

to its preservation, development, dissemination. It is concerned to set forth what really happened or, in Ranke's perpetually quoted phrase, wie es eigentlich gewesen.

However, there are ^{three} ~~two~~ quite distinct ways of conceiving critical history: one can think of it as critical belief; one can think of it as critical reconstruction; and one can think of it as some confused mixture of both critical belief and critical reconstruction. As the first two conceptions suppose a rather rigorous cast of mind, the third ~~is~~ has been the most common, but gradually is being dissipated. I offer a series of ~~soundings~~ soundings that, I think, will bring to light what has been going on.

In 1955 there was published posthumously a paper of Carl Becker's entitled, "^What are historical facts?"

It is available: (1) The Western Political Quarterly, VIII (Sept. 1955), 327-340; (2) Detachment and the Writing of History, Essays and Letters of Carl L. Becker, Edited by Phil L. Snyder, Ithaca N. Y. (Cornell U. P.) 1958, (Cornell Paperbacks) 1967, pp. 41-64; (3) The Philosophy of History in our Time, An Anthology Selected and Edited by Hans Meyerhoff, New York, (Doubleday Anchor) 1959, pp. 120-137. It is well worth reading as an introduction to the problem. Becker himself was not satisfied with it and, though he read versions of it twice in 1926, he never published it.

On Becker there are available a biography and a study. ~~By~~ B. T. Wilkins, Carl Becker, A Biographical Study ^B ~~in~~ American Intellectual History, Cambridge, Mass. (M. I. T. and Harvard) 1961. Charlotte Watkins Smith, Carl Becker: On History and the Climate of Opinion, Ithaca (Cornell U. P.) 1956.

The underlying issue is, of course, philosophic naivete. One has to learn to distinguish between experiencing and judging. One has to learn that "facts" are not, in ordinary usage, data of experience. One has to discover that what in ordinary usage are referred to as facts are the terms meant in singular, assertoric, true judgements or propositions. With that discovery one has on one's hands the epistemological problem of explaining how it possibly can be that facts, though not known in experiencing, are known in judging. Becker showed convincingly that historical facts are in the ~~historians'~~ historian's head. He knew this was not a satisfactory solution. But he was not an epistemologist and so ~~was unable~~ ^{hardly his task} to think ~~himself~~ ^{his way} out of the problem.

On data, see Insight, pp. 73 f. On fact, ibid., pp. 331, 347, 366, 411 ff.

Another dimension to the issue appears in a book by Karl Heussi on the crisis of historicism. By historicism he means the ~~methods of~~ ^{assumptions commonly held by} historians about the year 1900. He lists four such assumptions or convictions. First, history is concerned to determine for us what in themselves are already structured facts. To reach them one has no need of any set of systematic or philosophic principles. The structure is already there, and all the historian has to do is follow his method and thereby determine just what the structure is. This method is conceived as totally independent of philosophic views. Secondly, historical objects are related; there is an intelligible network of relations that links the lot together. Thirdly, there is historical development. Finally, historical studies ^{are} ~~is~~ not concerned

with the depth of things, with their genuine content, their substance, essence, idea, form, sense. Such essays as Harnack's Wesen des Christentums are historically marginal or peripheral; they contribute to history nothing of moment.

It was Dr Heussi's contention that historicism, defined by the above assumptions, was mistaken indeed, ~~but~~ not on all four points, but only on the first. Around 1900 it was assumed that, however much subjective elements might interfere with the historian's apprehension, at least there existed opposite it a once for all firmly given univocal structure. This Dr Heussi considered untrue. Such structured things exist only in human thinking, but if inquirers proceed from the same standpoint they will arrive at the same structured things. What lies opposite historical apprehension is not already univocally structured; it is not some fixed magnitude; it is an inex^hhaustible incentive to ever new historical views.

