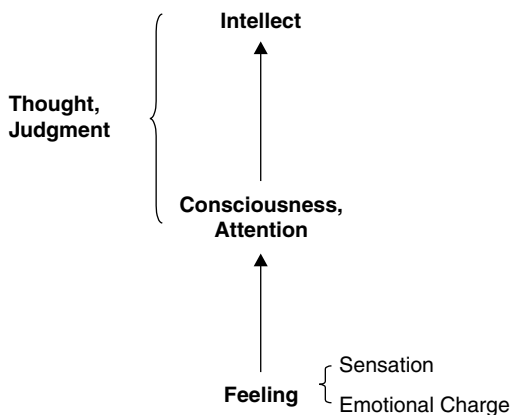
The reason for this is best clarified in *Philosophy of Practice*, in which art is said to represent desire or longing itself—that is, will—thus making ideally lucid what in normal life remains concealed, indistinct, or amalgamated (*PP*, pp. 266–272; Croce specifically stresses the affinity with Schopenhauer). Again, it is essential to this account that the feeling or aspiration Croce refers to is not restricted to the class of what we would normally call “desires” but encompasses the entire domain of will (see *PP*, pp. 73–75). Croce sees in this claim a resolution of the dichotomy between classicism and romanticism, a dichotomy that emerges as confused: the current of pure feeling, far from being that upon which the artist imposes form, is what distinguishes the unity of artistic intuition from a mere concatenation of images. It is not the imposition of form on matter that engenders unity in a spiritual movement; rather—in harmony with Kant’s dictum that the act of spontaneity is at once an act of formal organization—it is the unity of a spiritual movement that imposes form on matter. Form, in the sense relevant to art, *is* feeling. It is, for example, the

crushing downward momentum of Rubens's *Descent from the Cross*—hence, its feeling of the dreadful weight of material existence—that so sublimely unifies that otherwise complex composition. But this emphasis on feeling is best seen as augmenting and clarifying, not revising the earlier conception of expression. However it may wax or wane, feeling, as Croce understands it in the *Aesthetic*, is a feature of every mental state, since it just is the mind's purposiveness as subjectively experienced. Thus to say that the intuition, as expressed in a work of art, presents feeling, is not to confine it to some particular domain of experience. Nor is feeling the *subject matter* of such intuitions, in the way that the Annunciation is the subject of Fra Angelico's picture; its role is that of the strong mental purposiveness that, in general, raises intuitions to that higher pitch of force and clarity aspired to by art.¹⁶ It is the vital current that moves through the work, subjecting it to a unifying principle.

IV

Collingwood provides a more detailed account of feeling and emotion than Croce, and departs from Croce in affirming at the outset that the business of art is the expression of emotion, thus bypassing Croce's more general claim that art is concerned essentially with intuition. But there is more common ground than might initially appear, and there are reasons, as will emerge, for preferring Croce's more general formulation.

Here, then, is a graphical representation of the mind as Collingwood sees it.



Each sense-datum carries with it an emotional charge; hence, the general category *feeling*, or what Collingwood calls the psychic level. But the psychic level in its purity never appears in consciousness. Acts of attention engender consciousness by transforming brute feelings—occurrent sense-data with their emotional charges—into what Collingwood, following Hume, calls “ideas.” Departing from Hume, however, Collingwood characterizes the general form of consciousness as that of judgment; in the case of the conscious but nonconceptual thought, the form is simply “This (feeling, sense-datum) is mine.” Such is the fundamentally Kantian stamp of Collingwood’s account: Consciousness is representational by virtue of being reflexive, that is, by virtue of a certain kind of *self-consciousness*. As will be expected from previous discussion, the organ that transforms feelings into ideas, makes them conscious, is the imagination: the imagination is that which transforms the occurrent flux of sensation into a coherent perceptual state, a *perception* in the proper sense of the word; the intellect is that which, in turn, subsumes those analogue representations under concepts.

Emotional charges are always, at least potentially, causally efficacious. Fear, for example, is “psychically expressed” by cringing and so on. Collingwood introduces the relation between sense-datum and emotional charge by way of an infant who is “terrified by the sight of a scarlet curtain blazing in the sunlight” (*PA*, p. 161): although the terror happens because of the redness in the curtain, and it is possible to perceive the redness without being afraid, the sensory and emotional experiences are, in this case, phenomenologically fused, distinguishable only by analysis or theory. Of course, not every sense-datum actually evokes a conspicuous emotional response, in the way exemplified by the infant. But Collingwood’s claim is not that every sense-datum is accompanied by an emotion consciously recognized as such. At the psychic level—not the conscious level—every sense-datum possesses a certain emotional character, an *expressive property* as it is standardly termed in contemporary aesthetics. We readily ascribe such properties to phenomenal qualities when asked to attend closely: navy blue, for example, is felt to be bolder than lilac, crimson is angry, jade-green serene. Similar things go for shapes, musical and alliterative sounds, and so on. The connection

between one's capacity to recognize expressive properties and one's propensity actually to undergo the corresponding feelings, of course, is a vexing and contentious issue. Collingwood is not explicit on the point, but it would be plausible, and most congenial to his position, to assume that the recognitional capacity depends upon the infective propensity: One can recognize an expressive property without being infected by the corresponding feeling, but the recognition is something like an intimation of how one would be affected were one in a more susceptible state of mind—were one less grown up, less accustomed to stifling such responses, less hurried, and so on.¹⁷

In addition to emotions that exist as emotional charges on sensa—the “purely psychical emotions”—there are what Collingwood calls “emotions of consciousness” (pp. 231–232). These are the more content-rich emotions that require consciousness of self, such as shame and pride. They occur as charges on thoughts or perceptions rather than charges on sensa.

The judgmental structure of consciousness entails the possibility of false consciousness: the case where one thinks, of some element of the psychic level, “that is not mine” (pp. 216–221). Such is repression, in Freud's sense, and certainly it was significant for Collingwood that the nature of Art should be explicable in terms of what he held to be the triumphant new science of the mental. But Collingwood's theory by no means depends on Freud's. All that is essential to the former is that there should exist feelings at the psychic level that admit of being owned or disowned by acts or refusals of conscious attention, and that the artist is especially concerned to express them, bring them to consciousness.

Now, there is one rather glaring inconsistency in Collingwood's account of self-consciousness. The expression of emotion, for Collingwood, consists either in “psychical expression”—the immediate physical manifestation¹⁸ of emotion, such as blushing or tears—or in imaginative expression, which is that act whereby we become conscious of an emotion as our own. But Collingwood also says that an emotion of consciousness, just by virtue of being conscious, has already received imaginative expression (*PA*, p. 238). Thus, if fear, for example, is a psychical emotion and shame is an emotion of consciousness, then it follows, with no

plausibility, that, whereas we may be afraid without being aware of it, we cannot be ashamed without being aware of it—indeed without having expressed it. Unfortunately, the account cannot be repaired by denying that emotions of consciousness are necessarily emotions of which we are conscious, maintaining, rather, that they are the emotional charges, *which themselves exist at the psychic level*, on thoughts or perceptions. This would violate Collingwood's dictum that emotional charges are properties or aspects of the constituents of experience, not further constituents of experience. Emotional charges, then, must exist at the level of their bearers; in that case emotions of consciousness cannot, so to speak, hide below the threshold of consciousness.¹⁹

Epicyles are conceivable that might assuage this difficulty. But there is, I think, a cleaner and more general solution. Rather than hold the aesthetic theory hostage to the finer details of a theory of self-consciousness, we might prefer Croce's simpler and more comprehensive claim that the essential concern of the artist is to present intuitions—nonconceptual representations, ideas, in Collingwood's sense. According to either Croce's account of the mind or Collingwood's, this retains the idea that art necessarily expresses emotion, and leaves room for the psychodynamic processes that interested Collingwood, but avoids a commitment to Collingwood's problematic bifurcation of emotions according to self-consciousness. It has also two further advantages. First, it avoids the implication that art is essentially biographical (despite the rant against “aesthetic individualism” at the close of *The Principles of Art*, all expression, for Collingwood, is expression, the coming to self-consciousness, of the artist's own emotion; he avoids the impending narcissism by supposing that the artist is, or ought to be, concerned with shared emotions—but more on this later). Second, it is congenial to the historicism shared by Croce and Collingwood in a way that a close adherence to Collingwood's theory would not be. The intuition, as explained earlier, is spontaneous: it is a situation-as-experienced-by-me that, while it incorporates sensory input, is not confined by it, and need not be predictable on the basis of it. The imagination, that blind but indispensable maker of intuitions, is in that sense free in its construction of conscious experience: whatever

a priori rules of synthesis may be partly constitutive of it, there is nothing in the very idea of such a faculty that rules out its operating, in the individual case, idiosyncratically or even capriciously and nothing to make it immune, so to speak, to outside influences. If the organ whose role is simply to generate intuitions must feel what it creates, it does not follow that it must feel it in advance of the creation.²⁰ And that the imagination should be emotional and reactive in that way is exactly what we should expect, insofar as perception, as it does for both Croce and Collingwood, embodies emotion or feeling.

v

The crucial point to take away from the foregoing is that emotion or feeling, for both figures, is intrinsic to the intuition, and is thus inseparable from conscious experience. For neither figure does emotion merely exist contingently alongside the other contents and activities of consciousness, as the purple dots in a pointillist picture exist alongside the others. That is why neither Croce's nor Collingwood's claim that art is the expression of feeling is directly refutable by citing works of art that we would not ordinarily characterize as expressive, or whose aesthetic importance is not determined by what we would ordinarily recognize as its expressiveness. The claim that art is the presentation of intuition might be refutable by finding counterexamples, but the claim that intuitions are expressive can be adjudicated only on strictly theoretical grounds.

