

R. G. Collingwood

AN ESSAY

ON PHILOSOPHICAL
METHOD

New Edition

*with an Introduction and
additional material edited by*

*James Connelly and
Giuseppina D'Oro*

AN ESSAY ON
PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD

This page intentionally left blank

AN ESSAY ON PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD

R. G. COLLINGWOOD

Revised Edition

with

The Metaphysics of F. H. Bradley

The Correspondence with Gilbert Ryle

Method and Metaphysics

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY JAMES CONNELLY AND
GIUSEPPINA D'ORO

CLARENDON PRESS • OXFORD

OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford ox2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide in

Oxford New York

Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi

Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi

New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece

Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore

South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press
in the UK and in certain other countries

Published in the United States
by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

© Teresa Smith 2005

Introduction and editorial material © James Connelly and

Giuseppina D'Oro 2005

The moral rights of the authors have been asserted

Database right Oxford University Press (maker)

First published 2005

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press,
or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with the appropriate
reprographics rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction
outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department,
Oxford University Press, at the address above

You must not circulate this book in any other binding or cover
and you must impose the same condition on any acquirer

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Data available

Typeset by Newgen Imaging Systems (P) Ltd., Chennai, India

Printed in Great Britain

on acid-free paper by

Biddles Ltd, King's Lynn, Norfolk

ISBN 0-19-928087-8 978-0-19-928087-2

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Teresa Smith for granting permission to publish previously unpublished manuscripts; Michael Beaney for his comments on the contents and the Introduction; the reader for the Oxford University Press for valuable comments on the Introduction; Charlotte Vrijen for suggestions on the transcription of the correspondence with Gilbert Ryle; David Boucher, Peter Johnson, Colin Harris, Peter Momtchiloff, and Rex Martin for their help and support over many years.

Editors' Note: In the essays new to this edition Collingwood's original notes are indicated by a dagger^(†) after the footnote number; all footnotes in the *Essay on Philosophical Method* itself are Collingwood's own and appear as they did in the original edition.

This page intentionally left blank

EDITORS' NOTES TO *AN ESSAY ON PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD*

As he notes in his correspondence with Ryle, in the *Essay* Collingwood does not name those whom he criticizes. These include G. E. Moore (pp. 47–8) in the discussion of precarious margins; Mill (p. 49) under the head of identified coincidents; Croce in chapter III, §2,8, and Gentile in §2,9. In each case he expounded the main principles of their philosophy and went on to criticize them both as fallacious in §10–13. On pp. 71–2 he criticizes W. D. Ross's calculus of goods without naming him; on p. 78 he names him as conceiving the relation between pleasure, knowledge, and virtue as constituting a scale of forms. On p. 79 he mentions H. W. B. Joseph's doubt whether pleasure is a good at all, but does not name him.

The brief discussion of the history of the ontological argument between pp. 124–7 summarizes the more extended discussion in Collingwood's 1919 *Lectures on the Ontological Proof of the Existence of God*, pp. 22–44.

This page intentionally left blank

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS	xi
EDITORS' INTRODUCTION.	xiii
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY.	cxvii

AN ESSAY ON PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD.	cxix
--	------

The Metaphysics of F. H. Bradley: An Essay on 'Appearance and Reality'	227
The Correspondence between R. G. Collingwood and Gilbert Ryle.	253
Method and Metaphysics	327
INDEX.	357

This page intentionally left blank

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>A</i>	<i>An Autobiography</i>
<i>EM</i>	<i>An Essay on Metaphysics</i>
<i>EPM</i>	<i>An Essay on Philosophical Method</i>
<i>IH</i>	<i>The Idea of History</i>
<i>IN</i>	<i>The Idea of Nature</i>
<i>MB</i>	'The Metaphysics of F. H. Bradley: An Essay on <i>Appearance and Reality</i> '
<i>MM</i>	'Method and Metaphysics'
<i>NL</i>	<i>The New Leviathan</i>
<i>PA</i>	<i>The Principles of Art</i>
<i>RP</i>	<i>Religion and Philosophy</i>
<i>SM</i>	<i>Speculum Mentis</i>

This page intentionally left blank

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

(A) The Place of *An Essay on Philosophical Method* in Collingwood's Work

Writing An Essay on Philosophical Method

Whatever critics might say, it is clear that Collingwood himself thought highly of his *Essay on Philosophical Method*. In proposing it to the Clarendon Press he presented it as:

A systematic treatment of the methods and peculiarities generally of philosophical thought: it is in fact a new *Traité de Méthode*, attempting to disentangle all the relations concerning philosophy (on its *formal* side) and science whether mathematical or empirical.¹

In *An Autobiography* he remarked that he wrote the book during a long illness in 1932, and that 'it is my best book in matter; in style, I may call it my only book, for it is the only one I ever had the time to finish as well as I knew how, instead of leaving it in a more or less rough state' (A 117-18). In fact he wrote the book *after* the illness which afflicted him throughout 1931-32. In November 1931 he requested leave of absence for Hilary Term 1932 on grounds of ill health. In January 1932 he wrote to his friend Guido De Ruggiero that 'I never

¹ Letter to the Clarendon Press, 9 March 1933. This passage forms the basis of the 'blurb' on the dustwrapper of the book.

answered your last letter, because I have been ill, rather seriously ill, for a whole year, and unable even to do such simple things as writing letters. It was not so much a definite disease as a kind of breakdown in health, which doctors said was due to doing too much work; anyhow, whatever the cause, I have had to stop all kinds of work entirely for a year past. I am now well enough to leave England, and I hope soon to go abroad and travel until the end of April, when I mean to begin work again.² The illness took the form of complications arising out of chicken pox suffered in April–June 1931.³ On his return from travelling in Greece and Italy during the summer of 1932 Collingwood rewrote his lectures on moral philosophy. They included a completely new version of the methodological introduction which had been a progressively more important and elaborate feature of the lectures since 1923. He began writing the *Essay* at the end of November. In Trinity term 1933 he lectured on ‘Philosophy, its Nature and Method’—presumably from a draft of the *Essay*, which at that time was still known as *What Philosophy Is*, although Collingwood was not satisfied with the title.⁴ On 2 May he wrote to the press stating that he had ‘practically finished the book that the delegates discussed on Friday—if they accepted it!’

² Letter to Guido de Ruggiero, 4 January 1932.

³ Collingwood delivered no lectures in either Trinity or Michaelmas terms 1931.

