

Article

## Between Collingwood's and Croce's Art-Theories: A Comparative Study

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### Introduction

An initial study of Robin George Collingwood's *The Principles of Art*<sup>1</sup> (hereafter, *Principles*) and Benedetto Croce's *Aesthetic: A Science of Expression and General Linguistic*<sup>2</sup> (hereafter, *Aesthetic*) gives an immediate impression that Collingwood appropriated and incorporated many elements in Croce's work to his own position. This is probably the main reason why Collingwood, in his correspondence with Croce, sincerely expressed his gratitude to the Italian Philosopher for laying the foundation of his art-theory.<sup>3</sup> Collingwood's acknowledgement of Croce's influence and the apparent similarity in their theories on art disposes us to wonder if Collingwood may have only extended, hence, reiterated the principles of Croce's position. Given this impression, the present article hopes to provide a study between Collingwood's and Croce's theories of art in the hope that we can tease out a crucial difference between their standpoints. If we can demonstrate a significant difference, then we may have provided ourselves with the cudgels to assert that Collingwood's theory of art is also unique.

To accomplish such goals, this article shall first provide a presentation on the similarities between Collingwood's and Croce's perspectives on the proper meaning of art. In particular, we shall focus on the following topics: the locus of art, art's primitiveness, and the genius of the artist. In the concluding part of this section, we shall use the preceding points as bases in

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<sup>1</sup> Robin George Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938).

<sup>2</sup> Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic: A Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, trans. by Douglas Ainslie (Boston: Nonpareil Books Edition, 1978).

<sup>3</sup> Collingwood mentions Croce, among other philosophers like Plato, Vico, Coleridge and Hegel, as one of the sources of his ideas on art. More specifically, he mentions Croce in the preface of *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art*. He points out that, "the general conception here maintained is not new; it is one already familiar from the works of Coleridge, Croce and many others; it is the view that art is at bottom neither more nor less than imagination." *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art* (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), 3. Jones also mentions that Collingwood's theory of art is closest to the first three chapters of Croce's *Aesthetic*. Peter Jones, "A Critical Outline of Collingwood's Philosophy of Art," in *Critical Essays on the Philosophy of R.G. Collingwood*, 20 (1991), 42.

asserting that Collingwood incorporated a number of Croce's ideas into his position on the meaning of art proper.

The second phase of the discussion shall articulate and assess the dissimilarities between Collingwood's and Croce's art-theories. More to the point, the discourse shall concentrate on these aspects: art as being given, the relation between art and sensation-impressions, and the constitutive elements of a successful art. The discussions on the dissimilarities between the two art-theories shall serve as our starting point and ground in elucidating what Collingwood modifies in Croce's art theory.

In the third and last section of the article, we shall continue in our comparison of the philosopher's positions by trying to present Collingwood's possible criticisms of Croce's theory of art as intuition. After which, we shall also attempt to state Croce's possible response. This phase shall be based on the preceding discussion on the dissimilarities between Croce's notion of art as intuition and Collingwood's stance that art is prophetic imagination.

## **Part I: Similarities between Collingwood and Croce**

### **The Proper Locus of Art**

Both Collingwood and Croce consider art to be properly located in the mental sphere. In particular, Collingwood claims that art proper is located in the domain of imagination.<sup>4</sup> For Croce, he holds that art is situated in the domain of intuition. These philosophers also claim that art is located in between the intellect and impressions. This intermediary role allows art to assert its autonomy in relation to the realm of the intellect and further its sense of authority over the domain of sensations. In view of art's relation to the intellect, Collingwood and Croce agree that the intellect has a sense of dependency on art. This implies that the general activities of the intellect cannot properly begin devoid of particular art forms in imagination (Collingwood) or in intuition (Croce). One main reason for this is that art serves as the intellect's starting point for the production of conceptual knowledge.

On the discussion on the dependence of the intellect on art, art is reckoned as indispensable to the advancement of human knowledge. Both Collingwood and Croce agree on this crucial role of art. Thus, art has a vital role to the intellect because as art serves as the starting point of intellectual abstraction, the degree of art's complexity is considered proportional to the extent or scope of intellectual knowledge. On this view, it is evident that art is directed towards the progression of human knowledge. It can be asserted that this is one context in Collingwood's and Croce's expositions of art's real

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<sup>4</sup> Collingwood notes that the attitude of non-assertion or indifference to the truth or falsity of art has been studied by philosophers under the names of hypothesis, intuition, supposal, representation and so forth. In this case, Collingwood is proposing that the term "intuition" in Croce also refers to his notion of imaginative experience. See *Speculum Mentis* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 76.

nature. This stance presents one possible reason why both philosophers seriously attempt to articulate the proper nature of art. In a sense, it can be claimed that both thinkers try to decipher art's proper meaning to present an approach or way of improving man's capacity for intellection. Hence, we can contend that one approach in the study of Collingwood's and Croce's art-theories is to consider art in relation to its role and contribution to the advancement of man's intellectual knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

