

What can R.G. Collingwood do for psychology today?

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The title is of course slightly provocative because R.G. Collingwood indeed did things 'for' psychology, as some of us know well. Here, in Manchester, Tom Pear became the first professor of psychology in Britain in 1919.



Tom Pear, Frederic Bartlett and George Humphrey

This happened relatively early – Frederic Bartlett and George Humphrey got their professorships at Cambridge and Oxford respectively only in 1931 and 1947 (see Costall, 2001).

So at these Universities, scientific psychology was established rather late ¹ and it seems that this was partly due to the resistance to it by philosophers, historians, and logicians. One of the scholars, who were instrumental in delaying psychology in Britain, or more precisely psychology modelled on natural science, was R.G. Collingwood.



R.G. Collingwood

The following two quotes summarize how psychologists felt working at Oxford. William McDougall and George Humphrey expressed it thus:

The scientists suspected me of being a metaphysician; and the philosophers regarded me as representing an impossible and non-existent branch of science. (McDougall, 1930, p. 207, quoted in Connelly and Costall, 2000, p. 149)

The new professor ... found himself the jetsam of an acrimonious debate as to whether he should exist at all (Humphrey, 1953, p. 382; cited in Connelly and Costall, 2000, p. 149)

The critical view from 'human sciences' was that natural scientific psychology was an impossible discipline: the methods of natural science were not appropriate for the study of psychological phenomena such as reasoning, imagination, or action. And, from the natural science perspective, since the methods of psychology were not quite as rigorous as those used in say physics or chemistry, it was not a proper natural science anyway.

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Today I want to go through R.G. Collingwood's criticisms of psychology, building up on their summary by James Connelly and Alan Costall (Connelly and Costall, 2000). I am going to consider their reception in psychology at the time, their merit, and whether we can learn something from these criticisms even now.

As Stephen Toulmin noted, Collingwood's main criticism of psychology was expressed in the *Essay on Metaphysics*, published in 1940 (Toulmin, 1972). We can, in addition, find some of the criticisms already in *Human Nature and*

¹ But still much earlier than sociology!

Human History published in 1935, *The Principles of Art*, published in 1938, and his *Autobiography*, published in 1939.

One psychologist Collingwood took to task in *Autobiography* was William James. I do not know how many of you read William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, but it certainly is not a book typical of psychology, at the time or now, and certainly not as far as James' method of investigation was concerned. Even so, the following is what Collingwood had to say about the book:

[W. James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*] professed to throw light on a certain subject, and threw on it no light whatever. And that because of *method* used. It was not because the book was a bad example of psychology, but because it was a good example of psychology, that it left its subject completely unilluminated. [...] *mind regarded in this way, ceases to be mind at all.*" (Collingwood, 1939, p. 93, emphasis added)

So the book according to Collingwood obscures its subject, and it does this because it is a 'good psychology'; so the critique engages psychology in general, not just William James. Regrettably, the critique of *Varieties of Religious Experience* provided in *Autobiography* is laconic – Collingwood assumes knowledge of James's book and does not spell out exactly what he finds objectionable in James' perspective on religious experience, or in his method and why he finds, for instance, his analyses of religious reformers' lives un-illuminating. It seems, however, that Collingwood specifically objects to James's individualistic and a-historical perspective on religious experience.

So what did James do in *The Varieties*?² He was interested in inspired, personal religion, and right at the beginning of his book he set aside religion as an institutional matter. He denied that religion could be reduced to a mental affliction, yet investigated how mental afflictions - such as what we understand as melancholia and dissociation - could serve as religious inspirations. His method was to analyse texts pertaining to significant cases – biographies and autobiographies in the main. He concluded that through experiences such as melancholia, through despair approached in a detached way, Tolstoy and Bunyan, for instance, could find ways to reform religion. In order to develop his psychology of religion, James examined a collection of figures from different points in history, but he did not do history. The mental afflictions and their consequentiality he treated as trans-historical, involuntary and impulsive - they just happen to people anywhere, long ago and now.

So James analyzed religious experience in a way that abstracted them from consequential circumstances and, in particular, from historical contingencies. And so, despite the fact that he criticised 'medical reductionists', such as Henry Maudsley (James, 1902, ch. 4 ; cf. Leudar, 2001), he tied 'genuine', 'full-bloodied' religious experience to psychological phenomena he assumed to be universal. He provided his conclusions not as historically contingent but as universally valid. His method, however, is not that far from 're-enactment' and anticipates contemporary discourse analysis and discursive psychology (e.g. Febver, 1982; Leudar and Thomas, 2000; Leudar, 2001).

So even though James superficially did not carry his investigation of religion using methods of natural science (e.g.

² See Leudar and Sharrock (2002a, b) for an outline of James' analysis of John Bunyan autobiography.

experiments and quantification) he did assume the universality of his conclusions, without subjecting them to historical analysis or testing their historical invariance historically. It is telling that it did not even occur to this most thoughtful of psychologists to subject his conclusions to historical examination, asking for instance what the conditions might be under which mental afflictions and suffering could possibly serve as the grounds from which to reform religion.³ Even though he did not spell it out, Collingwood objected to the lack of historical perspective in James' work and the hasty assumption of universal validity of his findings. The faults Collingwood found in James were also the faults that he found in modern psychology in general.

The mental scientist, believing in the universal and therefore unalterable truth of his conclusions, thinks that the account he gives of mind holds good of all future stages in mind's history: he thinks that his science shows what mind will always be, not only what it has been in the past and is now. ... Not the least of the errors contained in the science of the human nature is its claim to establish a framework to which all future history must conform. (Collingwood, 1936, p. 21).

Collingwood's critique is apt, but, unfortunately for those trying to formulate historical psychology, the problem is that he is polemicizing, rather than doing history of psychology.⁴ The latter would

³ James' historical blind spot is puzzling – he is certainly not blind to social influences on the mind. In his analysis of the self, for instance, he is not a methodological solipsist and argues that the self has material aspects and is social in that it is a function of recognition by others (Leudar and Thomas, 2000, chapter 5).

⁴ Collingwood, however, has a valiant go at formulating a theory of imagination (In *Principles of Art*) and engages in anthropology (see papers collected in Collingwood, 2007).

be more helpful as it would show how psychology, as one attempt at getting to know ourselves, got to be in the state it is. Could it have been any different?

But let us first examine in more detail Collingwood's critiques of psychology. When he becomes analytic, his critique is impressive. In the following extract he seems to be doing history of psychology.

Psychology under that name has been recognized as a distinct science from the sixteenth century, when the word was used by Melancthon, Goclenius and others to designate what was in effect a new science. (Collingwood, 1940, p. 106)

He thus places the beginning of psychology roughly to the time of Gallileo! So psychology would certainly not be a young science even in Collingwood's time; the age is not its problem, its method is. To my knowledge, however, this history is not elaborated anywhere in Collingwood's work.⁵ He does, though, comment on what kind of psychology this 'old' psychology was. In doing this, he introduces the idea of 'criteriological science'.