⁴ Letter to Clarendon Press, 9 March 1933.

Apparently, when the book was discussed at the Delegates' meeting, Collingwood had not returned to the room after the discussion and was therefore unaware that it had been 'accepted by acclamation'.⁵ This letter indicated that the title was now to be *An Essay on Philosophical Method*. The book went to the printer towards the end of June, proofs were corrected in July and the book was published in October 1933. The letter in March offering the *Essay* to the Clarendon Press contained an abstract of its contents and was sent to W. D. Ross, the Provost of Oriel, who had been asked to comment on it for the press. As the letter makes clear, Collingwood had high hopes for the book. He wrote that:

I have gradually been forced to the view that, at present, the progress of philosophy is held up because people do not face these questions of method, and even the best of them are consistently being tripped up by the consequences of this neglect. The book is in a sense pioneer work—nothing like it exists, and although I can't actually hope that it will create the interest that its subject deserves . . . it is by far the most important thing I have written—it is in fact my first genuine, technical, philosophical work. I have written it in a much chaster and less exuberant style than *Speculum Mentis*, which was an introduction to a philosophy: here the philosophy itself is beginning to take shape, and the style aims at elegance and economy.⁶

For the most part Collingwood's proposal does not deviate from the structure of the published book, but there are a couple of notable differences. The

⁵ Letter from R. W. Chapman at the Clarendon Press, 3 May 1933.

⁶ Letter to the Clarendon Press, 9 March 1933.

first is that originally Chapter I was to be an introduction followed by a separate chapter with historical illustrations. In the proposal Collingwood indicated that he had not yet written these chapters; later he merged the two to form the Introduction as published. The other main point of difference concerns Chapters V, 'The Philosophical Judgement' and VI, 'Philosophy as Categorical Thinking'. Originally there was to have been only one chapter entitled 'The Philosophical Judgement' making the claim that the philosophical judgement is universal, yet different from judgements in mathematics and empirical science in being not hypothetical but categorical; this would then lead to a consideration of the ontological proof. Although Collingwood indicates that this chapter is essentially complete in manuscript, it would appear that he had second thoughts and divided it into two. In the published book the title 'The Philosophical Judgement' is reserved for a discussion of affirmation and denial (topics not mentioned in the proposal) followed by a section on the universality of the philosophical judgement. Discussion of the ontological proof and of the claim that philosophy consists of categorical judgements is postponed until the next chapter, now entitled 'Philosophy as Categorical Thinking'. It is clear that Collingwood had always envisaged the book containing a discussion of the ontological proof; the material added at this late stage was that contained in the published Chapter V.

So much for the immediate circumstances of writing the *Essay*, but what of its origins in Collingwood's thought and writing? Although the *Essay* was written afresh, nonetheless it did not emerge from a vacuum; it had a pre-history; it emerged as the outcome of many years of thought on philosophical method in a variety of contexts. This is apparent in Collingwood's short PS in answer to a query by R. W. Chapman of the Clarendon Press:

You ask how I do it: but it does itself. The subject 'took charge' about the end of November, and has forced me to write in every odd moment since, neglecting everything else, and welding together all the many thoughts about these questions that have been occupying me at times for many years. One can't stop when once the thing has begun writing itself out.⁷

Taking this as our cue, let us examine the origins of the *Essay* a little further. We have already indicated that it began life as the methodological introduction which Collingwood incorporated into his lectures on moral philosophy from 1923. But what of the themes of the *Essay*, the particular positions, arguments and doctrines which it develops?

The Themes of the Essay

Before exploring the origins of the arguments and themes of the *Essay*, it is important to contextualize them through a brief account of its leading themes

⁷ Letter to the Clarendon Press, 9 March 1933.

of conceptual overlap and the scale of forms. Collingwood's argument can be summarized thus: in philosophy the specific instances of concepts tend to overlap so that two or more concepts may be exemplified in the same instance: 'any distinction in philosophy may be a distinction without a difference, (that is), where two philosophical concepts are distinguished Aristotle's formula may hold good, that the two are the same thing but their being is different' (*EPM* 50). Aristotle's formula explains the essential insight lying behind the doctrine of the overlap of classes. The scale of forms supplements and develops this by suggesting that there is overlap not only in extension but also in intension. The subject matter of philosophy, owing to this overlap of classes, does not admit of classification into mutually exclusive species of a common genus of the sort to be found in the natural sciences. Philosophical concepts are generic; the species of a philosophical genus differ from each other both in degree and in kind; and in a philosophical scale of forms 'the variable is identical with the generic essence itself' (*EPM* 60). Differences of degree between philosophical concepts cannot be measured because they are different both in degree and in kind (*EPM* 70-1); further, 'if in philosophical thought every difference of kind is also a difference of degree, the specifications of a philosophical concept are bound to form a scale; and in this scale their common essence is bound to be realized differentially in degree as well as differentially in kind' (*EPM* 77).

The terms on a scale of forms are related both by opposition and by distinction. Each term is distinct from its neighbours, but also opposed to it. This opposition is not absolute: 'if the variable is identical with the generic essence, the zero end forms no part of the scale; for in it the generic essence is altogether absent. The lower end of the scale, therefore, lies not at zero, but at unity, or the minimum realization of the generic essence' (*EPM* 81). This might seem to imply that all opposition disappears and that we are left only with distincts, but in a philosophical scale of forms there is a fusion of distinction and opposition and therefore the scale does not consist merely of distincts (*EPM* 81-6). But opposition within a scale of forms does not imply the real existence of either end of the scale; for example, it does not imply the existence of pure wickedness or pure goodness: 'the lowest member of the scale, the minimum realization of the generic essence, is already, so far as it goes, a realization of this essence, and therefore distinct from other realizations; but, as the limiting case, it is an extreme, and therefore an opposite relatively to the rest of the scale' (*EPM* 82). Opposition appears at any point in the scale: 'the same relation which subsists between the lowest member of the scale and the next above it reappears between any two adjacent forms. Each is good in itself, but bad in relation to the one above, and hence, wherever we stand on the scale, we are at a minimum point in it; and conversely, however far down we go,

there is always the possibility of going lower without reaching absolute zero' (*EPM* 84). Infinity also has no place in the scale: 'each term in the scale . . . sums up the whole scale to that point. Wherever we stand in the scale, we stand at a culmination. Infinity as well as zero can thus be struck out of the scale, not because we never reach a real embodiment of the generic concept, but because the specific form at which we stand is the generic concept itself, so far as our thought yet conceives it' (*EPM* 89).