The universality of emotion, however, engenders a worry that the Expression Thesis, far from being too restrictive in what it counts as art, is too liberal. Art, for Croce and Collingwood, is expression. But if art is expression and expression is the self-conscious awareness of something individual, then what, if anything, distinguishes art from expression-in-general? An answer, surely, is required; it really would stray too far from ordinary conceptions to suppose that, since hardly a moment goes by when we are not aware of some individual thing or state of affairs, we therefore pass the hours, however vacant or mundanely industrious, in making works of art. But the answer cannot be that the artist is specifically concerned with intuitions-with-emotional-content; for all intui-

tions, according to either theorist, possess emotional content. Yet nor is the answer that art comes about just when the intuition is externalized, embodied in a material artistic medium; that that is not so is precisely what is asserted by the Croce-Collingwood Ideality Thesis (indeed any answer that conceived art as an activity not already implicit in a correct theory of the mind would be a mistake, for either Croce or Collingwood). What, then, is the answer?

The answer is that the distinction is a matter of degree rather than principle: What distinguishes the intuitions realized in fine works of art from intuition generally is ultimately only empirical or quantitative, as Croce puts it. There are two aspects to this. First, Croce and Collingwood insist, with some plausibility, that we are not as aware as we might think (*Aes.*, pp. 9–11 and 137; *PA*, pp. 303–304). We do, of course, enjoy an intuition of something virtually every waking moment. But these are typically rather flat, ordinary, and unrefined, and the mind is seldom concerned to set off from others and to dwell upon a single intuition. Such intuitions as we have are also typically sketchy and fleeting: the attention required by practical negotiation of the environment, and for the application of concepts used in thinking about the environment, is highly selective, and does well to adhere to the simple and familiar when it can. Once the schema sufficient for action or concept-application is in place, we are not concerned to elaborate or sustain the intuition. Further, the control of action can often dispense with intuitions entirely, making do, in its animal way, with sensory input, preconscious processing and routines that are virtually automatic, whether learned or innate. Finding that one has driven several miles or made a cup of coffee without paying attention are familiar examples.

Second, despite the categorical distinctions that Croce and Collingwood insist upon between art and other things (see *EB*, pp. 559–561; *PA*, chap. 1 and pp. ii–v; *EA*, pp. 1–21), they regard the distinction between art and expression generally as evaluative (see especially *Aes.*, pp. 12–14). There is not some further metaphysical distinction between artistic and nonartistic episodes of expression.²¹ Further—and here we anticipate a discussion to come later—there is a certain empirical necessity in the fact that it is empirically adequate to identify artists as those who master the physical medium—who make

paintings, actual musical sounds, and so on. For Croce and Collingwood, of course, the “bodily work” is not to be confused with the work of art proper, which is the intuition. From a metaphysical standpoint, and even from a practical standpoint in many cases, the medium is only of practical, not aesthetic, significance. In every case, indeed, it is requisite for the communication of the intuition from one mind to another. But neither Croce nor Collingwood hold the absurd view that the *object* of the struggle with the medium is never anything but the externalization of the intuition, as if the complete intuition might in every case have existed without the medium. On the contrary, the human mind is in point of fact sufficiently feeble as to be unable to sustain or develop elaborate intuitions without perceptual helps—without the aid of the medium.²² The medium not only expands, intensifies, and refines the imagination, it also provides the very forms without which the more rarefied achievements of the imagination could never, in practice, be realized. The artist’s technical mastery, then, is the acquisition of a vocabulary or repertoire of the imagination, not merely a means of externalizing the imagination. We will, in any case, return to this issue: the question of the ideality of the work of art depends upon how this dependence is conceived.

VI

The discussion of expression so far has had everything to do with the artist, and little to do with the spectator. Since its appeal to and value for the spectator is plausibly thought to be essential to art, the account is at best incomplete, unless we can use the theory to say something illuminating about the uptake of works of art. My remarks will have to be somewhat speculative, as neither Croce nor Collingwood makes a sustained effort at doing this.²³ But I think the way is reasonably clear, and that traversing it will illuminate further the theory of expression.

Both Croce and Collingwood, of course, hold that the work of art is not the material thing, but, at most, the intuition occasioned by the thing. The spectator, then, is not one who apprehends or perceives a material thing, but one who realizes a certain intuition. Now, it is crucial,

for our purpose, that we first recognize that an intuition is essentially subjective. It may in point of fact represent an actual situation, but whether or not it is veridical, or refers to any objective situation at all, is totally indifferent to its character and status as an intuition. It is not, indeed, a perception, because a perception adds to intuition the judgment of existence or reality (see *Logic*, pp. 155 and 166; thus, Croce especially echoes Kant’s claim that in aesthetic experience we are not concerned with the “real existence” of the object; see *EA*, p. 16; *EB*, p. 557; *PA*, pp. 135–138; and *SM*, pp. 58–63). The intuition is a situation-as-it-is-experienced-by-me. Now because of this, or so Croce and Collingwood would argue, the intuition must be understood holistically (see *Aes.*, p. 20). It comprises a structure of impressions from several senses along with emotive content—the emotional charges on *sensa* in Collingwood’s case, or, in Croce’s, the emotional character of the mental activity that constitutes having the intuition. No aspect can be subtracted—no formal, sensory, or emotive aspect—without affecting the remainder; intuitions have a thoroughgoing unity that cannot be accounted for in terms of parts individuated by analysis. It would be implausible to suggest that this interpenetration occurs among sense-data themselves—whatever those, precisely, might be—but it is sufficient to maintain that, *in an intuition*, sensations are formally organized by the imagination, and always occur with an emotional charge or as part of an emotionally charged mental activity. If the subjective character of an item of experience is in turn sensitive to whatever emotions are in play, then interaction may occur even among sensory materials themselves. Again, this does not mean that the shade of deep blue that one perceives in the evening sky must be affected *chromatically* by, say, the shriek of a bat passing by overhead. The point rather is that if I wish to account for how the blue of that sky was for me on that occasion, I might have to mention the bat. Analysis can readily disassemble the intuition, but in the intuition itself, perception and emotion are fused in a single unified experience.

Such reflections as these, I think, help to make sense of Croce’s use of the phrase “lyrical image” in describing the intuition. The emotional content of an intuition is not like that of the sensory contents of an experience; it is not detachable from it, and does not in any real sense recur in other

intuitions. Thus, the intuition or image is a symbol only in the special sense that it presents, without being identical with, the feeling: it presents it only as the emotional aspect of that particular image, not as something signified by it or identifiable apart from it. Thus, there is absolutely no question of the expressive content—qua emotional content—being given by some other image, some other work of art. The expression of intuition is always the expression of a unique emotion.

Now as Collingwood points out, Berenson famously observed that the difference between a painter such as Giotto or Massaccio and a highly linear painter such as Piero Della Francesca—or even a highly painterly one such as the later Titian—is that a painter in Giotto's mold is more conspicuously concerned with tactile values: the impression one has, in looking at the picture, of the solidity of objects, and of the consequent tangible reality and complexity of the spaces around, behind and between them (*PA*, pp. 146 ff.). But the apprehension of tactile values is not strictly a visual matter. It is, rather, a matter of what Berenson called “ideated sensations.” One does not, of course, actually feel the solid wood of the cross in Giotto's *Crucifixion*; nor actually the space between the kneeling Virgin and the figure behind her. What one does, rather, is to feel these things imaginatively, or what perhaps comes to the same thing, feel them hypothetically: one feels in one's hand, perhaps, an anticipation of what the solid wood *would* feel like; one feels kinaesthetically what it would be to pass behind the Virgin, and so on. This kind of visceral anticipation of mass and space is our fundamental way of subjectively apprehending and representing the physical environment; thus, Collingwood's otherwise paradoxical remark that Cezanne—arguably, the most tactile of painters—painted like a blind man.

That visual intuition may carry proprioception and kinaesthetic perception with it does not tell us anything explicitly about emotion; but it points the way. For if we recall that the intuition is essentially subjective and holistic, then I think it plausible to regard the Berensonian phenomenon as but one, admittedly central species of a wider genus. For let us look a bit closer at a more conspicuous example: What happens when we gaze at one of Cezanne's baskets of fruit? The sensory stimulation is itself purely visual; nevertheless, something about the way that Cezanne has

painted that table, those apples, those plums, prompts us to undergo certain ideated kinaesthetic sensations. We can anticipate grasping the edge of that table, passing a hand behind the piled oranges, and so on. In that respect, it is just as if we were, so to speak, in the grip of such sensations before a real basket of fruit upon a table. That aspect of what it is like to look at fruit—or what it can be like—is heightened, pushed to the fore. And it is that state of dwelling upon that aspect of the real experience, we might add, that enabled Cezanne to paint in his singularly tactile way; it is what makes us want to say that there is something deeply realistic about Cezanne's pictures, despite the fact that reality does not actually look like that.