The sixteenth-century proposal for a new science to be called psychology did not arise from any dissatisfaction with logic and ethics as sciences of thought. It arose from the recognition (characteristic of the sixteenth century) that *what we call feeling is not a self-critical activity, and therefore not the possible subject-matter of a criteriological science.* (Collingwood, 1940, p. 109, italics added)

These activities were thus not activities of the 'mind', if that word refers to the self-critical activities called thinking. But neither were they activities of the 'body'. To use a Greek word (for Greeks had already made important contributions to this

⁵ James Connelly confirms this impression (personal communication).

study of feeling) they were activities of the 'psyche', and no better word could have been devised for the study of them than psychology. (Collingwood, 1940, p. 110)

Unlike any kind of bodily or physiological functioning, *thought is a self-criticizing activity. The body passes no judgment on itself.* Judgment is passed on it by its environment, which continues to support and promote its well-being when it pursues its ends successfully and injures or destroys it when it pursues them otherwise. The mind judges itself, though not always justly. Not content with the simple pursuit of its ends, it also pursues the further end of discovering for itself whether it has pursued them successfully. The sciences of body and mind respectively must take this difference into the account. (Collingwood, 1940, pp. 107-108, italics added)

So criterial sciences (such as, e.g., history, logic or ethics) are appropriate for the study of 'self-critical activities' but not for the study of feelings, sensations, reflexes etc. Phenomena of psyche are not historical objects, and for this reason Collingwood argued that these (and only these) can be studied by methods of natural science psychology.

More generally Collingwood implied that different disciplines study phenomena of different character and so different methods of investigation are appropriate - and this is surely right. The distinction between sciences according to the phenomena they investigate and the methods they use to do so is combined in Collingwood in one coherent criterion.

As Connelly and Costall (2000) argued, although Collingwood does not rule psychology out of court altogether, he does restrict its scope so much that psychologists working to his requirements could do nothing interesting - unlike philosophers, historians and anthropologists. Of course psychologists were hardly likely to accept this solution, especially since it is not at all clear that the

methods of logicians, philosophers and historians can say all there is to say about thinking, mind, and social action respectively.

Note, however, that Collingwood presupposes that the distinction between psyche and mind is a natural one, i.e. one determined by the nature of these phenomena, rather than a distinction between 'human kinds' (cf. Hacking, 1991). Collingwood does not situate this distinction in history and treat it as something to be explained historically.⁶ The distinction is, to my mind, not obviously a natural one, 'in the phenomena' so to speak. So we need a way to decide whether or not it is natural.⁷ I will consider whether this distinction, if held as an 'absolute presupposition', rather than something to be scrutinized, has negative methodological consequences for psychologists trying to formulate historical psychology.

Collingwood's first critique of modern psychology is then that it was developed to study low level, non-criteriological psychological states, such as feelings, but now it is being extended to study phenomena that are criteriological in character. These are not to be studied by psychologists but by philosophers, historians and anthropologists. His point is that we have perfectly good sciences such as logic, philosophy and ethics to study phenomena that psychology is now

⁶ He of course situates the *discovery* of the distinction in history, but he turns to this only later in his career (Collingwood, 1945).

⁷ My impulse is to ask, are there historically contingent criteria involved in making for instance the distinction between instincts on the one hand and thinking, imagining and acting ethically on the other? Or is it perhaps that that *sort of* distinction is always present but has a different meaning in different historical situations? Or are there actions that are both impulsive and controlled (cf. Austin, 1961) with the mix of ingredients historically contingent?

taking for its own, and claiming that it is investigating them scientifically.

Thus a science of feeling must be 'empirical' (i.e. devoted to ascertaining and classifying 'facts' or things susceptible of observation), but a science of thought must be 'normative', or as I prefer to call it 'criteriological' ... In the sixteenth century the name 'psychology' was invented to designate an 'empirical' science of feeling. In the nineteenth century the idea got about that psychology could not merely supplement the old 'criteriological' sciences by providing a valid approach to the study of feeling, but could replace them by providing an up-to-date and 'scientific' approach to the study of thought. Owing to this misconception there are now in existence two things called 'psychology': a valid and important: 'empirical' science of feeling, and a pseudo-science of thought (Collingwood, 1938, p. 171).⁸

To my mind even now, seventy years later, Collingwood argues cogently that psychology modeled on natural science, which mechanizes situated, reflexive and culturally mediated experiences, is defective in that it is not adequate for its phenomena.

But how does the lack of *historical* perspective come into Collingwood's critique? Psychology could become a criteriological science yet not a historical one. For instance logic has become a part of some experimental psychology and cognitive science studies of reasoning without these being historical.⁹

The crucial point Collingwood made is that the criteria, which are internal to the 'higher' psychological phenomena, are historically contingent and understandable only in relation to contemporary social,

cultural and political circumstances. This then is one way history intimately enters the mind. So, criterial science is reflective, the reflection proceeds with criteria, and these criteria may be more or less specific to a historical period (or they might be universal as far as we can say now). Without taking these three characteristics on board, any psychology remains incomplete; these points should be cornerstones of any historical psychology.

There is of course another characteristic crucial to historical psychology: in some circumstances, historicity itself becomes a reflexive aspect of experience; experience becomes situated in history for the individual and the group, not just for a historian. The fact that we change as people is a constitutive aspect of our personhood. Collingwood took this on board:

knowing oneself is historical - It is only by historical thinking that I can discover what I thought ten years ago, by re-reading what I then thought, or what I thought five minutes ago, by reflecting on an action that I then did, which surprised me when I realized what I had done. In this sense all knowledge of mind is historical. (Collingwood, 1936, p. 19)

The method that Collingwood designs for studying criterial phenomena of history - human activities - is 're-enactment'. This consists in working out the intentionality of actions of persons in the past (the 'inside' of what they did) from what they are said to have done and its circumstances (the 'outside'). The re-enactments are an end in themselves but they also serve as a basis for working out presuppositions on which the people in the past acted, that is the grounds of their activities. Through re-enactments Collingwood aims to uncover changing and varying grounds of human activities. I will analyze the method of re-enactment in some detail later in the paper and its relevance to psychology.

⁸ Note that Collingwood defends criteriological science of thought rather than calls for criteriological psychology.