This refines the notion of overlap. The classes of a philosophical concept overlap so that 'the higher term possesses not only that kind of goodness which belongs to it in its own right, but also the kind which originally or in itself belonged to its neighbour' (*EPM* 86–7). Each term has a double relation to its neighbours: 'in comparison with the one below, it is what that professes to be, in comparison with the one above, it professes to be what it is' (*EPM* 87). Bringing the argument together, this leads to the idea of determinate negation: 'the higher term is a species of the same genus as the lower, but it differs in degree as a more adequate embodiment of the generic essence, as well as in kind as a specifically different embodiment' (*EPM* 88). The higher term is therefore not only distinct from the lower, but also opposed to the lower. It 'possesses not only its own specific character, but also that which its rival falsely claimed' (*EPM* 88). Negation is determinate because it both cancels and reaffirms: 'the higher term thus negates the

lower, and at the same time reaffirms it: negates it as a false embodiment of the generic essence, and reaffirms its content, that specific form of the essence, as part and parcel of itself' (*EPM* 88).

Finally, Collingwood further develops the notion of overlap and the nature of the philosophical scale of forms by explaining that the higher of any two adjacent forms overlaps the lower because it includes the positive content of the lower as a constituent element within itself; but it rejects the negative element in the lower, and this negative element is the denial that the generic essence contains anything more than the lower itself provides. It is this denial that constitutes its falsehood. 'The lower overlaps the higher in a different sense: it does not include the higher as part of itself; it adopts part of the positive content of the higher while rejecting another part' (*EPM* 90). Taken together, 'the overlap consists in this, that the lower is contained in the higher, the higher transcending the lower and adding to it something new, whereas the lower partially coincides with the higher, but differs from it in rejecting this increment' (*EPM* 91).

These are the leading themes of the *Essay* in brief; they will be amplified and expanded below.

Origins of the Essay

In considering the place of the *Essay* in Collingwood's work it is instructive to consider the development of his attitude towards dialectic,

degrees of truth and reality, the ontological proof, and one of the central themes of the *Essay*, the scale of forms.

Collingwood began lecturing on Aristotle's *De Anima* in 1912. Although he observed Aristotle's use of the scale of forms in *De Anima* (*EPM* 102), this manner of presentation and analysis did not become ingredient in his own thinking until later. In his first published work, *Religion and Philosophy* (published in 1916 and written over a three-year period from 1912) Collingwood did not take a dialectical approach. In fact, his procedure there betrayed certain tendencies which later in the *Essay* he classified as errors. For example, in the earlier work, where he found there to be overlap between religion, theology, and philosophy, he identified the categories and asserted their identity, thereby committing what in the *Essay* he dubbed 'the fallacy of identified coincidents' (*EPM* 48). In writing *Speculum Mentis* (an explicitly dialectical work) a few years later Collingwood reconsidered their relationship and drew an important distinction between implicit and explicit features of experience. In notes inserted into his copy of *Religion and Philosophy* Collingwood commented on his rejection of realism:

This book was written in (and before) 1914 (begun 1912) and represents the high-water mark of my earliest line of thought—dogmatic belief in New Realism in spite of an insight into its difficulties which I think none of my teachers shared. . . . The whole thing represents a point of view

I should entirely repudiate, and its complete failure with the public gives me great satisfaction.⁸

And in his notes on 'The Devil', published in the same year, he observed that it:

represents the breaking point of my earlier philosophical beliefs. It is still realism, sharpened and hardened: The doctrine of God is not thought out: the general position is one of transcendence, and the coarseness and clumsiness of the work reflects the influences of the environment in which 'Prayer' was written. The flagrant superficiality of it, I think, drove me back upon my real convictions, and led to a year of negative criticism (1916) and the building-up of a new dialectical idealism in 1917.⁹

This confirms that Collingwood understood his own thought at this point to be taking a new turn. But there was still something missing: he had identified his target but not yet fully worked out and articulated his alternative philosophical approach. In 1917 the 'building up of a new dialectical idealism' took the form of a full-length unpublished book entitled *Truth and Contradiction*. As only the second chapter survived, commentary on the whole book is impossible.¹⁰ However, in this chapter he analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the

⁸ Collingwood had bound the proofs of *Religion and Philosophy* together with 'The Devil' and wrote these comments on the end paper in about 1918. The volume is in the possession of Teresa Smith. ⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Although Collingwood stated in his *Autobiography* (99) that he had destroyed the manuscript of *Truth and Contradiction*, nonetheless Chapter 2 survived.

coherence theory of truth and rejected the associated notion of degrees of truth and reality. In this endeavour we can see the truth of his later comment that he was building up a new dialectical idealism: but at this stage had still not yet achieved it; *Truth and Contradiction* was his first serious attempt, but he clearly was not happy with it. In the early 1920s he wrote a 'Sketch of a Logic of Becoming', 'Notes on Hegel's *Logic*', a draft of opening chapters of a 'Prolegomena to Logic' and *Libellus de Generatione*, all devoted to working out a dialectical logic of becoming—but he was still not yet satisfied by any of them. And so Collingwood found himself in possession of a serviceable philosophical method which (although he employed it in his lectures and in *Speculum Mentis*) lacked proper philosophical justification. It took him another ten years to work out the answer to his own satisfaction through lengthy and detailed considerations of the nature of philosophy and the distinctive character of philosophical concepts in a variety of contexts, most especially in philosophy of history and moral philosophy.

Given Collingwood's constant insistence that philosophy has to give an account of its own pre-suppositions, he was never going to be ultimately satisfied with a method justified solely on pragmatic grounds. However, he was obviously confident that he would clear the matter up eventually, and by 1923 he was sufficiently confident in the idea of a scale of forms (which was, with the directly related logic of the overlap of classes, the central theme of

the *Essay*) to use both the phrase and the arrangement. The relation between art, religion, science, history, and philosophy is displayed, then, in *Speculum Mentis* as constituting a scale of forms of experience in which each term in the scale renders explicit what for the previous term was only implicit. Although the term does not appear there, *Speculum Mentis* is arranged dialectically as an overlapping scale of forms. The forms of experience are articulated phenomenologically, with each achieving more adequately what its predecessor was striving (yet failing) to achieve.