The painter, by manipulating the purely visual constituents of experience, is able selectively to set off, to catalyze, other subjective elements of what it is like to look upon a basket of fruit, the Grand Canal, or whatever. But if we agree that the intuition must be understood holistically in the way suggested, and accept some version of the Croce-Collingwood thesis that feeling permeates all perception, then it seems we are bound to think of the Berensonian phenomenon as encompassing, potentially, any aspect of what such-and-such visual experience is like, not merely Berenson's tactile values. That, then, is how, in the case of painting, we can think of the intuition as presenting distinctively emotional content to the audience. Think, for example, of the late van Gogh's olive trees and cypresses, trembling in the midday sun, or bent by the afternoon winds of late summer: most of those who sympathize with these pictures, I suppose, will agree that van Gogh's singular brushwork and coloring intimate what it is like for a person of exquisite, or even pathological sensibility to gaze upon such things: we are thereby acquainted with what that is like. The sense of the reality of the experience—that is, its seeming fidelity to what it is like—is far more significant than its extreme departures from visual literalness (see *PA*, pp. 308–309).

Van Gogh, of course, is a distinctive and conspicuous case (though not an especially easy case). The story will change as we move through different sorts of examples, and, of course, as we move away from painting. There is not room to consider more. But I hope it will be reasonably clear that Croce and Collingwood make it plausible that every work of art expresses emotion. It is

not an empirical generalization or analytic truth, but a theoretical claim, like the proposition of physics that matter is really energy. The claim is motivated by their more general theories of the imagination, and explained in such a way as not to be baldly inconsistent with the idea, say, that Goya was a more expressive, more emotive painter than Raphael. From the Croce-Collingwood point of view, that is true, but what it means is that whereas Raphael celebrated the comparatively harmonious or serene movements of the spirit, Goya was more interested in the more agitated ones.²⁴

VII. THE WORK OF ART AS IDEAL OBJECT

Both Croce and Collingwood held that the work of art, in Collingwood's phrase, is the "total imaginative experience" that one has when contemplating the bodily work of art: that necessarily, no work of art is identical with a material object (*PA*, pp. 139–142, 151, 275, 300, and 305; *SM*, pp. 64–65; *Aes.*, pp. 8–12 and 111–117; *EA*, pp. 9–11; *EB*, pp. 225–231). There are, as far as I can see, two arguments in Croce and Collingwood for the Ideality Thesis. The first, already touched upon, is more prominent in Collingwood and is rather feeble.²⁵ The second is present in both theorists, but Croce gives it more depth.

The first argument, as Collingwood presents it, depends upon what is surely a sound epistemological point: "A person who hears the noises the instruments make is not thereby possessing himself of the music" (p. 140; for Croce, see *EB*, pp. 227–230, and *EA*, pp. 9–11). This rather oblique way of putting it is probably unnecessary: it would not have sounded too paradoxical to say that the person who hears the noises—the "heard sound" (p. 143)—does not thereby hear the music: to hear music is to hear sounds as musically organized, and it is certainly possible to hear musical sounds without hearing them as musically organized (p. 140; Collingwood compares this with hearing speech without hearing it as expressing a sense, but a more evident parallel would have been that of hearing speech without hearing it as grammatically organized). Collingwood's point, then, is that the senses are insufficient for engagement with the work of art. A further organ, the imagination, is needed. The

senses give us the noises or sounds—the bodily work—and the music *comprises* the sounds, but only as raw material: the music is a structure of sounds as imagined by a musically competent listener, not simply a collection or sequence of sounds.

Having made the epistemological point, Collingwood announces without further ado the ontological claim that "the work of art proper is something not seen or heard, but something imagined" (p. 142); then, after some further points that I will return to, "a work of art is a total activity which the person enjoying it apprehends, or is conscious of, by the use of his imagination" (p. 151)—by which we are to understand not simply a repetition of the epistemological point, but that a tune, for example, is really "the tune in the composer's head" (p. 139). The reason is that to "possess oneself of the music" is not passively to receive something from without, but to "reproduce," "reconstruct" something. As explained earlier, the imagination is a creative agent, not merely something receptive. But why does Collingwood infer from this that properties supplied by the imagination are not in the bodily work? He does so because he tacitly assumes the senses are adequate to reveal the properties of the bodily work (Croce proceeds similarly when he infers that since aesthetic properties are not determined by physical properties, the work cannot be a physical object; see *EB*, pp. 227–230, and *EA*, pp. 9–11). Then, since the work has properties that cannot be revealed by the senses, it cannot be identical with the bodily work (pp. 139–144). Since only the imagination can supply the missing properties, and the imagination creates rather than receives its object, the work must be an imagined object.

The argument is confronted with two difficulties, each decisive individually. The first trouble is that the senses, on Collingwood's reckoning, are not sufficient for the perception of *any* external object; they merely deliver a field of impressions, without making objects or representations of objects out of them (*PA*, p. 192). We are aware or conscious of objects only insofar as our imaginations construct representations of them. If the argument were sound, it would establish not only that the work is an experience, but that so is the bodily work, along with every material object.

The second trouble is that Collingwood is trying to have his cake and eat it too: he does not

wish to invoke a crude physicalistic premise, whereby a face, for example, cannot truly be described as “sad,” because, being a physical object, a face can only truly be described in terms of its straightforwardly physical qualities. But in that case, he is badly placed to get the work’s aesthetic properties into the mind. He cites cases in which a property that does admit of being instantiated by physical objects is attributed to the work when something in the relevant physical object seems to resist it: the change in expression in the face of a wooden puppet, the *sostenuto* in a percussive instrument. Human faces do literally change their expressions, but those of wooden puppets do not; strings literally do play *sostenuto*, but pianos do not. But the appearance of a discordance in such examples between object and property depends upon the implausible meta-physical view that such properties—facial expression, *sostenuto*—must supervene upon local distributions of physical properties. This is to forget not only that properties can be relational, but that the relevant relata may be the propensities of human response. Collingwood confuses things further by likening aesthetic properties apprehended by the imagination to colors:

The imaginary experience which we get from the picture is not merely the kind of experience the picture is capable of arousing, it is the kind of experience that we are capable of having. But this applies equally to the colours. He has not put into the pictures certain colours which we passively find there. He has painted, and seen certain colours which come into existence as he paints. (p. 150)

This is a fair enough way to describe what is involved in color-vision, but it totally undoes the ontological contrast that Collingwood wished to maintain between the bodily work and the imagined work. On the contrary, since Collingwood wished to ascribe colors to the bodily work, it suggests that the same could be done for aesthetic properties, yielding an account of both in terms of response-dependence: an object has such a property just in case it is generally perceived as having it by a suitably prepared audience under normal conditions. Then, if color is response-dependent as Collingwood suggests, or if we really do see the puppet’s expression change, the piano play *sostenuto*, then Collingwood refutes

his argument for the Ideality Thesis in pointing it out.

It is possible to reply on Collingwood’s behalf that the work, whatever it turns out to be, must bear its aesthetic properties essentially. Then, if we look for such an object, it may seem inevitable that only an ideal or mental object will do. Such considerations, however, cannot establish that the work is immaterial, let alone mental; at most, they establish that *if there is such a thing as the work of art*—an object that possesses intrinsically the properties we intuitively judge to be its aesthetic properties—then it is not the bodily work, in which case, granting the assumed dilemma, it is mental. To insist that the aesthetic properties of the work must be essential to it, then, might be to insist that there simply is no such thing as the work of art.

VIII

Before turning to the second argument for the Ideality Thesis, we have to consider a certain exegetical dispute. Aaron Ridley has recently argued that Collingwood did not reason as I just suggested; further, that Collingwood neither held the Ideality Thesis, nor denied that at least some actual works of art are identical with bodily works of art, nor denied that some works of art could not exist without their bodily counterparts.²⁶ Ridley quite rightly emphasizes that these issues are totally independent of Collingwood’s global idealism: the primary question is whether Collingwood thought that works of art, necessarily, are mental things like ideas as opposed to material things like lumps of clay, whatever the correct metaphysical account of that distinction might be. What is in question, as Ridley puts it, is whether or not Collingwood espoused an “art-specific idealism.”