Where Becker was led to conclude that historical facts were in historians' minds, Heussi was led to conclude that the historical structures of things were in historians' minds. In sound enough Kantian fashion this did not trouble him, for inquirers proceeding from the same standpoint reached the same structures. Our own position would differ. Understanding of structures has to occur before they can there can be any hypothesis about them. Knowledge of structures is to be reached when true judgement can affirm them. But what is so known, has existed all along. ~~It is not~~ It is not some product of understanding and judging. ~~It is not~~ However, while we maintain that the structures are truly objective, we reject the naive realist view that they are to be known, not by understanding and

judgement, but ~~by~~ solely by observation or solely by collecting and evaluating testimonies. Not by observation alone, for that yields only data and not insight into the data. Not by merely collecting and evaluating testimonies, for this overlooks the difference between historical experience and historical knowledge. Testimony can reveal the fragmentary experience of contemporaries. It can reveal the constitutive intelligibility of their thoughts, words, and deeds. But ~~whilst~~ this is not history but only the starting-point for historical investigation. History presents, not the constitutive intelligibility of what people intended, but the retrospective intelligibility of what resulted not from their intentions alone but also from their oversights as well. To know at any time

For eight other meanings of the name, historicism, see Alan Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, London (SCM) 1964, p. 104.

Karl Heussi, Die Krisis des Historismus, Tübingen 1932, pp. Ibid., p. 56: Damals (um 1900) war es so, dass man den "subjectiven" Anteil an aller historischen Erkenntnis sehr stark betonte, ihn aber für eine unvermeidliche, mehr oder minder starke Trügung der Auffassung eines an sich fest gegebene, ein für allemal strukturierten Gegenüber betrachtete. Danach wandlen sich die Anschauungen der Menschen, es bleiben die Dinge. Nach der von uns vertretenen Auffassung sind die so strukturierten Dinge nur im Denken der Menschen, aber vom & gleichen Standpunkt ergeben sich die gleich strukturierten Dinge im Denken der Menschen; das Gegenüber ist nicht eindeutig ^und fertig strukturiert, keine starre Grösse, sondern unerschöpflicher Anreiz zu immer neuen historischen Auffassungen.

what then is going forward is to foresee how things will end.

~~now things will end presupposes foresight.~~ Historical knowledge
not of foresight but
is a matter of hindsight.

I have said that a distinction between history as critical
belief and history as critical reconstruction presupposes a
rigorous cast of mind. ^{Such a mind} ~~that~~ I find in R. G. Collingwood.
^{he} In a paper read to the British Academy in 1936 ~~and~~ on "The
Historical Imagination" and in another in a projected ^{but unfinished} book begun
in 1939 on "Historical Evidence," ^{he drew} ~~the distinction is drawn~~
with clarity and vigor, though not quite in my terms.

Both are contained in the ~~pr~~ posthumous work, The Idea
of History, Oxford (Clarendon) 1946, pp. 231-249 and 249-302.

Both are well worth reading and, as well, the whole of the
^(p. vi)
Editor's preface, whence ^{came} my information about their dates.

History, then, as critical belief is described as the
commonsense notion of history. One can know the past inasmuch
as someone remembers it, gives testimony of it, and proves to
be credible. Collingwood would grant that history in ancient
Greece and Rome and in the Middle Ages was just such critical
belief. But he claims that an entirely different conception
of history has been developing since Vico and, if you want
proof of its existence, then ~~compare in detail the~~
take the history of Greece down to the end of the Peloponnesian
War and compare in detail the account given by Grote and that
in the ~~last~~ Cambridge Ancient History, in ~~each~~ each case marking
every sentence culled from Herodotus and Thucydides. ~~The old~~
~~history is scissors-and-paste history; it collects reliable~~
statements, pastes them in a scrap-book, and latter ~~e~~ weaves
^{together}
them in a continuous narrative

234

258

259f

G

260

By the time one has finished that ^Rchose, he feels, one will have learnt a great deal about the nature of modern writing of history.

236 f.