⁹ But the logic is of course seen as something timeless

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So Collingwood has much to say that is pertinent even to psychology today. But how did psychologists react to his critique at the time? Some took it as polemic - which it was - and reacted in kind:

Every psychologist to whose notice it has been brought has been justly angered by what Collingwood wrote of psychology in his *Essay on Metaphysics* (Donagan, 1962, p. 157, quoted in Connelly and Costall, 2000)

Others took the critique that Collingwood voiced more as an intellectual challenge – which it also was.¹⁰ Gestalt psychologists - Koffka, Wertheimer and Kohler - whilst not reacting directly to Collingwood's writings were concerned about the problems he raised. They certainly wanted psychology to be a rigorous science yet they were strongly opposed to positivism and atomism in psychology (see e.g. Koffka, 1935/1963, Ch. 1).¹¹

Koffka did not refer to Collingwood by name but the engagement with the problem that Collingwood expressed so forcibly is unmistakable. In *Principles of Gestalt Psychology* (Koffka, 1935/1963) he writes:

[German] experimental psychology had carried on a feud with speculative psychologists and philosophers who, not without reason, belittled its achievements and claimed that mind in its truest aspects could never be investigated by scientific methods, i.e., by methods derived from the natural sciences. *How could, so the argument would run, the laws of sensation and association, which then composed the bulk of scientific psychology, ever explain the creation or enjoyment of a work of art, the discovery of truth, or the development of*

a great cultural movement like that of the Reformation? The facts to which these opponents of scientific psychology pointed and the facts which the experimental psychologists investigated were indeed far apart that they seemed to belong to different universes, and no attempt was made by experimental psychology to incorporate the larger facts in their system which was erected on the smaller ones, at least no attempt which did justice to the larger.

[...]

Not only did psychology exhaust its efforts in trivial investigations, not only had it become stagnant with regard to the problems it actually worked on, but it insisted on its claim that it held the only key to those problems which the philosophers emphasized. *Thus the historian was right when he insisted that no laws of sensation, association or feeling-pleasure and displeasure could explain a decision like that of Caesar's to cross Rubicon with its momentous consequences; that, generally speaking, it would be impossible to incorporate the data of culture within current psychological systems without destroying the true meaning of culture.* For, so they would say, culture has not only existence but also meaning or significance, and it has value. *A psychology which has no place for the concepts of meaning and value cannot be a complete psychology. At best it can give a sort of under-structure, treating of the animal side of man, on which the main building, harbouring his cultural side must be erected.* (Koffka, 1935/1963, p. 19-20, emphasis added)¹²

Koffka accepted both that psychological phenomena are not like 'indifferent empirical facts' in natural sciences (they are meaningful, appropriate or inappropriate, and right or wrong) and that this creates a dilemma for psychology: how to be a rigorous science and yet not distort the phenomena it studies through its methods. Clearly it cannot be a science bound by positivism, he concluded. The analysis resonates with Collingwood's critique.

Wolfgang Kohler did not refer to Collingwood by name either, but he reacted to similar critiques in German

¹⁰ Both Gestalt psychologists and Collingwood were significantly affected by Dilthey (Collingwood, 1938, pp. 172-175; Ash, 1998, pp. 72-74)

¹¹ This part of the talk was substantially expanded here.

¹² Cf. Collingwood, 1936, pp. 12-13.

philosophy – i.e. arguments that mind cannot be studied using methods of natural science. Like Koffka he argued that psychological phenomena are meaningful and not value free, which means that they are unlike phenomena studied in natural sciences, and they call for appropriate methods of investigation (Kohler, 1966, chapter 1).

I am not going to attempt here a detailed analysis of the solution that Gestalt psychologists provided to these problems, except to provide a very brief outline. The solution involved:

1. rethinking the relationship between causal explanation and understanding which involved amongst other things insisting that the former be meaningful, not just statistical (Wertheimer, 1925; Koffka, 1935, pp. 20-21);
2. formulating the concept of ‘requiredness’ (Kohler, 1966)¹³ and
3. postulating psychophysical isomorphism, which made ‘requiredness’ a property of both physical and psychological phenomena (cf. King and Wertheimer, 2008, p. 261-267).

The concept of requiredness was built around a distinction between how something is, and how it ought to be, between ‘indifferent facts’ and phenomena with ‘intrinsic demands’ to use Kohler’s words (Kohler, 1966, p. 36). The Gestalt solution also takes on board the fact that what is ‘intrinsically required’ is required in particular circumstances; requiredness is a relational property intrinsic to a situation. According to Gestalt psychologists, requiredness is a property of all psychological phenomena – perception, thinking, acting (Koffka, 1935, ch. 1; Wertheimer, 1925; Kohler, 1966; cf. King and Wertheimer, 2008; Ash, 1998).

¹³ The book was based on William James Lectures which Kohler presented at Harvard in 1934-1935.

Requiredness goes some way towards satisfying Collingwood’s argument that higher mental functions are ‘criteriological’. Requiredness is, however, not a *historical* concept, or one designed to figure in historical explanations of experience. Kohler, for instance noted that requiredness in music may change in history, yet he did not accept that awareness of such historical change enters the phenomenology of particular musical experience, or its psychological explanation (see e.g. Kohler, 1966, p. 84).¹⁴

Methodologically Gestalt psychologists were pluralists. They used experiments to study visual perception (but often demonstrating phenomena using single participants rather than using groups of subjects and statistics). In his work on primate problem solving, Kohler used observational methods and Wertheimer carried out ethnographic studies of thinking (Kohler, 1925; Wertheimer, 1925b).

Gestalt psychology was therefore alive to the problems stressed by Collingwood in his polemic and was methodologically flexible. It was, however, an exception in psychology at the time. This was possibly because Kohler, Koffka and Wertheimer’s education made them alive to a distinction between human and natural kinds and the idea of *Wissenschaft* (see Ash, 1998, part 1; cf. Hacking, 1996).¹⁵ Most psychologists, at the time and since, were unaware of Collingwood or reacted negatively to his analysis.

What I want to do next is to address something that puzzles me. Collingwood

¹⁴ This does not mean that Kohler had an aversion to history – he provides a good historical summary of ‘requiredness’ (Kohler, 1966, chapter 2).

¹⁵ It is also instructive that psychologists in the UK and USA valued many of Gestalt ideas but did not pick up the concept of requiredness.

was a historian and yet he engaged in polemics with experimental psychology, instead of conducting a historical analysis of psychology and the presuppositions, or even the 'absolute presuppositions' that psychologists make in their work. He also seems to have ignored other psychologies that were historical and not slaves to dogmatic positivism.

So, the first thing is: was there historical psychology contemporary to Collingwood's critique in the nineteen thirties? There was certainly a fair bit of relevant psychology beside Gestalt psychology already mentioned. I will consider here Freud, Wundt, and Vygotsky and Luria, all of whom tried to formulate historical psychology and whose work Collingwood could have examined (cf. King and Wertheimer, 2008, pp. 270-279).

I will focus on methods they used and outline what these psychologists tried to accomplish. Then I want to consider both whether their methods would satisfy Collingwood and whether his methods would have been of any use in their projects.