In his earlier *Speculum Mentis*, Collingwood asserts not only the Ideality Thesis, but that the work of art is private (*SM*, pp. 68–73), and that the bodily work is valued only by the “aesthetic weakling” (*SM*, p. 67). In the *Principles of Art*, Collingwood does not repeat the privacy claim, but he appears on several occasions to enunciate the Ideality Thesis unequivocally. Toward the close of Book I he writes:

If the making of a tune is an instance of imaginative creation, a tune is an imaginary thing. And the same applies to a poem or a painting or any other work of art. This seems paradoxical; we are apt to think that a tune is not an imaginary thing but a real thing, a real collection of noises; that a painting is a real piece of canvas covered with real colours, and so on. (*PA*, p. 139)

The intended contrast, one might think, between an imaginary thing and a real thing is sufficiently clear: the imaginary thing is a thing that takes shape in the mind—it “exists in a person’s head,” as Collingwood puts it—and the real thing is a nonmental material thing. Toward the end of Book III, he reiterates:

In Chapter VII it was said that a work of art in the proper sense of that phrase is not an artefact, not a bodily or perceptible thing fabricated by the artist, but something existing solely in the artist’s head, a creature of his imagination; and not only a visual or auditory imagination, but a total imaginative experience. It follows that the painted picture is not the work of art in the proper sense of that phrase. (*PA*, p. 305)

Ridley’s claim is that despite these ways of putting the point, Collingwood was not on such occasions asserting the Ideality Thesis, but only the epistemological point adduced above. In the passages directly following the first of the seeming Ideality claims just quoted, Collingwood says, for example, “music does not consist of heard noises” (p. 141); but what he is immediately concerned to show is “music we listen to is not the heard sound, but *that sound as amended in various ways by the listener’s imagination*, and so with the other arts” (p. 143, emphasis added). So far as ontology goes, then, this begins to look like a point about the mental equipment involved in the apprehension of the aesthetic *properties*, not a point about the identity of the apprehended object.

Collingwood also describes artist activity in a way that sits uneasily with the Ideality Thesis. In the section preceding the second apparent statement just quoted of the Ideality Thesis, Collingwood is anxious to stress the dependence of the artist’s creative activity on his or her engagement with the medium. Summing up, he says:

The painted picture is not produced by a further activity upon which he embarks, when his aesthetic activity

has already arrived at completion. . . . There is no question of “externalizing” an inward experience which is complete in itself and by itself. There are two experiences, an inward or imaginative one called seeing and an outward or bodily one called painting, which in the painter’s life are inseparable, and form one single indivisible experience, an experience which may be described as painting imaginatively. (pp. 304–305)

The artist’s inward experience depends upon the outer. In that case, it would seem wrong to say that the work exists independently of the artist’s outer activity of fabrication.

From both the artist’s side and the spectator’s side, these passages suggest that what we might be tempted to speak of as distinct objects or processes are really only distinct aspects of a unitary object or process, one aspect of which (the imagined) may depend upon the other (the material or sensible). It would be, thus, a mistake to interpret Collingwood as holding that, since the sensed object lacks properties possessed by the work of art, and the sensed object is all there is to the bodily work, the bodily work is not the work of art. For Collingwood does not deny that the sensed object—the bodily work—possesses the aesthetic properties of the work. All he is denying is that the senses are adequate to receive them. Another mental organ, the imagination, is required. If we need a way to interpret Collingwood’s exact words, then, we should assume that by “bodily work of art” Collingwood means a collection of material, sensible properties, and not, strictly speaking, an object. If so, then there is no tension between Collingwood’s denial that the work is the bodily work and his claim that the painter’s imaginative activity is inseparably intertwined with the bodily act of painting.

I think Collingwood’s apparent professions of the Ideality Thesis are not equivocal enough to sustain Ridley’s claim (the reader should reread the examples adduced above). As John Dilworth has suggested, however uncharitable it might seem to impute the Ideality Thesis to Collingwood, it is no more charitable to interpret him as not having meant what he seems so plainly to have said.²⁷ Indeed, as Dilworth points out, immediately following the passage quoted above in which Collingwood acknowledges the role of the bodily act of fabrication in at least some cases of artistic creation, Collingwood says: “No reader, I hope, has been inattentive enough to imagine

that in the preceding section this doctrine [that the bodily work is not the work of art] has been forgotten or denied" (*PA*, p. 305).

But, aside from these exegetical courtesies, I think Ridley makes some philosophically substantive misapprehensions. First, Ridley's main point, as against the idealistic interpretation, is that since Collingwood clearly held that the *sensuous* experience of both artist and spectator is logically necessary for their respective realizations of the *imaginative* experience—where the sensuous content includes perception of the artistic medium—the imaginative experience must be necessarily connected with the public object, that is, the bodily work.²⁸ But, not to put too fine a point on it, to infer from this that Collingwood cannot have held the Ideality Thesis is a non sequitur. For one thing, the necessary connection between the sensory and imaginative would establish that between the imaginative experience and the bodily work only if a certain externalist conception of sensory experience were assumed, such that the experience one has when perceiving the bodily work could not have been that experience unless it were, in point of fact, an experience of actually perceiving the bodily work. Despite the fact that internalism about the contents of experience was almost self-evident for virtually any philosopher until very recently, there is, indeed, some evidence that Collingwood envisaged the possibility of such externalism.²⁹ But that does not matter. For even if we do ascribe externalism to Collingwood, we do not thereby acquire a reason to deny that he held the Ideality Thesis. Semantical externalism, for example, has no more tendency to show that thoughts are not in the head than the relational nature of fleabites has of showing that a fleabite cannot be on the skin.³⁰ Likewise, that the bodily work should be logically requisite for the total imaginative experience does not have any tendency to show that the work of art cannot be identical with the experience rather than the bodily work.

Second—again quite aside from the apparent idealistic declarations cited above—we should ask why it should be considered a service to Collingwood to deny that he held the Ideality Thesis. One reason would be to avoid the implausible implication that, say, Tintoretto's *Last Judgment* might have existed in perfect detail without having been painted. But in the obvious sense in which that is implausible, the Ideality

Thesis does not imply it; it implies it only as a logical or metaphysical possibility, not as a real psychological possibility (I say more about this below).³¹ I suspect that what is really going on is that Ridley has been anachronistic, too quick to assume that the ascription of the Ideality Thesis to Collingwood "robs his philosophy of art of almost all its interest and promise."³² First, Ridley assumes that if we think of what is independently interesting and promising in the theory as entailing the Ideality Thesis, then its interest and promise lapse. But that Collingwood believed in the entailment is consistent with its not holding. The truth, as I see it, is simply that Collingwood was understandably mistaken on this point. Second, we should not assume that the Ideality Thesis is somehow so inherently implausible that a refined intelligence such as Collingwood's at Oxford in 1937 cannot have held it. Things were different then. In the sense in which the Ideality Thesis might be implausible to an analytically trained philosopher in the twenty-first century, then surely general philosophical idealism is even less plausible; but certainly that doctrine—or rather doctrines such as Joachim's, Bradley's, and Green's that we conveniently group together under that name—did not strike Collingwood as implausible.³³ Those were his heroes and his friends, and the refined historicism that was his mature philosophy, though only crudely summed up as idealist, was the outcome of his nearly lifelong opposition to realism. So, however implausible the Ideality Thesis might seem to Ridley, or to you, or to me, such implausibility is not evidence that Collingwood did not hold it.

IX

The second argument for the Idealistic Thesis is perhaps only implicit in our two theorists, so I will exercise a somewhat free hand in presenting it.³⁴

If we ask, "What is the ultimate aim of the artist's technical activity?" then there is a lot to be said for the answer that the aim is to make things that are beautiful or otherwise rewarding to contemplate: in particular, the artist *makes* the bodily work with the intention that it will be valuable to contemplate, and *presents* it because of the value of contemplating it. The second argument's main premise, then, is that the aim of the artist's

activity of bodily fabrication is to make the experience available: the particular act is explained by a separately conceivable intention with respect to that experience. If so, then the bodily work is inessential to the realization of the intention; its role is only that of an experience-inducer, something that enables one to communicate and to conserve the experience, as Croce puts it (*EB*, p. 567). If the work, then, is that object whose realization is what consummates as opposed to facilitates the artist's effort, then the work is the experience. Of course, that much is insufficient to distinguish art from either amusement or the pleasure industry; one might suppose that what television producers or prostitutes are most fundamentally concerned to provide are experiences. But they are not, as the artist is, concerned specifically to exercise the imagination, and to the extent that they are, not for its own sake.³⁵