That modern history is not simply believing the testimony of credible authorities, Collingwood considers evident from the fact that modern historians select, construct, criticize¹. The selecting and constructing are not on principles contained in the testimonies. The criticizing does not aim¹ at determining whether or not the authorities were credible; it asks what they were up to in making their statements; and when that question is answered, the answer makes the testimony evidence for something or other. Thus, if the testimony was just propaganda, still there is a history of propaganda.

260

258

236 240

While Collingwood would grant that scissors-and-paste history is ~~something~~ a great deal of the history people are still reading and even a good deal of the history people are still writing, he offsets the indistinctness of practice ~~but~~ by a ~~set~~ startlingly vigorous clarity of his theory. He calls for a Copernican revolution in the theory of history. He would eliminate the humble collector of credible testimonies and put in his place the autonomous scientist that reconstructs the past.

Such reconstruction, he considers, to be quite different from the ~~critical~~ applying the critical criterion that authorities can be believed when they narrate what accords with contemporary experience, and ^{that} they are to be disbelieved when they narrate what does not accord with contemporary experience. For this critical criterion regards, not what did happen, but what could happen. Secondly, it leaves the

determination of what did happen, not with the historian, but with the testimony of his authorities. Thirdly, it is quietly set aside by the best historical procedure. "That the Greeks and Romans exposed their new-born children in order to control the numbers of their population is no less true for being unlike anything that happens in the experience of contributors to the Cambridge Ancient History." The fact of the matter is that,

while nature is the same today as it was two thousand years ago, the social and cultural matrix is quite different.

~~While one might argue to an analogy of nature at present, as to nature in the past because the laws of nature are constant, there are the obvious facts of historical development and decline to force one to replace analogy in history by genetic and dialectical extrapolation.~~

History as critical reconstruction is the work of historical imagination. It is imagination out to ascertain, not the imaginary, but the real. It is not arbitrary but motivated, not a matter of passively accepting, but of actively demanding. If a ship is seen, first, in one position and, five minutes later, in another, imagination has to ~~fill in~~ picture the distance between the two positions as ~~a~~ trajectory of a movement. another, imagination not only may but must relate the two positions with a local movement. This is what Collingwood means by a priori imagination and he considers it the principle that gives ~~historical~~ written history its continuity. He finds this a priori ~~movement~~ imagination at work when we fill out sensible data to perceive what is not given, such as the underside of the table or the far side of the moon. Finally, he finds it in the artistic imagination; while the characters and incidents in a novel are all imaginary, still "the whole

239 f.

cf 239 f.
Moltmann
necessity

reconstruction
not just analogy

240-2 aim of the novelist is to show the characters acting and the incidents developing in a manner determined by a necessity internal to themselves."

246 To be sure, artistic and historical imagination differ, and they do so in three ways. First, the historical picture must be localized in space and time. Secondly, all history must be self-consistent: purely imaginary worlds cannot clash and need not agree, but there is only one historical world. Thirdly, the historian's picture has to be justified by its relation to what is ~~of~~ called evidence.

Evidence is potential and actual. Potential evidence is any datum, here and now perceptible. Actual evidence is any datum the historian can use in meeting a historical question. The more history he knows, the more questions he can ask; the more questions he does ask, the more data he can promote from potentiality to actual evidence; and the ~~development of historical knowledge now is the time for all~~ ". enlargement of historical knowledge comes about mainly through finding how to use as evidence this or that kind of perceived fact which historians have hitherto thought useless to them." So historical knowledge grows only out of historical knowledge. It is a distinct category of knowledge.

247 The work of the historical imagination reconstructing the past by using historical questions to promote ~~data~~ evidence from its potential to an actual role is not only constructive but also critical. History as critical reconstruction, unlike history as critical belief, does not begin by evaluating the trustworthiness of its sources. On the contrary, ~~so~~ what uses data can be put, is discovered in the course of the historical reconstruction

contrary, the exigence of the historical imagination for
 a continuous and coherent picture not only effects the construction
 of the past but also supplies the means of historical criticism.
 For negative criticism of a document does not imply total
 rejection of the document; it merely shifts its relevance from
 one range of questions to another; and it is one and the same
 flow of questions generated by the exigence of the historical
 imagination that effects both the reconstruction of the past
 and the transpositions of data from one range of relevance to
 another.