Collingwood worked out the idea of an overlapping scale of forms in conjunction with his lectures on moral philosophy, which he had delivered from 1921 and which he rewrote regularly. The courses of lectures from 1921, 1923 (amended in 1926), 1929, 1932, and 1933 clearly show the evolution of his thought concerning the scale of forms. The earliest lectures post-date the dialectical turn but precede the formulation of scale of forms analysis; by 1923 however Collingwood had made the decisive shift. In Part II of that year's lectures on moral philosophy he for the first time offered an account of philosophical method in which he explicitly introduces the idea of a scale of forms and briefly outlines its main features. He attributed the idea to Aristotle, and cited the analysis in *De Anima* of the different forms of the soul differing in function and capacity as an instance. These lectures were written in September of 1923,

as *Speculum Mentis* was being prepared for the press. His discussion of the idea in the lectures was prompted by the approach taken in the book and this marked the beginning of his working out of the logic of a scale of forms. In *Speculum Mentis*, Collingwood had developed the distinction between implicit and explicit features of experience and philosophy as experience raised to self-consciousness, rendering explicit the principles implicitly informing experience, and showing how each form gives rise to its successor dialectically as a scale of forms. However, although under the influence of Croce and Gentile he had moved towards a dialectical manner of thinking and presentation, Collingwood had not yet developed a fully philosophically adequate account of dialectic. In the conclusion to the section on the scale of forms in the 1923 lectures Collingwood stated that:

Our series is to be a series of the forms of action; and action is the opposite of passivity. Hence at the bottom of the scale we ought to find pure passivity and at the top, pure activity. Every stage in the scale ought to be more active than the one below it and more passive than the one above it; and the dialectical process leading from one to the next must be based on the lower stage's incomplete self-sufficiency, its dependence on a principle which it does not itself include or possess. For this means an incomplete freedom and therefore an incomplete activity.¹¹

¹¹ 'Action': lectures on moral philosophy, 1923, 42. This version of the conclusion, which was an amended version of the original, probably dates from 1926. The references to *De Anima* are to be found at p. 41.

This indicates that the scale of forms was explicitly identified by Collingwood as a series of terms in dialectical relationship. A key feature of a dialectical relationship is the distinction between implicit and explicit, with later terms making implicit what remains only implicit in earlier terms. In *Speculum Mentis* he wrote that:

I may perhaps be permitted here to refer to a book called *Religion and Philosophy* which I published in 1916, and in which I tried to give a general account of the nature of the religious consciousness, tested and illustrated by detailed analyses of the central doctrines of Christianity. With much of what that book contains I am still in agreement; but there are certain principles which I then overlooked or denied, in the light of which many of its faults can be corrected. The chief of these principles is the distinction between implicit and explicit. I contended throughout that religion, theology, and philosophy were identical, and this I should now not so much withdraw as qualify by pointing out that the 'empirical' (i.e. real but unexplained) difference between them is that theology makes explicit what in religion as such is always implicit, and so with philosophy and theology. This error led me into a too intellectualistic or abstract attitude towards religion, of which many critics rightly accused me. (*SM* 108n)

Progress on working out the dialectic of implicit and explicit and developing a satisfactory conception of the scale of forms accelerated from 1927–9 onwards, in his writing on moral philosophy, politics, and the philosophy of history. This required consideration of the nature and distinctive character of philosophical concepts. In his essays on 'The Idea of a Philosophy of Something' (1927) and

'Outlines of a Philosophy of History' (1928) he argued that there can be a philosophy of something if (and only if) that something is a universal and necessary form of experience; this view was repeated in his pamphlet on *The Philosophy of History* (1930). In these essays and in his 1929 lectures on moral philosophy he referred to the concepts distinctive of philosophy as transcendentals:

A philosophical concept is universal in the sense that it arises necessarily whenever anybody thinks about a subject . . . the subject itself must be a philosophical, or universal, concept; and that can only mean a concept applicable to everything that exists. It is a familiar idea in philosophy that there are such concepts; in scholastic terminology they are called transcendentals, and you will find, in Spinoza for instance, that *ens*, *res*, and *unum* are given as examples of transcendentals . . . The view which I am putting forward, then, is that the concepts which compose the body of philosophy are transcendentals.¹²

In the 1929 lectures Collingwood wrote that 'philosophy deals with conceptions of a particular kind, namely those that in traditional philosophical language are called transcendentals'.¹³ In these papers and lectures, up to and including the 1932 lectures, Collingwood was working out the themes of the *Essay* through an exploration of the *differentiae* of philosophical thinking, the distinctive nature of philosophical concepts *versus* non-philosophical or class concepts, and the

¹² 'The Idea of A Philosophy of Something', in *IH* 2nd edn., 351-2. ¹³ Lectures on Moral Philosophy, 1929, 6.

implications of conceptual overlap for philosophical analysis. However, the detailed logic of the overlap of classes had not yet been fully developed and the methodological explorations as a whole had not yet been translated into the vocabulary of *An Essay on Philosophical Method*. In the *Essay* Collingwood finally demonstrated to his own satisfaction how a scale of forms, a dialectical progression, was possible. This demonstration hinged on the distinction between empirical or non-philosophical concepts as class concepts and philosophical concepts which, considered in their relations, displayed identity and difference, fusion of opposition and distinction, and fusion of degree and kind. Thus in a philosophical scale of forms the higher terms make explicit what is merely implicit in the lower.

The starting point for Collingwood's reflection on method is Socratic. In philosophy we come 'to know better something which in some sense we knew already' (*EPM* 11). This principle is reasserted throughout the book, and he also remarks that 'every school of philosophical thought has accepted this principle' (*EPM* 161). There was thus nothing distinctive (and Collingwood did not claim that there was anything distinctive) about the mere claim 'that philosophy brings us to know in a different way things which we already knew in some way' (*EPM* 161). Indeed, Susan Stebbing, in the article Collingwood subjects to critical scrutiny in Chapter VII, wrote that 'in using the method of

metaphysical analysis we are not using a method of discovering reasons; we are using a method of discovering what it is precisely which we already in some sense knew.¹⁴ Collingwood's originality lies, then, in his systematic elucidation of an account of philosophical method in which this claim acts as a clue to the nature of philosophical concepts. Philosophical concepts overlap in their instances and out of the basic principle that philosophy renders explicit what is otherwise implicit, Collingwood is able to demonstrate the logic of the scale of forms. A further merit of Collingwood's methodological approach, according to Michael Beaney, is that it avoids the so-called 'paradox of analysis', a problem which he identified several years before the phrase was coined. The paradox is that either the *analysandum* is the same in meaning as the *analysans* or it is different. In the first case the analysis is true but trivial; in the second it is interesting and informative but false. From this it would seem to follow that an analysis cannot be both correct and informative. Collingwood's solution lay in his conception of the scale of forms of progressively more adequate and comprehensive knowledge.¹⁵

¹⁴ L. S. Stebbing, 'The Method of Analysis in Metaphysics', 93. This is the article discussed in Chapter VII; see also, for example, C. D. Broad's Introduction to his *Scientific Thought*, London, Kegan Paul, 1923.