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Collingwood was familiar with Freud and well disposed to him as a clinician (e.g. Collingwood, 1938, p. 64). In fact, like W.H.R. Rivers, he was himself psychoanalysed (Connelly and Costall, 2000). Yet, when Freud turned to history, as he did in *Totem and Taboo* (Freud, 1999) and in his analysis of Leonardo da Vinci (Freud, 1910), he could be careless and dogmatic (cf. Stannard, 1980). Collingwood objected to Freud's lack of historical scholarship, obvious for instance in his ignorance of the character of magical rituals (see, Collingwood, 1938, pp. 62-65). Freud had some education in classics and could read original sources, but did so none too carefully; crucially he did not read them in their context. Freud's

research method in clinical studies, on the other hand, is clinical, and pays attention to the historicity of the self - presumably Collingwood would have had no objection there. But Collingwood could not possibly be well-disposed to Freud's projection of psychoanalytic concepts and contemporary clinical observations into the past, and the naturalisation, or even pathologizing of historical figures and collectivities, which he considered socially dangerous (ibid, p. 77).¹⁶

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Wundt is usually presented as a father of physiological psychology, but it is less often acknowledged that from the start of his work he saw the need for 'folk psychology' (Danziger, 1990).¹⁷ Wundt is still notable, because in addition to individual psychology - studying mind as an individual phenomenon - he acknowledges that mind is a social phenomenon too. In the following extract he is writing about it as 'folkseele'.

... folk psychology may be regarded as a branch of psychology concerning whose justification and problem there can no longer be dispute. *Its problem relates to those mental products which are created by a community of human life and are, therefore, inexplicable in terms merely of individual consciousness, since they presuppose the reciprocal action of many.* This will be for us the criterion of that which belongs to the

¹⁶ Freud tries to explain history through the language of psychoanalysis that he presumed to be universally valid and applicable. The problem is that Freud turns to historical materials to extend the domain of psychoanalysis instead of using history to refine and develop psychoanalysis. The latter is required to accomplish the former.

¹⁷ Some people would prefer to translate *Völkerpsychologie* as 'social psychology', others as 'cultural psychology'. There is a poignant paragraph at the beginning of the *Elements of Folk Psychology* (p. 4) where Wundt discusses whether to call folk psychology 'social' - he does not do so because it reminds him of contemporary sociology!

consideration of folk psychology. (Wundt, 1916, pp. 2-3)

Consequently, the phenomena that his folk psychology studies are mental and intentional phenomena but not individual ones since they developed and exist in coordinated collectivities.¹⁸

Wundt is then using a distinction between individual and social but at the same time, trying to avoid a dualism of incommensurables.¹⁹ This is quite clear in the following texts.

All phenomena with which mental sciences deal are, indeed, creations of the social community. Language, for example, is not the accidental discovery of an individual; it is the product of peoples, and, generally speaking, there are as many different languages as there are originally distinct peoples. The same is true of the beginnings of art, of mythology, and of custom. The natural religions, as they were at one time called, such as the religions of Greece, Rome, and the Germanic peoples, are, in truth, folk religions; each of them is the possession of a folk community, not, of course, in all details, but in general outline. (Wundt, 1916, p. 2, emphasis added)

Thus, then, in the analysis of the higher mental processes, folk psychology is an indispensable supplement to the psychology of individual consciousness. Indeed, in the case of some questions the latter already finds itself obliged to fall back on the principles of folk psychology. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that just as there can be no folk community apart from individuals who enter into reciprocal relations within it, so also does folk psychology, in turn, presuppose individual psychology, or, as it is usually called, general psychology. (Wundt, 1916, p. 3)

Individual physiological and folk psychologies are intertwined and presuppose each other.²⁰ Wundt's understanding of what is 'human nature' is pertinent here. Surprisingly for the alleged father of physiological psychology, he does not argue that human nature is something biological and provided for every human being by evolution. Instead, he conceives of human nature as something that has social history rather than something wholly pre-existing but gradually discovered. In fact, he spends the concluding chapter of *Elements of Folk Psychology - The Development to Humanity* - by charting the growth of the idea of 'unity of mankind', which is an essential presupposition of the concept of 'human nature'. According to him, it develops from the idea that each tribe consists of unique people with unique characteristics, through religious, cultural, social, political and historical 'globalization', if you forgive the anachronism.

The phenomena Wundt studied in folk psychology included language, thinking, religion, myth, custom. These are social phenomena with a social dimension. When Blumenthal comments on Wundt's psychology he could have almost been talking about Collingwood.

Wundt recognised that such an approach was largely limited to the 'outer' phenomena such as sensory processes and simple affective processes. As one moves to more abstract phenomena such as language, he argued that the methodology must shift towards the methods of logicians and historians. (Blumenthal, 1973, p. 13)

Social phenomena like language and activity have 'inside' and 'outside' joined together, and Wundt, like Collingwood

¹⁸ 'Folkseele' is then akin to ideas in cognitive science such as mutual knowledge, distributed cognition, and joint action.

¹⁹ There is a difference between making distinctions and introducing dualisms.

²⁰ Note also that Wundt writes that 'All phenomena with which mental sciences deal are, indeed, creations of the social community' not just some.

focus on the 'inside', i.e. these social phenomena are stripped of meaning and intentionality.²¹

What we need to consider next is what method Wundt developed for folk psychology, and was it anything like re-enactment? He is certainly not using experimental introspection. He uses facts uncovered by archaeologists, but he finds that archaeological and historical evidence is too fragmentary to be sufficient to specify the mental life of our 'primitive' ancestors, and neither is it of a right kind. This conclusion is endorsed by G.H. Mead in his respectful review of the first three volumes of *Folk Psychology* (Mead, 1904, 1906). Wundt concludes that the best information for studying human mental history is to be gained from study of contemporary primitive societies (Wundt, 1916, pp. 14-17).²² Wundt thus makes *Folk Psychology* dependent on historical sciences, using their findings as evidence. In the preface Wundt characterizes his method as developing into a 'synthetic survey'. In this book he selects findings from ethnology, often accepting them uncritically (which is not surprising since he is not a practising ethnologist).

Wundt of course uses other sources of evidence, in addition to those open to second hand archaeologists and ethnologists. These include observations

of animal behaviour and studies of 'deaf mutes' (e.g. Wundt, 1973, pp. 57-63). In his respected book on origins of language Wundt assumed that initially gesture was a simple expression of emotion that was not intentional in character and was a part of emotional response (Wundt, 1973). Wundt argued that language developed from such gestures. The development of language thus started with unintentional expressions of emotions in activities and ended in language, which although also an activity is intentional and representational (criterial according to Collingwood). Wundt thus distinguishes between evolutionary and cultural development and seeks to link the two.

Wundt of course does not mix indiscriminately contemporary and historical data. He interprets archaeological and ethnological evidence using psychological laws derived from studying contemporary individuals and societies and so provides psychological accounts for what ethnologists observed. For instance, he reviews ethnological findings on belief in deities and interprets them psychologically. Such interpretation, however, is not re-enactment. Understanding thoughts of historical actors is not the same as explaining their behaviours by reference to general psychological laws.