This way of advancing the Ideality Thesis receives some further, if woolly, support from Croce's general philosophy. Croce holds that the science of knowledge has two branches—Logic, which deals with judgments and universals, and Aesthetics, which deals with intuition (*Aes.*, pp. 1–2; cf. *EB*, pp. 216 and 223–227; *AFPK*, pp. 137–138; *PV*, pp. 44–61). Intuition, then, is a species of knowledge: the aim of imagination, like that of judgment, is *truth*. But what kind of truth? The logical faculty always involves relation; in the most basic case, it involves the subsumption of one representation under another, for example the individual representation under a concept. Unlike that faculty, which deals in universals and relations, what the imagination presents to consciousness, the intuition, is always individual, always *how-these-things-are-now*, as subjectively and nonconceptually apprehended. Indeed, Croce is careful to stress that intuition is not *perception*, if by perception we mean something that makes an objective claim: perception, in that sense, is intuition plus the judgment that things are as represented (*Aes.*, pp. 3–4). Since it is wholly nonrelational, truth, where intuition is concerned, consists only in features manifest in the intuition itself, such as clarity, distinctness, vivacity, and unity. But neither is intuition mere sensation, since intuition embodies *form* whereas sensation, in itself, does not. Thus, art, says Croce, is *vision, contemplation* (*EA*, p. 8). Since it is only the force or activity of spirit that can bring about those features, the truth of an intui-

tion is proportional to the degree to which it manifests the action of human spirit, that is, feeling. Thus, Vico—whom Croce celebrates (*Aes.*, pp. 220–234; *PV*, pp. 46–48) as the first to distinguish imagination sharply from both sensation and intellect—says that Homer assuredly strove to represent something of ideal significance, not particular truths about certain historical events (*Scienza Nuova* 3). But, however it might affect the passions that direct reflection and action, however forcefully it carries conviction, the image is powerless to prove its general validity without ceasing to be art; nor is it, as philosophers have often believed, a kind of prepropositional intimation of intellectual truth. What Homer did do is to present an ideal image of the human spirit, that is, the spirit in a singularly truthful way, rid of adventitious clutter; it was not simply the ideal nature of the heroic actions he described that enabled him to do this, but, equally, or rather equivalently, the purity and spirit of the representation itself, of the intuition. (It is this revelatory function of the imagination that led Ruskin, that most spiritual of practical aestheticians, virtually to equate imaginativeness with truth in painting; see *Modern Painters* 2:3). In the intuition, form and subject matter cannot be prised apart in such a way as to attribute these aesthetic qualities to the form, those to the subject matter. So long as we allow that there is something in the idea that truth can be applied to intuition in the way Croce suggests, this strengthens the case for the ideality of art. For it is fair enough to say that the scientist, as one who creates knowledge, is thereby one who creates something ideal or mental. Yet for Croce, again, the artist differs from the scientist primarily only in her or his concern with the individual in our experience of the world—the intuition—rather than the conceptual or abstract. The implication is that art is ideal because all knowledge is ideal. Resistance to this, Croce so forcefully proclaims throughout the *Aesthetic*, is merely the persistence of a certain Cartesian bias toward the universal, away from the individual.³⁶

x

That the successful artistic image is a truthful one has often been proclaimed, and remains oddly compelling. Still, it is hard to see what it could

mean in the context of Croce's theory.³⁷ It remains far-fetched that "truth" should be the right word for the formal and expressive qualities Croce had in mind; that an intuition can be "truthful" is just not readily comprehensible unless what is meant is the judgment that it corresponds to something, in which case we are outside the aesthetic domain, in Croce's view. I think the argument of two paragraphs ago, however, is valid. If it is unsound, then there must be something wrong with its main premise that the *aim* of art is to bring about certain sorts of mental states. I think there is, but I hope we can waive the complaint that such a view is refuted by certain twentieth-century counterexamples. The view will not be dismissed unless we can show that it fails as an account of what ought to be, on its own reckoning, the most favorable cases.

In his *Art and Its Objects*, Richard Wollheim advances two objections to the Ideality Thesis. The first, I think, is unsuccessful. With the second, however, I think Wollheim hits the nail on the head.³⁸

Following Wollheim, we can call the first objection the objection from the poverty of the image. If the work is the imaginative experience, then it seems to follow, for every work of art, that it might have been complete but not materially embodied. And this is simply not plausible. Beyond a certain minimal degree of complexity, the human imagination is just not up to the task.³⁹ More acutely, the trouble with the theory is its implication that "the capacity in general to create works of art... may flourish quite independently of there being in existence any means of externalisation."⁴⁰ Wollheim continues:

The parallel to the conception of the artist as the man whose head is crammed with intuitions though he may know of no medium in which to externalise them, would be the conception of the thinker as a man with his head full of ideas though he has no language or other medium to express them. The second conception is evidently absurd.⁴¹

Such a man is absurd because he is envisaged as being completely without language; there would be nothing absurd about him if he were merely physically unable to speak. The absurd man has ideas, but they are not embodied in any language, not even inwardly, as he thinks them to himself. But in that case the parallel is misleading,

because neither Croce nor Collingwood held that one's head might be crammed with intuitions without one's knowing of a suitable medium, in that sense; indeed they explicitly deny it (*EB*, pp. 565–566; *PA*, pp. 241–247). Neither Croce nor Collingwood was committed to the view that intuitions could exist without a medium, at least *as imagined*. As I was at pains to stress earlier, the imaginative experience is necessarily the experience of a painted picture, a played tune, a spoken poem, whether or not the material thing exists. It includes the sensory content of the work. It is certainly true, of course, that the mind will frequently be unable, because it is too difficult, to realize and sustain a complex intuition without the aid of the bodily work. But the Ideality Thesis is consistent with that; it entails logical or metaphysical separability of work from bodily work, but not psychological separability. So the objection from the poverty of the image fails because the theory does not require nearly so much of the image as the objection assumes: it does not require that it contain its content in abstraction from its sensuous content, and it does not require that, in practice, it be realizable in the absence of the bodily work.

xī

The second argument depends on a chapter of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language.

Wittgenstein's antiprivacy stricture is in the first instance a point about the relation between understanding and practice: no inner experience, as Wittgenstein puts it, "could have the *consequences* we ascribe to meaning." Carefully thought through, we find that criteria for the ascription of meaning go with practice—the capacity to perform in such-and-such ways—and cannot engage in any determinate way with inner experiences on their own. It is, we might say, the point of the concept of meaning that we should be able to invoke it in the description and evaluation of actual practice. It is a mistake, then, to identify meaning or understanding with an inner state.

It is not immediately clear just how hard we should push the analogy between art and language. For, unlike the linguistic case, the claim is not immediately compelling that the spectator cannot justifiably be said to have an appropriate experience of a work unless she or he

displays such-and-such capacities. We allow, as we might put it, a great deal more slack for the spectator's subjectivity, and indulge his or her inability to prove himself or herself. Wittgenstein, for his part, does not deny there are inner experiences; what he denies is that they constitute meaning or understanding. Indeed, there is nothing in Wittgenstein that entails that those experiences could not exist without their actual meaning-constituting contexts—in the head of a solitary man, in a brain in a vat, or whatever. It is just that they could not mean what they do. Yet the work of art, according to the Croce-Collingwood view, is consummated, realized, in having the intuition, in the individual experience.⁴² The intuition might have practical consequences, and a lack of ability to perform in certain ways—to talk about the intuition, whistle a tune, or whatever—may engender a certain empirical assurance that a person is not having the sort of experience we do, or think she or he ought to have in the face of the bodily work. But these considerations do nothing to undermine either the existence of intuitions, their logical independence of context, or their being the ultimate point of art. To put it most starkly: Propositional understanding logically requires its context because performance in context is what gives our attributions of understanding their point; the artistic intuition does not logically require context, because in speaking of it we are concerned with the experience for its own sake, not because of a concern with any performative capacities that might be associated with it.

The trouble is that the consequences of a complete disavowal of Wollheim's analogy between art and language are too severe, and not in any case congenial to either Croce's or Collingwood's purposes. To insist, in the face of the foregoing, that the work of art is the intuition, is to accept that the work is an entirely subjective, phenomenal object: its properties are just the properties that it seems to have. Their *esse* is *percepti*. If so, then there is no room for misapprehension, misunderstanding of the work. Yet neither theory is intended as a wholly subjectivist account of art; both insist that intuition embodies knowledge. The connections between intuition and knowledge could be severed only at the expense of modifying Croce and Collingwood's respective general philosophies of mind, and only at the price of trivializing art—the one thing that

neither figure would have been prepared to do. It is, at any rate, totally false to our understanding of what either the artist or the spectator means to do, to suppose that the artist's creation might be completely subjective, that is, not answerable to anything outside itself. Irrespective of the artist's communicative intentions, the artist, as Wollheim cites Freud as having pointed out, is concerned most urgently to *escape* his or her own subjectivity—the domain of fantasy, wish fulfillment, and omnipotent thinking. The means of escape is the medium: it is because the artist at least implicitly regards the bodily work of art—not the experience—as the bearer of aesthetic properties, that he or she can think of success with the medium as proof that he or she really does have an imagination, really does mean things, really does have certain intuitions and feelings, and does not merely fancy that he or she does. But this possibility of external validation via the bodily work only makes sense if we think of the medium as bearing its expressive possibilities independently of how the particular artist regards them. From either the artist's point of view or the spectator's, there has to be room for a distinction between successful expression or understanding and mere projection—for misunderstanding, misapprehension of the work. If so, then we cannot think of the bodily work merely as the occasional cause of the really meaningful thing, the experience; we have to think of the experience as something that strives to apprehend properties of the bodily work—properties, in any case, that the work can in some other way be established to be correctly attributable to the work.