¹⁵ For extended discussion of Collingwood's work in relation to the emerging analytical school see M. Beaney, 'Collingwood's Critique of Analytic Philosophy'.

Collingwood's achievement lay therefore in his attempt to think through clearly the requirements of a scale of forms which did critical justice both to his employment of it and to the philosophical work of his forebears. It was the culmination of an engagement with Hegel, Plato, Bradley, Croce, and Gentile on the nature of a dialectical scale and on the nature of the philosophical concept. To take merely one instance, Collingwood did not mention Croce in the *Essay*, but his presence can nonetheless be felt because one of his concerns was to take account of Croce's criticism of Hegel's notion of dialectic.¹⁶ For Croce, philosophical concepts which are related by opposition exhibit dialectical relations; philosophical concepts related only by distinction, however, cannot enter into dialectical relations. Collingwood's view, however, is that this distinction (by which Croce rids himself of much of Hegel's dialectic) ends up by throwing away the possibility of philosophy itself. In his view, because philosophical concepts are related by both opposition and distinction, and because they are both universal and categorical, they are related dialectically and hence arrange themselves as a scale of forms. Collingwood's conception of dialectic is thus a modification of both Croce's and Hegel's.

In the *Essay* Collingwood reached his goal with a formulation of method which allowed him to

¹⁶ Collingwood identified his unnamed interlocutors in his letter to Ryle of 9 May 1935.

accept the idea of a dialectical scale of degrees of knowledge. Through this he was enabled to reappraise the work of philosophers (including Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, Locke, Kant, and Hegel) whom he explicitly cited as following this method. In particular after completing the *Essay* he directed his method onto Bradley's philosophy, and was able to admit Bradley's doctrine of degrees of truth and reality as valid—at least when understood as constituting a scale of forms. This he did in the essay on Bradley published below, and the results were also made public in his lecture on the 'Nature of Metaphysical Study'.¹⁷

In Collingwood's writings from the early 1920s onwards we can trace both the use of scale of forms analysis and its progressive developing theoretical justification. These were only properly brought into mutual balance in the writing of the *Essay* which was born out of reflection on the scale of forms as previously employed in his philosophical work. Hence we can largely agree with Louis Mink's claim that the *Essay* is 'throughout, an *ex post facto* justification of the dialectical system of *Speculum Mentis*'.¹⁸ The reservation lies in recognition of the fact that in the *Essay* Collingwood was not trying to produce a philosophical system or to justify the system developed in *Speculum Mentis*;

¹⁷ The second lecture contains a distillation of the argument developed in Collingwood's essay on Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* and is published in the revised edition of *EM*.

¹⁸ Mink, *Mind, History and Dialectic*, 73.

he was seeking to elucidate the logic of philosophical thought through an analysis and exploration of the nature of philosophical concepts.

This returns us to the point in November 1932 when Collingwood, following his rewriting of his lectures on moral philosophy in the summer of that year, finally embarked on the work which was the culmination of many years of effort, arising both out of substantive philosophizing and also out of determined but elusive efforts to articulate the logic of philosophical method. But it is also important to recognize that, although the foregoing constitutes a very important and distinctive part of the *Essay*, there were other important sources as well. After all, Collingwood stated that he was 'welding together' the many thoughts about these questions that had been occupying him for many years. One of these sources was previous work in aesthetics which was distilled into the final chapter concerning 'Philosophy as a Branch of Literature'. Collingwood had developed his views on aesthetics in *Speculum Mentis* and *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art* (1925), and published papers on 'The Place of Art in Education' (1926), 'Aesthetic' (1927), and 'Form and Content in Art' (1929) together with a cluster of substantial reviews in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

For our present purposes, however, perhaps the other most important source is the series of lectures on the ontological argument written in late 1919. Collingwood first lectured on the ontological proof

in 1920 and again in 1921 and 1922. The lectures were extensive (36,000 words) and consisted (as was his wont) of a theoretical and an historical part. Chapter VI, 'Philosophy as Categorical Thinking', can be seen as a distillation of these lectures.¹⁹ Collingwood also discussed the ontological proof in *Religion and Philosophy* and *Speculum Mentis*, and a few years later returned to it in *An Essay on Metaphysics*. As an indication of Collingwood's approach to the ontological argument, consider these passages from the lectures:

[T]aken by itself, in abstraction from any context or rather content of positive theological and philosophical conceptions, the ontological proof [is] purely formal and empty. The trouble with it, taken thus in abstraction, is not (as some critics have said) that it proves the existence of an Absolute but not of God still less of the Christian God. The trouble is, rather, that it does not prove anything positive at all. It is the mere skeleton or framework of proof, without any determination towards proving this rather than that. It shows that reality exists as we conceive it: but it does not in itself determine how we shall conceive reality: that is to say it is a pure form which does not dictate its own content. In its special religious bearing, it is of value in insisting that religion is conception, i.e. is not mere imagination, but claims truth: but it does not tell us whether one particular religion is truer than another. Similarly in its philosophical bearing it does not advance any special theory of the nature of reality. Now this purely formal character of the ontological proof must be reconciled with one very conspicuous fact: namely that all its

¹⁹ See, e.g., *EPM* 124–7. Inspection of pages 1, 22, 28, 35, 41–2, 49 of the Lectures on the Ontological Proof of the Existence of God will confirm this.

supporters have emphatically asserted that it could only apply to one conception, not to any and every conception. It is the first thing that strikes one on studying the literature, that Anselm, Descartes and his followers, Hegel, and the rest all insist that there is only one idea which is affected by the proof, an idea which they variously define as *id quo majus cogitari nequit*, *ens realissimum*, the one substance, the Absolute Conception, or God. All their critics, on the other hand, from Gaunilo to Kant, get at cross-purposes with them by trying to apply it to other ideas—ideas either of things perfect in their kind, not absolutely perfect, or else of ordinary objects of experience.²⁰