Wundt's method assumes that general psychological laws are fixed but can be used to explain and understand historically changing human mental characteristics. Wundt's historical psychology is an applied science and not something necessary to discover general psychological laws. It is possibly interesting, but not essential. His assumption of general and fixed laws is like that made in physics. Physicists hope that the assumption is true, but they test it strenuously, in, for example, cosmological research. Historical psychology should be a psychological equivalent of cosmology –

²¹ The terms inside and outside here do not have the same meaning as when used in cognitive psychology – they do not mean physically inside the head and outside it. The 'inside' and 'outside' phenomena are the same except understood under broader, 'thicker' descriptions.

²² Wundt is careful in deciding which societies are primitive and which are not. 'Natives of Australia' he does not consider primitive but the 'Pigmies of the Congo' of Africa and 'Negritos' of Philippines he does. Wundt is assuming that contemporary 'primitive societies' correspond in their mental development to our ancestors. On this assumption, cross-cultural studies can substitute for historical studies and provide some data for historical psychology.

it should test the assumption of invariable psychological laws derived on the basis of contemporary research but Wundt's psychology does not do so.

We have seen that Wundt's method in folk psychology is not re-enactment. The question is: would Collingwood's method of re-enactment help Wundt to study development of human language? What Wundt needs is a method which can allow him to consider both 'irrational' activities and 'criterial' language and to study how one is transformed into the other in historical development. So can one re-enact non-criterial activities? Before I consider this, let me outline another attempt to formulate historical psychology – that of Vygotsky and Luria.

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Luria and Vygotsky formulated historical psychology in the nineteen thirties but the work was only published in English relatively recently - Luria and Vygotsky (1992) and Luria (1976). Like Wundt they argue that human nature is a dynamic socio-historical accomplishment:

The behaviour of contemporary civilised man is the product not only of biological evolution or childhood development; it is also the product of historical development. *In the process of man's historical development, external relations between people, and relations between mankind and nature are not all that has changed and developed. Man himself changed and developed; human nature has changed.* (Luria & Vygotsky, 1992, p. 41, italics added)

Moreover, like Wundt, Luria and Vygotsky argue that there is just not enough historical evidence in artefacts uncovered by archaeologists to allow a study psychological development in our ancestors.

Vanished periods of history have left documents and remains pertaining to their past, which are helpful, primarily, in

reconstructing the external history of human race, while failing to give a remotely objective or complete account of the psychological mechanisms of behaviour. Accordingly, *historical psychology* can draw on a very much smaller body of material." (Luria & Vygotsky, 1992, p. 41).

They therefore engage in three converging projects. They study behaviour of 'anthropoid chimpanzees', of 'primitive man' and child development. The methods they use include laboratory experiments, informal field experiments, and ethological observations. So like Wundt and Gestalt psychologists they are methodological pluralists.

Where, however, Wundt studies collective 'folkseele', Luria and Vygotsky's unit of analysis, even in historical psychology, is the individual. Both approaches, however, try to ascertain historical changes in 'human nature'. Both argue that the individual is transformed through involvement in social activities, which themselves change in history. In Vygotsky and Luria's historical psychology, collective social activities get ahead of individual development and transform it. The change in the individuals can in turn dialectically provide for further development of the social.

So again, Vygotsky and Luria postulate instinctual human characteristics (which are however *not* human nature). These subsequently develop through historical social change and in individual children through socialisation.

Curiously, the historical changes made notable in their work tend towards intellectualism.

Primitive man is motivated more by practical than theoretical considerations, and in his psyche logical thought is subordinate to his instinctive and emotional reactions. (Luria & Vygotsky, 1992, p. 43)

The historical development of memory begins from the point at which man first shifts from using memory, as a natural force, to dominating it. This dominion, like any dominion over a natural force, simply means that at certain stage of his development man accumulates sufficient experience – in this case psychological experience – and sufficient knowledge of the laws governing operations of memory, and then shifts to the actual use of those laws. This process of accumulation of psychological experience leading to control of behaviour should not be viewed as a process of conscious experience, the deliberate accumulation of knowledge and theoretical research. This experience should be called “naïve psychology” (Luria & Vygotsky, 1992, p. 56)

So both Wundt and Luria & Vygotsky are not doing just historical psychology but also ‘paleo-history’ and their central problem is the transition between the two modes of life: i.e. instinctual and environment embedded and ii. abstracted and representational.

The question then is: would Collingwood’s re-enactment method have helped them in their work, especially where they wanted to account for the move from the instinctual, natural, and empirical to the symbolic and criterial ways of acting? So we are asking about the limits of re-enactment as a method of discovery.

The rushed conclusion would be that the method is of very limited use for studying non-criterial phenomena. This would of course be hardly surprising as that is how Collingwood designed the method. The consequence is, however, that it would be of little use in looking at a transition from instinctual to intentional, presupposed by the historical psychologists we have considered here (and by those we will not, e.g. Bartlett, 1923). Yet, one should avoid a hasty conclusion – what are the limits of what one can re-enact?

Clearly it would be misguided to do chemistry by empathising with sodium

burning in the water. On the other hand, Kohler’s analysis of problem-solving by chimpanzees is not that far from re-enactment.²³ But can one re-enact the behaviour of a bee? The limits of scope of re-enactment as a research method are not clear a priori.

So I have reached what seems a dilemma: I welcomed Collingwood’s argument that physical and human kind differ in that the latter are criterial and the former are not, and that both need to be researched by different scientific methods. And I argued that just because a method does not consist of control experiments, this does not mean it is not scientific (see Leudar and Costall, 2009). Now, however, I find that the method of re-enactment may itself hinder investigating the relationship between the non-criterial (e.g. instinctual) and criterial psychological phenomena. There is I suppose more than one way out of this dilemma. One might argue that all human actions are criterial (which is in effect what Gestaltists did); another would be that even non-criterial actions can be re-enacted, at least those that matter to historical psychologists.

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So let us consider in more detail the method of re-enactment, which others here will no doubt speak about.

The business of a historian, for Collingwood, is an understanding of people’s actions. He doesn’t stop at understanding these actions as behaviour, as a behaviourist would understand the word. According to Collingwood actions have both an ‘inside’ and an ‘outside’. It is not enough for historians just to understand the outside of the action; they have to use the outside of the action and

²³ Kohler does not hesitate to describe the chimps’ behaviour using intentional vocabulary – he is talking about the ‘inside’ of their activities.

the circumstances to understand the thoughts of the actor, of the person who actually carried out the action. The interesting thing about Collingwood's method of ascertaining purposefulness is to be found in the following text.