The editor of Collingwood's posthumous work, T. M. Knox,
 stated that from The Idea of History onwards, Collingwood's
 writings contain an impressive argument for the recognition of
 history as productive of results no less entitled to be called
 knowledge than those of natural science. So far, however, is
 he from defending Collingwood's philosophic views that he
 strongly criticizes them. Accordingly, while more is to be
 learned about history from Collingwood than I have set forth,
 still I feel that ~~the~~ presentation ^{could} ~~be~~ be at once simple
 and helpful only if ~~new~~ ^{different} philosophic suppositions ~~were~~ ^{were} introduced.

Notes pp. 51-55

Ibid., p. 234.

Ibid., p. 258.

Ibid., p. pp. 259 f.

Ibid., p. 260.

Ibid., pp. 236 f.

Ibid., p. 260

Ibid., p. 258.

Ibid., pp. 236, 240.

Ibid., pp. 239 f.

Notes pp. 51-55 continued

Ibid., 239 f. The implication of Collingwood's analysis is that there is no a priori analogy between contemporary and earlier historical experience but, on the contrary, it is the work of the historical imagination to construct critically the changes that have taken place between two historical epochs and to reach historical knowledge of the earlier and later analogies of experience. Cf. my point above on ~~interpretation~~ the interpreter's acquiring the common sense of an earlier place and time (pp. See also Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope, London (SCM) 1967, pp. 175-182.

Ibid., ^{pp.} 240-42.

Ibid., p. 246.

Ibid., p. 247.

Ibid., p. 245.

Ibid., pp. 259 f.

~~Ibid., p. 244.~~

~~Ibid., pp. vii-xx.~~

The writings of the pseudo-Dionysius do not represent early Christian thought but they do represent a Neoplatonizing tendency at the end of the fifth century. Similarly, every error or falsity uncovered by historical criticism does not reduce the data of history but merely relocates the significance of data. See Collingwood, op. cit., p. 259.

Ibid., p. xiii.

Ibid., pp. vii-xx.

What everyone can learn from Collingwood is, of course, ~~the distinction I have phrased as between history~~ the distinction between -- in my terms -- history as critical belief and history as critical reconstruction. In the former case one asks whether the synoptic gospels in their entirety or in part are credible and then one believes what one has found credible but one does not learn anything that is not set down in the synoptic gospels. In the latter case one may, ~~as~~ for instance, endeavor to determine how the synoptic gospels came into existence, as Rudolf Bultmann did in his Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition, and as later scholars with further refinements are still endeavoring to do. In this case one discovers what some first century Christians fragmentarily experienced but, in all probability, none investigated, assembled, clarified, unified, expressed.

Göttingen (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht) ⁴1958. First edition
in

See ~~the~~ I. de la Potterie, (ed.), De Jésus aux Evangiles, Gembloux (Duculot) 1967, where Formgeschichte has an intermediate role between Traditionsgeschichte and Redaktionsgeschichte.

Now if there are divergent notions on the nature of critical history, there also will be divergent notions on the method of critical history. It is one thing for historians to have discovered and developed their craft. It is another for them to possess a sufficiently accurate theory of knowledge for them to ~~express~~ give a satisfactory account of their procedures.

Now I have already reported from Karl Heussi that, at the turn of the century, historians felt they had no need of any systematic or philosophic principles and that they were in possession of a method that was without philosophic presuppositions. Such a position, however, might be reached in various ways. Its basis might be simply the rejection of speculative history such as that of Hegel or Marx. It might be a conclusion drawn from the positivist position that the only item of philosophic knowledge is that there ^{are} no further items of philosophic knowledge.