XII

The question of whether the normativity of aesthetic understanding might have ontological implications is conspicuously absent from Croce's writings on art (but see *Aes.*, pp. 9–11, and *EB*, p. 227). Collingwood, however, confronts it in the penultimate chapter of the *Principles*, and comes very close to recognizing that the Ideality Thesis cannot be quite true if one allows that works of art can be misunderstood: some remarks suggest either discomfort with the thesis, or a failure to grasp its implications. It is only fair to Collingwood to give these a hearing.⁴³ I shall not attempt what I think is the

impossible task of reconciling everything Collingwood says in this rather notorious chapter with the theoretical exposition that precedes it, but I will try to offer a satisfactory explanation of a few key turnings in Collingwood's discussion.

There are some false starts. To the worry that the Ideality Thesis implies that one can never know whether one's experience matches that of another, Collingwood replies that we have to live with that in any case, as that is how it is with linguistic communication. At most, we enjoy an "empirical or relative" assurance of a congruence among mental states (*PA*, pp. 251 and 309). He then advances a claim about the expressive purposes of artists:

The artist may take his audience's limitations into account when composing his work; in which case they will appear to him not as limitations on the extent to which his work will prove comprehensible, but as conditions determining the subject-matter or meaning of the work itself. In so far as the artist feels himself at one with his audience, this will involve no condescension on his part; it will mean that he takes it as his business to express not his own private emotions, irrespectively of whether any one else feels them or not, but the emotions he shares with his audience. (*PA*, pp. 311–312)

This is not, however, a point about the impossibility of private language; it is only a rant against "aesthetic individualism," the "cult of genius." Collingwood is not here saying that it is impossible to express something that the audience cannot grasp, but only that the artist typically is, has been, and ought to be concerned to express what is in the heart of mankind, not simply what is in his or her own heart (p. 313).

More tellingly, Collingwood now suggests that failure to succeed with an audience may cause the artist to suspect that she or he has not expressed anything, but merely suffered from a corruption of consciousness (p. 314). This connects with a claim that the artist's expressive repertoire is necessarily acquired from the community:

As an artist, he is a speaker; but a man speaks as he has been taught; he speaks the tongue in which he was born . . . what he says to himself is in principle capable of being said to any one sharing his language. As a finite being, man becomes aware of himself as a person only so far as he finds himself standing in relation to

others of whom he simultaneously becomes aware as persons. . . . If he has a new thought, he must explain it to others, in order that, finding them able to understand it, he may be sure it is a good one. If he has a new emotion, he must express it to others, in order that, finding them able to share it, he may be sure his consciousness of it is not corrupt. (pp. 316–317)

Collingwood is on the verge of saying that expression, that is, self-consciousness, necessarily takes place only insofar as it is intelligible to others: self-understanding is parasitic on being comprehensible to others, because the meaningful entities or media in terms of which expression is carried out are meaningful only by virtue of the meanings they have in the community. That is why artistic meaning is a "collaboration," as Collingwood puts it. This is deep and true, but what it shows is that expressive content must be conceived as a property of the public object, and not as something contained in the experience of the object. In a word, it totally removes whatever justification there might have been for identifying the work of art with the "total imaginative experience" of the bodily work.⁴⁴ Collingwood, I fear, realized this, and was perhaps embarrassed by it. In the paragraph immediately following, he writes:

This is not inconsistent with the doctrine, stated elsewhere in this book, that the aesthetic experience or aesthetic activity is one that goes on in the artist's mind. The experience of being listened to is an experience which goes on in the mind of the speaker, although in order to its existence [*sic*] a listener is necessary, so that the activity is a collaboration. (p. 317)

The concerned reader will have been looking for reassurance that the preceding remarks about the social requirements of self-consciousness are consistent with the Ideality Thesis: We expect *that* thesis to be "the doctrine stated elsewhere in this book." What we get, however, is only the observation that insofar as the experience of being understood logically requires an understander, this does not imply that that experience does not take place in the mind. But why should Collingwood wish to make that point? Why does he now wish to shift gears and make of the point about collaboration a metaphysical rather than a merely moral one? The answer, I suspect, is that

he believes, or at least hopes, that a certain externalist conception of the total imaginative experience will avoid the subjectivism that he now recognizes as a threat.⁴⁵ According to the externalism, the content of a mental state—or rather, its being the mental state that it is—presupposes a certain social and material context. It is very much to Collingwood's credit that he should have foreseen the possibility of externalism about expressive content, and that such a doctrine does not entail that the experience of meaning does not take place in the head. But this does not address the crucial issue: That features of the context should determine the *content* of the experience does not entail that the experience is itself answerable to something else—that, once it is in place, it might be wrong. The problem with the Ideality Thesis is intractable: it lies in the identification of the individual experience as the content-possessing thing, not in any particular account of how that content is determined.

XIII. CONCLUSION

I suggested at the outset that Croce's theory and Collingwood's, nowadays, are underrated. But how much of them can survive Wollheim's criticism of the Ideality Thesis? There remains, of course, the Expression Thesis, which is logically independent of the Ideality Thesis. Underlying the Ideality Thesis, however, I suggest that a more fundamental commitment, which we might call the Experiential Thesis, remains viable (it is entailed by the Ideality Thesis, but does not entail it). It concerns not the metaphysics or ontology of art, but rather its purpose and value. Croce and Collingwood are united in holding that the struggle of art is answerable, ultimately, only to the intuition, the experience of the work of art. Its aesthetic value is realized there or nowhere: The Experiential Thesis, then, is that the aesthetic value of the work is the value of the experience of it (it would be natural, but not obligatory, to add that the relevant value of the experience must be its intrinsic or noninstrumental value, or to circumscribe the permitted varieties of extrinsic or instrumental value in certain ways).⁴⁶ Thus, understanding the work, appreciating it, or recognizing its value means not simply interpreting it or reading off its properties, but experiencing it rightly. Guided by Wittgenstein and Freud,

Wollheim shows that our two theorists were wrong to think that the experience can rightly be conceived as being only naturalistically and not normatively constrained by the bodily work, whereas this includes not only its materiality, but its embeddedness in an historically conditioned form of life such as painting. But that failure does not itself vitiate the Experiential Thesis: That the value of the work is the value of the experience does not entail that the work is the experience. On the contrary, if Croce and Collingwood must concede the logical primacy of the material work, we can now assign a more determinate sense to the idea that the work of art captures an individual intuition: the intuition is just the experience one has who experiences the bodily work of art with understanding. This is not to relinquish the claim that art is intuition-expression or that the justification for the existence of the bodily work of art is the intuition it sustains; it is only to make room in the theory for the normative concepts effectively excluded by Croce and Collingwood's mentalism.

Notwithstanding their attempts to justify it in terms of general considerations from metaphysics and the philosophy of mind, it is probable that the principal motivation for the Ideality Thesis in Croce and in Collingwood was to divorce Art from Science, Engineering, or Craft: they took it as self-evident that there cannot be recipes for creating works of art, nor, so to speak, scientific instruments for detecting or measuring aesthetic properties. Artistic creation and understanding must be spontaneous, and works of art must be conceptually recalcitrant, ineffable: Understanding them, knowing their content, is necessarily experiential in a way that conceptual understanding is not. Such is the lore of the *salon* or of Telegraph Avenue, but as Croce points out, it would be incredible if such widespread ideas were simply false (see *EA*, pp. 1–8). If it does not imply the Ideality Thesis, then so much the better for this emphasis on the subjectivity of aesthetic experience, on what it is like to experience the work.

What then of the Expression Thesis? We can see it now as supplementing the Experiential Thesis: The aesthetic significance of the experience of the work of art depends upon its emotional or feeling-content (as presented by its sensuous content). As explained earlier, it is crucial to the significance and plausibility of this

claim that the concepts of emotion and feeling in play be the rich sorts of theoretical concepts that Croce and Collingwood, in their differing ways, envisaged them to be: Like sensation itself, emotion or feeling must be conceived as intrinsic to both the existence and identity of each phenomenological state, not as an optional accompaniment to it. Whether we should believe this, or whether either Croce's account of emotion and the mind or Collingwood's are defensible, are large questions that are well beyond the scope of this paper. So is the question of whether, even if we grant to Croce or Collingwood their preferred conceptions of feeling, the resulting circumscription of aesthetic content or value is not too narrow.⁴⁷ But I hope I have said enough to show that these are the sorts of questions to be asked with regard to these theories of art: Their fates rest upon much wider and more difficult questions in aesthetics than is typically recognized, and on perfectly general questions in philosophical psychology.⁴⁸

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1. I refer to the works of Collingwood and Croce according to abbreviated titles. For Collingwood's works: *Speculum Mentis* (Oxford University Press, 1924) is noted as *SM*. *The Principles of Art* (Oxford University Press, 1938) is noted as *PA*. *An Autobiography* (Oxford University Press, 1939) is noted as *AB*. For Croce's works: *Aesthetic* (London: Noonday, 1909), trans. D. Ainslie from *Esetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale* (Bari: Laterza, 1902), is noted as *Aes*. *Philosophy of the Practical, Economic and Ethic* (Macmillan, 1913), trans. D. Ainslie from *Filosofia della pratica, economica ed etica* (Bari: Laterza, 1909) is noted as *PP*. *Logic as the Science of the Pure Concept* (London: Macmillan, 1917), trans. D. Ainslie from *Logica come scienza del concetto puro* (Bari: Laterza, 1909), is noted as *Logic*. *The Essence of Aesthetic* (London: Macmillan 1921), trans. D. Ainslie from *Breviario de estetica* (Laterza, 1913), is noted as *EA*. "Aesthetics," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed. (1929), trans. R. G. Collingwood from *Aesthetica in nuce* (Bari: Laterza, 1928), is noted as *EB*. *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico* (George Allen & Unwin, 1913), trans. R. G. Collingwood from *La filosofia di Giambattista Vico* (Bari: Laterza, 1911), is noted as *PV*. "The Totality of Artistic Expression," in *Philosophy, Poetry, History* (Oxford University Press, 1966), trans. C. Sprigge from *Filosofia, Poesia, Storia* (Milan: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1951), is noted as *TAE*. "Art as the Form of Pure Knowledge," in

My Philosophy and Other Essays on the Moral and Political Problems of Our Time, ed. R. Klíbanisky, trans. E. F. Carrit (George Allen & Unwin, 1949), is noted as *AFP*.

2. Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (Princeton University Press, 1960) and *Meditations on a Hobby Horse* (University of Chicago Press, 1963); Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968); Richard Wollheim, *Art and Its Objects*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1980). Collingwood first advanced a theory of art in *Speculum Mentis* (1924), which presented a more general philosophical system. Roughly the same ideas were written up in his *Outline of a Theory of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925). In what follows, I mostly ignore these earlier attempts. They contain much that we might wish had been retained in *PA*, but the theory actually advanced is too problematic, and too much at odds with the later theory (it culminates, disappointingly, in a quasi-Leibnizean theory of art as confused intimation of conceptual truth). Croce's *Aesthetic* was a relatively early work; his subsequent writings on art, however, present more varied and often less lucid terrain. Rather than attempting to do justice to the evolution of Croce's thinking about art, my strategy has been to regard the *Aesthetic* as representing the basic view, and to browse the later writings for useful elaborations and adjustments.

3. John Hospers, "The Croce-Collingwood Theory of Art," *Philosophy* 31 (1956): 291–308. Doubts as to Croce's actual influence on Collingwood should be silenced by the bibliographical discoveries reported by Alan Donagan, "Collingwood's Debt to Croce," *Mind* 81 (1972): 256–265. In *Speculum Mentis*, Collingwood credits Croce as the modern champion of the imagination in aesthetics, but at this time was finding fault with Croce's identification of intuition with expression.

4. William Kennick, "Does Traditional Aesthetics Rest on a Mistake?" *Mind* 67 (1958): 317–334; John Passmore, "The Dreariness of Aesthetics," in *Aesthetics and Language*, ed. W. Elton (Basil Blackwell, 1959), pp. 36–55; Stuart Hampshire, "Logic and Appreciation," in *Aesthetics and Language*, ed. Elton; Morris Weitz, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 15 (1956): 27–35; Arthur Danto, "The Artistic Enfranchisement of Real Objects: The Artworld," *The Journal of Philosophy* 61 (1964): 571–584; Jerrold Levinson, "Defining Art Historically," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 19 (1979): 232–250; George Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic* (Cornell University Press, 1974).

5. Weitz ("The Role of Theory") invokes two points from Wittgenstein, not just the one about family resemblance. The further, more radical point is that any similarity between a given object and an accepted member of the term's extension might reasonably provoke a community to extend the term to that thing, there being no higher standard that might determine such a move as incorrect (though, of course, the community, especially upon learning further information, might subsequently withdraw the term from that object). Thus, Weitz ought really to be remembered for saying that Art is an "open concept," as he puts it, not merely that it is a family resemblance concept.

6. In *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Harvard University Press, 1981), Danto offers an alternative explanation: our concern with art just is, or has become, partly reflexive, a concern with the nature of the interest we take in works of art.

7. See, for example, R. Wilkinson, "Art, Emotion and Expression," in *Philosophical Aesthetics*, ed. O. Hanfling (London: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 186–194.

8. True, Collingwood says that Book 1 of the *Principles of Art* is an exercise in conceptual analysis. And that theoretical elements figure prominently there does not prove that he was wrong to say so; analysis is almost always idealization, and in practice must be informed by theoretical considerations. However, the plausibility, and indeed the content, as Collingwood points out, of the claim that Art is Expression is derived almost wholly from the theories propounded in Book 2. It was, I think, a needless and bad strategic maneuver on Collingwood's part to have pretended that he could first, by strictly analytical means, mark out the logical space to be filled by a theory. For a more detailed discussion of this issue with respect to Collingwood, see J. Grant, "On Reading Collingwood's *Principles of Art*," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46 (1987): 239–248.

9. For a recent, unsympathetic account of what below I call the Expression Thesis in Croce and Collingwood, see Gordon Graham, "Croce and Collingwood," in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. B. Gaut and D. Lopes (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 75–85. For pungent criticism of what I call the Ideality Thesis, see Beryl Lake, "A Study of the Irrefutability of Two Aesthetic Theories," in *Aesthetics and Language*, ed. W. Elton (London: Blackwell, 1959), pp. 100–113; also Passmore, "The Dreariness of Aesthetics" (pp. 52–54), and Paul Ziff, "Art and the 'Object of Art,'" also in *Philosophical Aesthetics*, pp. 170–186.

10. The claim assumes that the expressive as opposed to the representational aspect of language is essential to it, or at least, in some sense, takes precedence. Croce and Collingwood stress the genetic and psychological priority of the expressive, but the view needs the much stronger thesis that the expressive aspect is a logical or metaphysical presupposition of the representational.

11. John Hospers, in "Collingwood and Art Media: a Reply," *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 2 (1971): 43–46, stresses the importance of this bit of Kantianism in both Croce and Collingwood. For detailed analysis and criticisms of Collingwood's theory specifically, see P. Jones, "A Critical Outline of Collingwood's Philosophy of Art," ed. M. Krausz, *Critical Essays on the Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood* (Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 42–67. For problems internal to Croce's theory of art, see G. Douglas, "A Reconsideration of the Croce-Dewey Exchange," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 28 (1970): 497–504; and especially G. Orsini, *Benedetto Croce, Philosopher of Art and Literary Critic* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1961). On Croce's general philosophy, see C. Sprigge, *Benedetto Croce: Man and Thinker* (Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes, 1952), and D. Roberts, *Benedetto Croce and the Uses of Historicism* (University of California Press, 1987).

12. In the earlier account in *Speculum Mentis* (pp. 80–91), Collingwood holds that since intuition, in itself, is not assertoric, it cannot be meaningful, hence, it cannot be expressive. Although he accuses Croce here of avoiding this problem, his later theory matches Croce's in identifying expressive content with feeling or emotion. In his later career, especially as expressed in "The Totality of Artistic Expression," Croce confronted this problem, and strove to assign something like a didactic function to art. In this, he was motivated by his own work in literary criticism, but it is hard to see the attempt as successful. See note 29 below, and the excellent discussion by Orsini (*Benedetto Croce, Philosopher of Art and Literary Critic*), chap. 6.

13. Nor did Croce bring this to the fore in his later *Essence of Aesthetic*. Had he done so, I think the argument of that book would have been enhanced, for it would have explained why intuition, in general, should happen to be infused with feeling.

14. See Orsini, *Benedetto Croce, Philosopher of Art and Literary Critic*, p. 48.

15. I have preferred, in its first occurrence in the passage as translated by Ainslie (in fact, the translator may have been Collingwood; see Donagan, "Collingwood's Debt to Croce"), the word "presentation" over "representation"—not on general linguistic grounds, but because "representation" would suggest that the feeling given by the symbol is something that might just as well be given by some other means, which is certainly not what Croce has in mind. "Representation" would make more sense if Croce was giving a theory of the material work of art, but, of course, he is not.

16. Although it is opposed to it on other grounds, the affinity on this point that Croce's account bears to Schopenhauer's is plain. Only slightly less obvious is the affinity to Kant's equation of the beautiful with formal finality, that is to say, with the appearance of purposiveness.

17. Richard Wollheim develops this view in his *Art and Its Objects*, §§15–19.

18. In more careful moments—for example, p. 229—Collingwood takes pains to specify that what is essentially connected with the emotion is not its physical expression but the experience of that physical expression. The importance of this will emerge when we consider the Ideality Thesis.

19. Collingwood seems to struggle with this issue on p. 239, top; in answering the question he sets for himself, he really only answers the question with respect to the psychological emotions.

20. Croce thinks of all knowledge, all concept-formation, as historically conditioned: the concepts in terms of which the intellect constructs history and science are themselves the contingent productions of history. I have not been able to find a clear statement in his works to the effect that the imagination is also subject to history in this way, but it would be surprising were he to deny it. Certainly, such aesthetic historicism is invited by the later refinement of his aesthetics (*The Essence of Aesthetic* and "Aesthetics") whereby art is concerned with the expression of feeling—of the lyrical intuition.