Historical questions are questions in which one tries to understand what somebody was doing on certain occasion. This can only be done if one understands what sort of occasion it was; for every action arises out of the situation in which it is done, and there is no understanding the action unless one understands the situation. *In metaphysics as in every other department of history the secret of success is to study the background.* (Collingwood, 1940, p. 191, italics added)

What Collingwood is arguing is that understanding of actions is to be gained in part through understanding situations in which they took place. So when he is talking about the 'inside' he is not talking about the inside the head of the actor; you do not get at these thoughts by looking inside the skull but by considering what was done in what circumstance. So certainly Collingwood's conception of action is situated rather than mentalist, despite using the 'inside-outside' metaphor.²⁴

Is re-enactment then simply working out the purposefulness of particular activities – how does Collingwood assess the generality of what he found? Does he end up with a collection of piecemeal re-enactments? No, because he does not stop with piecemeal re-enactments, but also analyses the presuppositions in the thinking in actions that he re-enacted.

²⁴ Note that saying that actions have an 'inside' and an outside does not amount to saying that the purposefulness of actions is to be sought in the head of the agent – simply that purpose can be hidden. In this sense re-enactment is not a 'simulation' if that means what was *in the head* of the actor.

A presupposition in logic is something which allows assertions to be true or false but is not itself assessed in the assertion. So for instance, if the question is, "Have you worked out what Collingwood means by absolute presuppositions?" presupposes that you have been trying to work it out, that Collingwood used the phrase 'absolute presupposition' etc. There may be many presuppositions involved in an action, all of them tacit and tacitly managed (if you answer "not yet" you will have tacitly accepted those presuppositions). But, if the action is made into an object of consideration, its presuppositions can be fore-grounded and made explicit. This is what Collingwood does: he does not just infer the thoughts in action of people in history; he goes beyond those and infers presuppositions of these thoughts.

The method of re-enactment can be used to compare the grounds for activities of different groups in different places in history (and it should also do so for different contemporary actors). In this sense the method is well suited for doing historical psychology.

Collingwood furthermore distinguishes between absolute and relative presuppositions. If you uncover and express a relative presupposition of an action, you may find that it too has presuppositions and so on. Does this process terminate? Collingwood assumes that it does, in what he calls 'absolute presuppositions'. These do not have presuppositions. As long as you partake in a particular form of life and want to do what you are doing, and think what you are thinking you cannot foreground and discuss them. (To do so you need a historian or an anthropologist.) Collingwood's method then consists in re-enacting actions, and systematically analysing their relative and absolute presuppositions. He is using the method to understand the actions of people who may

have been different from us – in his terms living with different ‘absolute presuppositions’. But I don’t actually think that Collingwood ever claims that such uncovered ways of living are incommensurable. After all in using re-enactment as a method he is in effect claiming that they are commensurable – he can understand them and can convey his understanding even to non-historians.

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So what can historical psychologists do with the method of re-enactment? Let us first say something for myself. I have used the method, or something very much like it. For instance, in studying hallucinations historically, I noticed, that Socrates had a *daemonion* which told him what not to do. This experience was interpreted by 19th century French retrospective psychiatrists as a hallucination (Leudar and Thomas, 2000, chapter 1). In trying to work out whether Socrates’ daemon could indeed be understood as a hallucination, I tried to work out how it was understood by people at the time in Athens and this through how it fitted into the life of Socrates and his community. It turns out that they did not have a word ‘hallucination’ and instead interpreted the voice as coming from the divine. If you projected the concept ‘hallucination’ on to Socrates’ experience its meaning would conflict with some of his very basic presuppositions; the concept simply does not apply in those socio-cultural circumstances.²⁵ So in a sense, in 2000, I was using the method of re-enactment before I knew about it, to work out the differences between hearing a voice in two very different socio-cultural settings, showing that the experience is socio-historically situated and not just a neurophysiological phenomenon.

What became obvious from that work is that re-enactment is not necessarily an easy task and that it affects one in doing it. In fact, the method reminds me somewhat of psychotherapy. It is not simply that you know so very much and can just fill out without effort all the gaps in the record, and re-enact what other people thought and felt. It could happen that you work very hard only to discover that you cannot think like somebody else does (or as you yourself did in the past). This is recognised by Collingwood.

It may be said that historical inquiry reveals to the historian the powers of his own mind. Since all he can know historically is thoughts that he can re-think for himself, the fact of his coming to know them shows him that his mind is able (or by the very effort of studying them has become able) to think in these ways. And conversely, whenever he finds certain historical facts unintelligible, he discovered a limitation of his own mind; he has discovered that there are certain ways in which he is not, or no longer or not yet, able to think. (Collingwood, 1936, p. 18-19)

Collingwood therefore sets up history as not being just about the past but as something that challenges us in the present and changes our knowledge of ourselves. Thinking historically allows us to see the limitations of the way we think now. In psychotherapy you do something similar; you think in a particular way and by thinking about your past under the guidance of a therapist you think about yourself in a different way (if the therapy works). Thinking about your past challenges the way you are now. So in this way the model of re-enactment has a therapeutic and creative element. This is precisely where re-enactment might help Wundt, Luria and Vygotsky – it might help to foreground the limits of the contemporary way of thinking and so

²⁵ Lucian Febver likewise claimed that Rabelais could not have been an ‘unbeliever’ in our sense of ‘atheist’ (Febver, 1942).

indicate limitations of the 'laws' explaining it.

The thing I find problematic in how Collingwood uses re-enactment is documented in the following:

So far as man's conduct is determined by what may be called his animal nature, his impulses and appetites, it is non-historical; the process of those activities is a natural process. (Collingwood, 1936, p. 16)

Collingwood distinguishes between a natural process and a criterial or normative process. He just makes that distinction and it allows him to separate history from natural science and to help history to stand against positivism in which psychology is lost.

What I really want to ascertain is where does this distinction come from? Is it a natural distinction or an absolute presupposition which Collingwood cannot put into focus? Or should it be a matter for historical work? Is it something which we should look at and see how people make it differently in different social, cultural and activity milieus? It seems to me that with respect to his critique of psychology Collingwood does not consider this possibility. But elsewhere, in his *Essay on Method*, he discusses religion and makes a distinction between phenomena that just happen to us and phenomena about which we can do something and which are under our control (which is not that far from the distinction between instinctual and intentional). Here he sees this boundary as mobile and something that is historical. For instance, he imagines a place in which everything is caused by fate or divinity. So in this domain he treats the distinction as historical.

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It seems to me that we can use Collingwood's method in Historical Psychology, but we have to use it more

radically, and treat the distinction between natural and criterial as historically contingent rather than something absolute that allows you once and for all to differentiate scientific psychology from (say) humanist historical psychology.

I think that studying this distinction historically is something I want to have a go at and see how it will complement, for instance, Tim Ingold's work which complicates the distinction between evolutionary and cultural development (e.g. Ingold, 2006). Collingwood can help psychology away from being purely cross sectional and timeless in its conception of what is to be a person and towards a realisation that you must think about people as beings with history, otherwise you are not thinking about people.

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Discussion

Giuseppina D'Oro

So you are saying that Collingwood makes a distinction between say, natural and criteriological/normative, but that he doesn't go far enough because he should acknowledge that it is a historical and not, say, a metaphysical, distinction?