In a related passage which moves towards the argument in the *Essay* he restates the same point by arguing that:

Anselm's ontological argument, taken in abstraction from any specific metaphysical or religious doctrine, is empty of all determinate content: it does indeed prove the existence of a reality of some kind, but it is only religion, or metaphysics in so far as metaphysics means the logical development of religion, that it proves the existence of the God of Christian belief. Except to a mind steeped in Christianity, or at any rate in a theistic system of thought, the ontological argument has no definitely theistic bearing at all: the reality whose existence it proves may be an Absolute but it is not God.²¹

In relation to the position maintained in the *Essay*, Collingwood's summary of the significance of the argument is important. He suggests that 'the ontological proof is really no less than the conviction that thinking is worth while; a conviction without which thought would never have arrived at any

²⁰ Lectures on the Ontological Proof, 22.

²¹ Ibid. 44.

results at all'.²² In other words, we have to believe that our thought is valid, that is, that valid reasoning exists. We cannot think unless we presuppose that we are thinking truly about a real object and this real object—whatever else it might be—includes our own thought. Further, thought is criteriological, that is, it judges acts of thinking according to standards which in turn are self-reflexively applied to itself. Philosophy is the study of thinking, and thinking is always implicitly criteriological, that is, governed by criteria by which the success or failure of each piece of thinking is judged. Philosophy is self-referential; it is an instance of its subject matter and therefore in its own performance exemplifies the principles and criteria of the performance it takes as its starting point, and appeals in judgement to the same criteria. As he expressed it in *The Principles of Art*, 'in order to study the nature of thinking it is necessary to ascertain both what persons who think are actually doing and also whether what they are doing is a success or a failure':²³ the philosopher is therefore obliged to judge his or her own performance as a thinker. Philosophy, then, is criteriological in two respects: it judges the success or failure of the performance it philosophizes about and at the same time judges *its own* success or failure as a piece of philosophical thinking, using in the latter instance

²² Lectures on the Ontological Proof, 21.

²³ *PA* 171n; see also *EM* 107 and 109.

criteria applying both to itself and to its object. This takes the form of a simple argument: philosophical thought concerns standards; because it is thinking about thinking it is self-reflexive; therefore it necessarily concerns its own standards and has to exemplify and live up to them. This appears to be the point of the ontological argument as Collingwood uses it in the *Essay*; it was also one of Gilbert Ryle's key points of disagreement.

Reception of the Essay

Most of the reviews of *An Essay on Philosophical Method* were positive, as was the reception by Collingwood's friends. In reviewing it for the *Oxford Magazine*, T. M. Knox described it as 'a philosophical classic'; the review in *Mind* by F. C. S. Schiller was typically quirky but appreciative; that in *Philosophy* by L. J. Russell was broadly sympathetic—and the editor of *Philosophy*, Sydney Hooper, sent Collingwood a letter expressing his appreciation of the book. Charles Hartshorne reviewed it favourably in *The International Journal of Ethics* and it was also reviewed in many other places.²⁴ Collingwood also received letters from Samuel Alexander, H. W. B. Joseph, and H. H. Joachim, all expressing appreciation, and the book also sparked

²⁴ For details see C. Dreisbach, *R. G. Collingwood: A Bibliographical Checklist*.

correspondence with his old mentor J. A. Smith. Despite this acclaim, the essay had its critics and Ryle was not the only one; and it is interesting to note that Ryle was not the only one to raise concerns about the use of the ontological argument in the *Essay*. Father M. C. D'Arcy also did so, although his comments tended in the opposite direction. Whereas Ryle bemoaned what he saw as logical backsliding with Collingwood claiming too much for the constructive powers of philosophy, D'Arcy was more worried that perhaps it established too little. He noted Collingwood's 'remarkable statement that "with Hegel's rejection of subjective idealism, the Ontological Proof took its place once more among the accepted principles of modern philosophy, and it has never again been seriously criticized", and went on to comment that 'I like this remark especially as some time ago I was told by two Cambridge philosophers that the greatest achievement of their school consisted in the final refutation of this very argument! I wonder, too, whether St Anselm would have been satisfied with the kind of object Mr Collingwood wishes to prove.'²⁵ Oddly enough, Collingwood's modified defence of the ontological argument did not worry most reviewers: it did not figure in any way in the reviews in *Mind*, *Philosophy* or *The International Journal of Ethics*.²⁶

²⁵ M. C. D'Arcy, review of *EPM*. Collingwood had previously written a favourable review of D'Arcy's book *The Nature of Belief*.

²⁶ By F. C. S. Schiller, L. J. Russell, and C. Hartshorne respectively.

Some reviewers, whether friendly or hostile, took issue with Collingwood's use of language. So, for example, D'Arcy regarded the *Essay* as an interesting and important book whilst C. J. Ducasse, for one, took the opposite view and considered it to be fundamentally mistaken and misconceived;²⁷ but both agreed that Collingwood's language was imprecise, sometimes vague, and insufficiently analytical. This criticism was later echoed by A. J. Ayer in his *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* where he remarked that '*An Essay on Philosophical Method* is a contribution to belles-lettres rather than philosophy. The style is uniformly elegant, the matter mostly obscure.'²⁸

General reviews aside, the two most substantial, critical and detailed contemporary responses to the *Essay* were the pieces by Ryle²⁹ in 1935 and Ducasse in 1936. Ryle's article is considered below in the context of the correspondence. Ducasse

²⁷ 'Mr. Collingwood on philosophical method'. In 1931 Collingwood had given a favourable but critical review of Ducasse's *The Philosophy of Art*. It is ironic, in the light of Ducasse's criticisms of his use of language, that Collingwood should praise Ducasse for adhering to his determination to avoid 'the vagueness and logical looseness which have been the bane of philosophy'.

²⁸ Ayer, *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, 193. It is interesting to note that R. W. Chapman at the Clarendon Press remarked in a brief note to W. D. Ross that 'I am no judge of its probable soundness or merit as philosophy, but it looks as if it might satisfy the condition of good literature.' Letter to Ross, 10 March 1933, Clarendon Press archives.