21. One might think that Croce's later emphasis on the "lyrical intuition" (see especially *The Essence of Aesthetic*, pp. 28–33) represents such a distinction, but it is clear, on close reading, that what Croce has in mind is a difference of degree rather than principle.

22. Here is one of several points at which an acknowledgment of Collingwood's and especially Croce's general philosophical idealism would enforce a more complicated presentation of their aesthetics. I do think aesthetics can be adequately understood on the basis of the ordinary, merely empirical distinction between mind and matter. But it should be acknowledged that, according to Croce, it is precisely in the domain of aesthetics that the incoherence of that ordinary conception is most plainly revealed.

23. Chapter 14 of *The Principles of Art* does, of course, stress the importance of the relation between artist and audience. What is missing, however, is an attempt to describe that relation in terms of the theory of expression itself.

24. Collingwood envisages a close parallel between art and history. Art in its communicative aspect is realized in the

knowledge—intuitive knowledge—it affords of the states of mind engendered by expression. Our encounter with a work of art enables us to know what it is like to be in such-and-such state of mind, where the most conspicuous or interesting aspect of the what-it-is-likeness—the subjectivity—of the state is its emotional aspect. Historical knowledge consists likewise in sympathetic understanding, imaginative reenactment of the thought expressed in human events. But, unlike Art, History does assuredly possess an immediate and separately conceivable practical value, because it is only insofar as past modes of thought survive that history is possible in the first place, understanding of history is necessarily understanding of the present. It does, therefore, play a role in the management of practical affairs, and may legitimately be motivated by its capacity to play that role.

25. For its appearance in Croce, see “Aesthetics,” pp. 229–231, *The Essence of Aesthetic*, pp. 10–11, *Aesthetic*, pp. 104–110.

26. Aaron Ridley, “Not Ideal: Collingwood’s Expression Theory,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55 (1997): 263–272, and “Collingwood’s Commitments: A Reply to Hausman and Dilworth,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 56 (1998): 396–398. Ridley receives support from Carl Hausman, “Aaron Ridley’s Defense of Collingwood Pursued,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 56 (1998): 391–393. Many points similar to Ridley’s are made in Grant, “On Reading Collingwood’s *Principles of Art*.”

27. John Dilworth, “Is Ridley Charitable to Collingwood?” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 56 (1998): 393–396.

28. Ridley, “Not Ideal,” pp. 266–269.

29. See the remarks about the experience of being understood, *The Principles of Art*, pp. 317–318. I discuss this passage below. On this issue, see also Grant, “On Reading Collingwood’s *Principles of Art*.”

30. I invoke a point from Donald Davidson, “Knowing One’s Own Mind,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association* 70 (1986): 441–458. Actually, Davidson’s example was sunburn. The comparison is closer if we consider something that is more palpably an object (a fleabite) than a condition (sunburn).

31. See also Dilworth, “Is Ridley Uncharitable to Collingwood?” p. 396.

32. Ridley, “Collingwood’s Commitments,” p. 397.

33. In fact, Collingwood’s relation to Idealism was both complex and contentious. It also shifted. See the early chapters of *An Autobiography*, especially chap. 6. I am not competent to sum up the vicissitudes of Collingwood’s thought on this issue, but his mature view is probably most safely described as historicist, leaving as a further question that of whether it amounts to idealism. Croce, for his part, declared that the unreality of the material world had “been proved in an undisputable manner” (*The Essence of Aesthetic*, p. 10), but was quick to add that the work of art is not only transcendently but empirically ideal, that is, not identifiable with anything physical, even allowing for the empirical truth of physical science.

34. But see “Aesthetics,” p. 567. The argument to follow is very near the surface here of Croce’s distinction between the physical object and the work of art.

35. For criticism of Collingwood on this point, see the excellent article by Don Taylor, “Art, Craft and History,” *Clio* 2

(1973): 239–278. Taylor argues that Collingwood’s attempt to distinguish art *ontologically* from amusement-craft must fail; for some amusements achieve their end precisely by exercising the imagination. But according to Taylor, that does not mean that the distinction cannot be made, and made as sharply as we think it ought to be: Art can be distinguished, if not by its exercising the imagination, then by the sorts of things it is concerned to imagine. The distinction is moral, axiological, perhaps epistemological, but not ontological.

36. It is most interesting that at the time of *Speculum Mentis*, when Collingwood had yet to accept Croce’s emphasis on feeling as the key to expression, he was much closer to the idea that beauty is somehow connected with truth; indeed, his attempt to make this out in terms of his logic of question and answer (*Speculum Mentis*, pp. 76–80), is impressive, and one wishes he had done more with it in the later work.

37. In a somewhat controversial later essay (“The Totality of Artistic Expression”; for more detail see “Expression Pure and Otherwise,” from the same volume) Croce tries more explicitly to connect the ideality of the intuition with universality, thereby coming closer to Vico than in earlier works, and agreeing with Kant that the disinterestedness of aesthetic contemplation implies its universality. Further, he regards this as essentially the same idea as that, in the intuition, the “individual and the cosmos” are inseparable. This attempt is generally regarded as unsuccessful, as running against the grain of the earlier theory. The theory of intuition does substantiate a distinction between expression and betraying or venting, what Collingwood called “psychical expression”: since intuitions already embody feeling, the way in which art embodies feeling is by dint of its *being* a clear and forceful intuition, not by its being a symptom of feeling such as blushing. A properly aesthetic interest in art is, thus, not a biographical interest, not an interest in a particular episode of emotion. Given the generally Kantian outlook of his *Logic*, perhaps this implies Kantian universalizability, but it does not reveal in what sense the intuition “reflects in itself the cosmos” (p. 261), or why artistic images should reflect the totality of life or the world as such. He appears to infer the latter from the claim, discussed earlier, that feeling cannot actually be abstracted from its manifestations. These are important thoughts: the belief that the artist is concerned with the ideal or universal rather than the real or particular has been asserted too vehemently through the centuries to be wholly untrue. It is perfectly comprehensible that Croce should have wished it to be a corollary of his theory of art, and perhaps he was acutely anxious to do so: as Orsini (*Benedetto Croce: Philosopher of Art ad Literary Critic*) explains, his critical practice suggested to Croce that art may legitimately be didactic, yet for him the distinction between the aesthetic domain and the logical is precisely that the former deals in the individual representation, not the general. But it would require more reconstruction than I am prepared to undertake to join these points together.

38. Readers familiar with it may wonder why I concentrate on the discussion in *Art and Its Objects*, omitting the more sustained criticism Wollheim offers in his later article, “On an Alleged Inconsistency in Collingwood’s Aesthetics,” in *Critical Essays on the Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood*, ed. M. Krausz (Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 68–78. The reason is that the former makes a more fundamental and decisive point. Very briefly, Wollheim’s point in the 1972 essay is that the divorce of the artwork from the bodily work is plausible only with respect to those arts that admit of notation, and

that are most suitably identified with types rather than tokens (e.g., music, poetry). Unlike those cases, it is just not true that we can credit someone with having made a sculpture in advance of her or his having sculpted it. This point is not decisive, however: one might think it accidental that the plastic arts are not notated (although, of course, there are well-known difficulties here). Further, as stressed, that the imaginative experience should, as a matter of psychological fact, depend upon actual perception, is consistent with the Ideality Thesis. Thus, the fact that we do not credit merely imagined sculptures might be perfectly intelligible even if the Ideality Thesis were true, indeed, even if we actually subscribed to it. What is needed is to show that something in the very notion of art—in our conception of its *purpose* or *value*—rules this out. That is what the argument from *Art and Its Objects* succeeds in doing.

39. *Arts and Its Objects*, § 23.

40. *Ibid.*, § 50.

41. *Ibid.*

42. Collingwood does famously describe art as mankind's medicine for the worst disease of mind, the corruption of consciousness. But that is not part of the definition of what art is, and does not imply that the content of a work of art depends on relations to anything outside the imaginative experience.

43. It is also only fair to Ridley and Hausman. One way to support Ridley's reading would be assume that

Collingwood's Chapter 14 is consistent with the theory; then, on the grounds that there is so much to be impressed by, and to agree with, in Chapter 14, reinterpret the theory so as to accord with it.

44. See also *The Principles of Art*, pp. 247 ff., that is, chap. 11, § 5.

45. Collingwood's assertion of the Ideality Thesis was much less qualified in his earlier *Speculum Mentis*; as noted earlier, he asserts in that work that the work of art is private (pp. 68–73), and that the bodily work is valued only by the “aesthetic weakling” (p. 67). Both the substance and tone of these claims is absent from *The Principles of Art*.

46. For a recent defense of this sort of view, see Malcom Budd, *Values of Art: Pictures, Poetry and Music* (London: Penguin, 1995), chap. 1.

47. For my part I would say that it is too narrow. It wrongly excludes from the aesthetic the sort of propositional suggestiveness that Kant discusses under the heading of Aesthetic Ideas, thus, failing, somewhat surprisingly, the case of poetry, the art that both Croce and Collingwood knew best.

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