Ivan Leudar

Yes.

Giuseppina D'Oro

[...] In Collingwood there is a distinction between history and metaphysics so that, for example, he gives us a history of historiographical understanding in which he begins with original history, then he speaks about scissor and paste history and then moves on to scientific history. He says the reason that scientific history is better than scissor and paste history is because scientific historians, such as Vico, actually make the distinction between natural and historical processes. Scissor and paste historians treated human affairs as if they were natural things and as such they did not write proper history – they used a method of inductive generalisation to understand human affairs, and as a result they failed to understand why people acted [as they did] because they were not taking their point of view [into account], they treated them like things. So in that respect, when Collingwood speaks about scientific history and refers back to Vico he is locating the moment in time in which historians had started to make the distinction between nature and history. But in his metaphysics he is doing something quite different. He is saying that if you want to be able to talk about actions and events, you have to make the distinction between deductive inferences and inductive inferences. One method reflects the ways in which we understand events and the other reflects the ways in which we ascribe practical syllogisms to people. This claim is not a historical claim.

Ivan Leudar

What you say is certainly very interesting, and I didn't talk about the distinction between history and metaphysics. As I understood it, [no doubt wrongly,] Collingwood's metaphysics was historical and for history, and his history was done using the method he partly worked out in his metaphysics. And I was not going into that distinction because I thought that both – metaphysics and history - were criteriological. I was talking about Collingwood's distinction between self-critical and non-reflexive psychological states. That distinction is there since *Principles of Art* – e.g. a distinction between feelings and more complex, self-critical emotions. As far as I could understand it, as a consequence of making it, even though Collingwood is against the science of human nature, there is, in his work, still quite a sharp distinction between something which is part of our nature, which is our psyche and that which is, say, our (self-critical) mind and both are to be dealt with in different sciences with the consequence that their relationship would always remain puzzling.

When Collingwood looks at the Greeks he says to me that they make that sort of distinction, and he also sees it used in the 15th century to motivate a science of feelings for which there was a need at that time; but he does not actually provide a history – was it the same distinction or did it have a very different meaning at different times and if so, then why?

There are perfectly good histories of the distinction between deliberate and intentional and, say, 'forced' action. Classicists and philologists for instance wrote about vocabularies for representing intentionality and treated them as historical phenomena. There are inspiring books on changing conceptions of everyday action. One thing I would, for example, very much like to find out is how the word

'fate' worked at different points in history. In *Voices of Reason, Voices of Insanity* I criticized Julian Jaynes's idea that there was no intentionality in *The Iliad*, and included a detailed analysis of the place gods had in actions of heroes and what the characters in the *Iliad* thought they could and could not affect. So I think it is possible to have a history of how people's experiences of their activities change in history and why.

It seems to me, moreover, that Collingwood's own general conception of action implicit in doing enactment is historically situated, not something that follows inevitably from the nature of action. The idea that actions have an inside and an outside fits well with Ryle's idea of thin and thick descriptions. A thin description produces the outside of an action. But as the context is extended and situational particulars added you get the thick description, the 'inside of the action' that is.

Nowadays certainly, many people would not make a sharp distinction between inside and outside of the action, and say 'it doesn't really matter what physically people did, I am interested in what they thought.' That is probably a distinction that you would not quite want to make today unless you are an unreformed cognitivist. But don't forget that Collingwood is using the metaphor well before the advent of cognitive neuroscience.

Collingwood's implicit conception of action then actually ties into the business of what is 'natural' about an action and what is 'criteriological'. I would rather presuppose that that the distinction itself is situated and contingent on a particular time and it should be treated as such.

John Pickstone

Maybe I could come in on this - it is very interesting task to try to historicise the

various distinctions that you talked about. [...] You might say that a part of what happened in the 17th century - there is a very good literature on botany - is that everyone learns how to move from treating a meaningful object to treating it as an object which is natural. Floras for example were originally all cultural but that's been cut out.

Simultaneously some of that cultural stuff can be made to have its own kind of natural history. We collect tales about it and we can classify stories about it and that is roughly what Collingwood is calling a scissor-and-paste history. Then I guess the argument would go through Vico, how would you make, as it were, a science from those sorts of things? That would be a rough sketch if you like.

Another interesting point would be to look at the distinction 'animal' as opposed to 'rational'. That is basically an Aristotelian distinction, but there is some very nice literature now on the emergence of the notion of emotion. That kind of stuff could be tied up of with French medicine - that would be another way of situating historically what is likely to have been Collingwood's understanding of the physiological side of human beings.

Ivan Leudar

I would approach it through looking at where the idea of impulsivity comes from. Ancient Greeks certainly didn't seem to have the concept of nature that we have, so there was no nature (human or environmental) to determine human activities. In the place of nature is the fate and the divine - what you could not control came from your fate or from the divine. So you could say there is a persistent distinction between what you can control and what you cannot, but its meaning is historical and tied with varied presuppositions about the world that people live with.

I wanted to see how far Collingwood's method would help historical psychology and that is why I introduced Wundt and Luria and Vygotsky. The point is that most historical psychologists presuppose that it is natural and correct to divide the world into physiological and cultural and want to account for the movement between these two moments. So you start with actions that are impulsive and instinctual but then try to show how our culture is built on them. From their point of view – I am not saying that I agree - Collingwood's method does not help. And it does not help because it only deals with the criterial aspect of historical development. It is specifically and by design excluded from analysing what is instinctual or impulsive, that is to be dealt with through the method of natural science. I suspect however that Collingwood is too conservative about what we can re-enact and what we cannot.

Giuseppina D'Oro

Perhaps we could make a distinction between the fact that there is a distinction and whether people make it. I suppose what I was trying to suggest is that metaphysics deals with the fact that there are distinctions and history deals with the fact that those distinctions are made. For example, there is a distinction between love and jealousy even if my partner does not make it. The fact that he does not make it does not mean that it does not exist. I would say that there is a place for metaphysics that cannot be completely historicised in Collingwood, even if such metaphysics is descriptive, rather than revisionary.

David Francis

Can I ask about the notion of re-enactment as a method because that has always puzzled me. In what sense is it a method? The first thing to say about professional history is that they are in the business of revisionism, that is what historians do, they revise their accounts of the past. Why did Chamberlain go to Munich? Well, the

standard view used to be this, but now someone has proposed that, and in 5 years someone else will propose something again based on what his motives were, what he wanted to gain by it, what his views of Nazis were. That is what historians do – they revise. That is what makes you a historian, I guess. And in doing so, they present an account of peoples' motives, intentions, aims, purposes, just like we do in many other contexts, except they do it in the context of the past.

So that is one thing that has puzzled me, the other is to what extent is the notion of re-enactment as a method tied into this distinction between the inside and the outside, because the thing that makes you wonder is whether if you committed to this inside/outside of action distinction you turn the inside into a mystery. You can see what people did but not why they did it, you can see outside but you cannot understand inside. Once you set that up as a dichotomy you need a method to get at the mystery.