²⁹ G. Ryle, 'Mr. Collingwood and the Ontological Argument'.

wrote a substantial critical essay on Collingwood's views of philosophical method. He correctly identified that Collingwood was attempting to elucidate a method for philosophy grounded in the nature of philosophical concepts. For Collingwood, whereas in scientific concepts the species of a genus are mutually exclusive, in philosophy they overlap, and the species of a philosophical genus constitute a scale of forms combining differences of degree with differences in kind. Ducasse's main line of attack was to address head-on what it means to be a species of a genus. He argued that for Collingwood to establish his claim that philosophical concepts are distinguished from scientific concepts by virtue of the fact that species of the genus overlap in philosophy, he would have to show that the relevant species are coordinate species of the genus: 'for the overlapping of species of a genus that are not coordinate is a ubiquitous fact, in no way distinctive of philosophical concepts'.³⁰ Again, 'coordinateness of overlapping species of a genus is the only thing that would have been distinctive, or that was in any need of demonstration, and without it Mr Collingwood's examples are only a waste of time.'³¹ He suggested that although Collingwood did not explicitly state that they are coordinate species, he tacitly claimed this to be so.³² However,

³⁰ C. J. Ducasse, 'Mr. Collingwood on philosophical method', 98.

³¹ Ibid. 99.

³² *EPM*, 35. Elsewhere, however, Collingwood seems to expressly deny that they are coordinate species, see,

he then accused Collingwood of never even attempting to show that the species that he mentions are coordinate and then tried to impale him on the horns of a logical dilemma by stating firmly 'that they are not coordinate automatically follows from the fact that they overlap. But if Mr Collingwood did not claim them to be coordinate, their overlapping, as already pointed out, could not then be claimed to be something distinctive of philosophical concepts.'³³ In other words, Ducasse willingly grants conceptual overlap, but denies its significance unless Collingwood were clearly arguing that overlap were overlap of coordinate species—and this he maintained he had not and could not do. His argument is reminiscent of that employed by Ryle.³⁴

For Collingwood, the central claim is that philosophical concepts escape the rules of classification exhibited by empirical or class concepts. In response, then, he would presumably have refused to accept the horns of the dilemma on which Ducasse sought to impale him. For Ducasse, Collingwood evades the issue by refusing (in his imprecision) to see the dilemma; for Collingwood,

e.g., 'Method and Metaphysics', below, note 4. The point, presumably, is that Collingwood denies what Ducasse affirms, that is, that the standard logic of classes is applicable to philosophical concepts. Given this, one can see that the two philosophers were bound to talk straight past each other.

³³ Ducasse., *op. cit.*, 99.

³⁴ In a footnote Ducasse explicitly states his agreement with Ryle's criticisms of the categorical nature of philosophical propositions.

Ducasse (and those like Ryle who share his view) miss the point by falsely assuming that all concepts are empirical classes. As he expressed it in the *Essay*:

[W]hen a concept has a dual significance, philosophical and non-philosophical, in its non-philosophical phase it qualifies a limited part of reality, whereas in its philosophical it leaks or escapes out of these limits and invades the neighbouring regions, tending at last to colour our thought of reality as a whole. As a non-philosophical concept it observes the rules of classification, its instances forming a class separate from other classes; as a philosophical concept it breaks these rules, and the class of its instances overlaps those of its co-ordinate species. (*EPM* 35)

Philosophy, then, ought to recognize these distinguishing features of philosophical concepts (or of the philosophical phase of concepts). Collingwood was well aware that certain approaches to philosophy, which he had earlier dubbed 'scientific philosophy'³⁵ and now referred to as analytical philosophy, agreed in maintaining that all concepts (philosophical concepts included) are class concepts where the phrase 'class concept' refers to the concepts typical of empirical science. This reduction is of course exactly what Collingwood was trying to escape:

Where the generic concept is non-philosophical, as here, the affirmation of one specific form involves the indiscriminate denial of all the rest, for their structure is that of a group of co-ordinate classes where each excludes each and therefore any one excludes all the rest, none more than another. But

³⁵ See *SM*, 49–50.

where the generic concept is philosophical, specified in a scale of forms of which the judgement is intended to affirm the highest (which it always is, because every one necessarily conceives the highest specific form known to him as the true form of the generic concept, and so affirms that), its denial of all the inferior forms is summarized in one denial, namely that of the proximate form; since each summarizes the whole scale up to that point, and the denial of that involves the denial of all that it summarizes. (*EPM* 107–8)

This is a claim about the distinctiveness of philosophy, philosophical reasoning, and philosophical concepts, expressing the view that they do not obey the laws of formal classificatory logic. It would therefore follow that simply invoking those laws against Collingwood could not have persuaded him, as it is their very status and character that is the point at issue. But Ducasse thought that by the looseness of his language at critical points in his argument Collingwood made matters easy for himself. Collingwood was himself well aware that such a charge might be brought against his manner of philosophizing by members of the analytical school who adopted a technical, scientific view of the nature of language. In *Speculum Mentis* Collingwood had remarked that 'to suppose that one word, in whatever context it appears, ought to mean one thing and no more, argues not an exceptionally high standard of logical accuracy but an exceptional ignorance as to the nature of language' (*SM* 11). This remark prompted Stebbing in reviewing the book to make

the riposte that 'presumably, to expect that such important words as true, identical, real should have a clear and unambiguous meaning, is to be a "verbal pedant" who uses "jargon" that is neither English nor "plain". The critic is thus given to understand at the outset that he must not expect precision of statement whether or not there be clearness of thought.' Collingwood's argument in the final chapter of the *Essay* that philosophy should be written in literary rather than technical scientific language was therefore no new departure: but Collingwood was no nearer persuading Ducasse of its merits than he had earlier persuaded Stebbing. Indeed the claim provoked a comparable outburst from Ducasse:

Many others of Mr Collingwood's contentions testify no less eloquently than those already considered how unfailingly fatal in philosophical investigations is a method which, in no matter what eulogistic terms described, essentially consists of a systematic refusal to be precise whenever precision would require of the reader some effort of attention, and would thus interfere with his literary enjoyment of what he reads.³⁶

Ducasse, it is fair to say, was not convinced by the *Essay*. Presumably Collingwood was aware of his article, but there is no evidence that he considered its criticisms either in unpublished manuscripts, private correspondence, or in print. Ducasse later

³⁶ L. S. Stebbing, review of *Speculum Mentis*, 566. Ducasse, op. cit., 104.

reviewed *An Essay on Metaphysics*, which he much preferred to the earlier work; indeed, he seemed to prefer it in direct proportion to the extent to which, in his view, it ignored or controverted the principles and precepts of its predecessor.³⁷

The Essay and after

Having looked at some of the reviews and critical responses to the *An Essay on Philosophical Method* we can now examine Collingwood's own use of his fresh-minted method and its relation to his later thought. After publication Collingwood employed the notion of the scale of forms and its associated concepts extensively. For instance, it is to be found in the manuscripts such as 'Notes Towards a Metaphysic', and in lectures such as 'Method and Metaphysics'. It is employed historically in both *The Idea of Nature* (largely written in 1934 and revised in 1937) and *The Idea of History* (mostly written early in 1936). It is present in *The Principles of Art* and forms the backbone of *The New Leviathan*.

In the *Essay* Collingwood does not distinguish or systematically explore all of the possible applications of the scale of forms. For example, in his work we find consciousness, forms of experience, concepts, and historical development all variously arranged as scales of forms. But there is

³⁷ Ducasse, review of *EM*.

a question: does scale of forms analysis require modification if applied to these different objects? The *Essay* is largely silent on this, perhaps because it makes the implicit assumption that there are no essential differences worth remarking. Although it could be argued that use of the method in different contexts requires modification,³⁸ it should be noted that neither in the *Essay* nor later did Collingwood indicate that he saw any need for fundamental modification to the argument of the *Essay*. In the *Essay* itself he has no qualms with employing the scale of forms historically;³⁹ he might be wrong to be so sanguine, but equally, perhaps we should accept that the work is an essay *not* a treatise, and that Collingwood limited his concerns accordingly.

The Principles of Art (1938) was explicit in its references to the *Essay* and quietly unobtrusive in its employment of the scale of forms and the concept of overlap. One important passage is discussed below; another is where Collingwood refers to the overlap between art and craft and urges his readers to avoid the fallacy of precarious

³⁸ In his introduction to the revised edition of *EM*, Rex Martin points out that a historical use of the scale of forms requires modification as its particular forms might not be co-present. In a historical process, for example, it may be that a later phase has no point of temporal coincidence with an earlier phase and hence the two cannot overlap in the way in which they can and do in a purely conceptual scale of forms (*EM* xxxviii–xlvi).

³⁹ e.g., see *EPM* 190–3.

margins (*PA* 22n). This is an important point and one often missed by hostile critics who frequently take Collingwood to be claiming that what is craft is *ipso facto* not art and vice versa.

In 'What Civilization Means', written in 1939–40, the method is employed in an important and explicit rebuttal of historical relativism. In this essay Collingwood analysed the ideals of civilized conduct and demonstrated that their interrelations are those of forms in a scale of forms. There cannot be, therefore, a single unilinear scale in which civilizations differ only in degree: civilizations differ both in degree and in kind.⁴⁰

It is worth noting that, generally, Collingwood did not dwell on the issue of method, preferring instead to let the dialectic emerge from the flow of the argument itself. This also follows his general approach to system building: he was systematic, but did not seek to produce a complete system unified in structure and terminology. There remains a curiosity, however, in the fact that the scale of forms was not obviously employed (and was certainly not mentioned) in *An Essay on Metaphysics*, where, given its immediate predecessors and successors which used or recommended the method, together with its status as a companion volume to the *Essay on Method*, one would expect it to have been. We examine this curiosity below.

⁴⁰ For an analysis of this piece (reprinted in the second edition of *NL*), in relation to the *Essay*, see J. Connelly, *Metaphysics, Method and Politics*, ch. 6.

Collingwood's last published book during his lifetime was *The New Leviathan*. This drew extensively on themes emerging directly out of the lectures on moral philosophy, especially his most recent series 'Goodness, Rightness, Utility', written at the turn of the year 1939-40; it incorporates the analysis to be found in manuscripts such as 'What Civilization Means' (1939-40) and draws on the account of mind and consciousness developed in *The Principles of Art*. It is explicitly arranged as a scale of forms. However, it does make an apparent (but unsignalled) modification to the doctrine by introducing 'the law of primitive survivals'. This states that 'when A is modified into B there survives in any example of B, side by side with the function B which is the modified form of A, an element of A in its primitive or unmodified state' (NL 9.51).⁴¹

Philosophical Method and Cosmology

Before embarking on an account of the previously unpublished manuscripts reprinted below, it is

⁴¹ David Boucher, *The Social and Political Thought of R. G. Collingwood*, 96, argues that the presence of an unmodified residue means there can be no complete overlap of forms on a scale. It could be argued in reply that the law of primitive survivals is found in historical, but not in purely conceptual scales of forms; however, this would be to concede the unity of scale of forms analysis. A different reply would be to argue that the law is implicit in the *Essay* anyway. For example, Collingwood states that the higher of two adjacent forms 'fails to include the lower in its entirety because there is a

instructive to look at the cosmological notes that Collingwood made immediately after composing the *Essay*. According to Knox, after completing the *Essay*, Collingwood remarked that having 'propounded a theory of philosophical method, he was now proceeding to apply it to a problem which had never been solved, namely, to the philosophy of nature'.⁴² To this end he began a series of notebooks on cosmology—'Notes Towards a Metaphysic'. There were five notebooks in all, covering some 522 pages (about 130,000 words). Much of this work contributed to his lectures on 'Nature and Mind' (and subsequently to *The Idea of Nature*). One substantial outcome was the sketch of a cosmology which formed the original conclusion (1934) to the lectures which comprise the bulk of *The Idea of Nature*.⁴³ In the opening remarks of the notebooks, begun in September 1933, Collingwood

negative aspect in the lower which is rejected by the higher: the lower, in addition to asserting its own content, denies that the generic essence contains anything more, and this denial constitutes its falsehood' (*EPM* 90). It is a moot point.

⁴² T. M. Knox, Prefatory Note to *The Idea of Nature*, v.

⁴³ The conclusions to the lectures on nature and mind are reprinted in *The Principles of History*. The 1935 conclusion is similar to the conclusion published in *The Idea of Nature* in that it simply marks the transition from the idea of nature to the idea of history. The 1934 conclusion, by contrast, is a succinctly stated philosophical cosmology tracing the emergence and evolution of matter, life, mind, and God. For details of these manuscripts, see D. Boucher, 'The Principles of History' and the Cosmology Conclusion to *The Idea of Nature*, and 'The Significance of R. G. Collingwood's Principles of History'.