Ivan Leudar

I think there are three things. One is whether Collingwood's distinction between inside and outside of an action is mentalistic and misguided, whether it is what makes necessary the method of re-enactment, and the third is whether he smuggles the re-enactment method into everyday life.

Collingwood distinguishes between what ordinary people do and what historians do. Most of the time ordinary people do not act as historians in his sense. You remember things about yourself and your community but Collingwood doesn't take this to be doing history. You might be doing history if you started accepting that you might be wrong - you have never been to Blackpool, you did not go there with your parents when you were 3 years old, and if you then started collecting evidence

to answer whether you did go there or not, and what was it really like.

Collingwood is dealing with the past of others, which he can't access by remembering or by talking to his mother – as a historian I guess you are not engaged with the past of others as you can be with your own, so you inevitably have to adopt some method like re-enactment. So I do not think it is the inner/outer distinction that forces Collingwood into re-enactment. And I don't think it intellectualizes understanding of other people - it is forced on you in doing history. It would be a gross intellectualisation and scientism if the method was carried into everyday life, but Collingwood is not doing that. In the book *Against Theory of Mind*²⁶ we argued that cognitive psychologists impose their theories and presuppositions about what behaviour is, what mind is and how they are related on to ordinary people. But Collingwood is not doing this he is just providing ways of doing history.

If you were a psychologist you might say history is memory, all memory is inferential, we do not have direct memory, we just infer. In fact Collingwood is quite odd; this is where I thought the natural/criterial distinction was quite interesting because he drives it right in the middle of memory. For him memory is on both sides, some of the memory, to the extent that it is simply reproductive, is non-criteriological and empirical and should be studied by experimental psychologists. But the memory where you have to doubt yourself, for example, in false memory syndrome, that memory is situated in very particular controversies and theories of the time. So actually, oddly enough, some of the memory is like history but only the memory which is pathological like that.

And I do not think his distinction between inside and outside of action is mentalistic, certainly as it is implicit in the practice of re-enactment. He re-enacts the actions of historical figures through learning as much as he can about the circumstances of their activities and empathising with them.

I certainly will look at what Collingwood says about memory and compare it what others say. For instance, Luria and Vygotsky say that originally memory just reproduces things. It is partial, not integrated or conceptual. Luria claims, oh these primitive people have fantastic memories, they remember everything in detail. He accepts this non-critically and says that as you develop, memory becomes something that is conceptual, criterial, attention-determined and so on. So it is a very good question but the heart of what I wanted to say in response is that, unlike in theory of mind, the scientific method which he says is appropriate for historians is not projected back on to ordinary folk.

Mike Lynch

I was intrigued by the references to folk psychology. From the quotations, it seems that they are very different from a common view that would have folk psychology be a matter of folk *theories* of psychology which would then be corrected by science. This seems to be something quite different.

Ivan Leudar

Completely different. I think that cognitive scientists are trying to use Collingwood to support simulation thesis but I do not see that he does – I do not see Collingwood as a mentalist.

Interesting, folk psychology is Wundt's idea and it also means something very different – not a proto-theory to be corrected. You have mutual knowledge, you can have an intention which is your individual intention but together we can form a mutual intention e.g. as in 'What should we do tonight? Oh shall we go to

²⁶ Leudar and Costall, 2009, Palgrave/MacMillan.

cinema. Lets'. Cognitive scientists would say that you do not have two intentions; you have one coordinated mutual intention. Likewise in Wundt's folk psychology you have got mental states which are distributed over 2 or more individuals. These phenomena are not individual phenomena they are properties of the group (that is why 'folk'). Folk psychology is not contrasted to science (folk vs. science) it is contrasted to individual (group vs. individual) as in the Wundt's idea of 'folkseele'. But that is why it is difficult for us to recognise as psychology what Wundt studies in folk psychology - when we say 'psychology' we expect something 'individual'.

Mike Lynch

Where does Collingwood pick up on this?

Ivan Leudar

That was one argument - Collingwood does *not* pick up on this, he has very little to say about Wundt. As Toulmin says in his introduction to Collingwood's *Autobiography*, he is arguing with psychology, rather than looking at the work of psychologists who had ideas similar to his, (like Wundt).

Mike Lynch

How is it similar?

Ivan Leudar

It is similar in that Wundt argues that methods of natural science are not appropriate for studying these phenomena because these phenomena are criteriological and historically situated - they have normative aspects and you need to use methods of other sciences, e.g. ethnology, to study them.

Wes Sharrock

Let's pick up on Dave's re-enactment point. I was wondering whether the re-enactment is collapsing two different issues, one of which is the problem of other minds (the inner/outer) and the

suggestion that there is something special about knowing other minds with what is just a constitutional feature of history which is that it goes beyond the data. Historians do not confine themselves to questions that you can answer with the data. They constantly put questions to the data that the evidence is just not enough to decide (this is a good thing and necessary to the pursuit) so historians have to imagine things, not due to constitutional inaccessibility of minds but because the data relevant to what was going on is restricted relative to all the things they want to say about it. When you talk about thick description, well of course they don't have a lot of contextual stuff because all that is retained in historical records is a small part of what would often be necessary; and of course with some things even mountains of information do not settle the issue, but not because it was hidden.

Ivan Leudar

That is just what I meant about the inside/outside as used by Collingwood - he does not make it a mentalistic distinction. But of course the lack of information is not the only problem - it is also a possibility that the people were different in certain respect. This made me interested in translation where classicists translate old texts, such as Greek tragedies, or when others translate even older texts like Sumerian cuneiform texts into more modern language. Where do they have problems in translation? and what kind of bridging assumptions do they make when they do not have enough data? They typically make assumptions about human nature, psychological make-up. So for instance J.R. Dodds - when he is talking about how to translate and understand particular rituals in Bachae, he makes assumptions about human nature. It becomes a bit paradoxical because on one hand he wants to see how people then and now are different and yet he has to bootstrap himself in some way by making

assumptions that are in some ways very similar. So how does he know that what he assumes to remain the same was not actually different.

Dodds was very interested in contemporary psychology and he also made psychoanalytic assumptions and assumptions from the dissociation paradigm to understand some of the rituals in the Athenian tragedy. When you do not have enough evidence you put things together by bringing in assumptions about human nature and contemporary theories – as Wundt did.

Mathieu Marion:

I wanted to say something related to what Wes was saying. I think the distinction between inside and outside is a really bad way for him to put across what he has to say, it makes it look as if there is something involved when as a matter of fact he is arguing against it.

Ivan Leudar

I was being charitable, as I said for myself, I have absolutely no problem reading inner/outer as descriptions with more or less situational particulars.

Ivan Leudar

Collingwood's ideas about language you describe are certainly very Wundtian - it would be interesting to see whether Collingwood does not attribute it or whether the idea was quite common at the time.