In view of art's relation to the domain of sensation, Collingwood and Croce also agree that with art, man gains an initial access to the world of the phenomena. This statement has a lot of implications. Firstly, it suggests that the intellect does not have a direct link to the sensible realm. In this case, the intellect can only discover and perhaps understand the dynamics of matter through what is made available in art as imaginative expression or in art-intuition. Secondly, the intermediate location of art implies that art by nature contains a type of porosity to both the intellect and sensations. It can be maintained that this is a presupposition held by both Collingwood and Croce. In their discussions on the locus of art, it becomes apparent that the domain of art has an access, which we interpret as a kind of openness, to both realms. This porosity can be construed as something similar to the overlapping relations between art and sensation-impression, and between art and the intellect.<sup>6</sup> Thirdly, since art is intermediate to impressions, it exhibits a type of dependence on the realm of sensation. Both philosophers agree that art cannot be devoid of impressions or sensation-emotions. Between the two, Croce is more explicit on this subject matter. He holds that it is due to matter or sensations that the universal forms in an artist's mind become particularised and concretised. If the world of matter is non-existent, there is no art, since forms shall remain universal, therefore staying unknowable to the consciousness in the mind of the artist. In the case of Collingwood, he maintains that if there is no sensation-emotion, art is not possible, since there is nothing to objectify and express in one's imagination.<sup>7</sup> In view of the foregoing, we can assert that both Collingwood and Croce affirm that art's proper location is in the mental realm that comprehends both the sphere of imagination (Collingwood) and the realm of intuition (Croce).

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<sup>5</sup> Browning is in consonance with this position. She specifies that Collingwood is a philosopher and historian who has deep faith in the powers of reason and aspires to develop the mental faculties of mankind. Margot Browning, "Collingwood in Context: Theory, Practice, and Academic Ethos," in *International Studies in Philosophy*, 25 (1993), 22.

<sup>6</sup> The nature of overlapping relations points out that entity cannot exist in complete isolation. Part of an entity's nature is to have a certain connection or link to other entities. Robin George Collingwood, *An Essay on Philosophical Method* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 182.

<sup>7</sup> Collingwood, *Principles*, 159-64. Jones argues that the notion that presents the realm of sensations as located below the level of consciousness does not clearly justify that sensation-impressions should be predicated as fleeting and non-recurring. Jones, *op cit.*, 50. Von Leyden also observes that in the *Principles*, Collingwood assigns the sensation-emotion as the indispensable object of consciousness in its simplest form. W. Von Leyden, "Philosophy of Mind: An Appraisal of Collingwood's Theories of Consciousness, Language, and Imagination," in *Critical Essays on the Philosophy of Collingwood*, 22 (1992), 27.

### The Primitiveness of Art

Collingwood and Croce maintain that art has a primitive status in relation to the intellect. The word “primitive” is a term that refers to art as an activity that is prior or primordial to the acts of the intellect. As we have seen in our discussion on the proper locus of art, the intellect bears a specific type of dependence on art. This is because the processes of the intellect can only take place once particularised facts of intuition are made available in art form. The question that now arises is: What characterises the primordial nature of art?

Art, Collingwood and Croce opine, is one comprehensive whole. As a complete singular entity, there is an absence of distinctions within art, say, between truth and falsity. In fact, Collingwood regards the notion of the non-assertive nature of art as Croce's main contribution to the proper understanding of art.<sup>8</sup> The salient characteristics of art as unity, completeness and singularity point to art's simplicity. Simplicity is the singular feature of the primitive nature of art. In contrast, the intellect is characterised by complexity. This is due to the bipolar nature of the intellect, which consists in its interest in the truth or falsity of things. It is this interest that moves the intellect to make art as its point of departure. Owing to its character of simplicity, art serves as the foundation for the intellect's function of constructing abstract relations between singular art forms. Since art is more primordial than the intellect, and since art's proper locus is in the mental realm, we can infer that the first conscious activity of man is art. It is through art that the human agent discovers his conscious self. Without art, human beings remain in the state of pure passivity or unconsciousness.

What is the relevance of asserting art's primitive or primordial nature? What is its role in the delineation of art's proper meaning? In view of these questions, Croce notes that part of the difficulty in articulating art's proper definition is that philosophers have thought of art as one of the highest activities that man can experience. Art has been regarded as something that belongs to the lofty ideals of humanity. But for Croce, such is not the case. It is precisely because of the treatment on art as a lofty ideal that philosophers lose touch of art's appropriate meaning. More specifically, the assignment of a supreme value to what is the simplest and most elementary activity of the mind has hidden the true nature of art from philosophers and, at the same time, caused endless confusion and conflict in aesthetic theory.

Collingwood coincides with the same train of thought. For him, art is the simplest and most basic activity of man. It is not the ideal but the starting point of any human attempt at intellectual progression. It is only when man is able to utilise art as the starting point—as the domain of possibilities—that

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<sup>8</sup> Collingwood, *Speculum Mentis*, 74. Orsini also recognises Croce's contribution in furthering the notion of the organic unity of form and content, which Croce theorises as the unity of intuition and expression. G.N.G. Orsini, “Theory and Practice in Croce's Aesthetics,” in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 13 (1954), 307.

man can properly advance to the height of intellectual power. Accordingly, Collingwood maintains that the simple and primordial nature of art is the key to understanding art's proper nature.

Given Collingwood's and Croce's bias in favour of the development of the intellect through art, it makes sense why both of them hold that art is not to be situated above or higher than the intellect. This is because for Collingwood and Croce, art is an indispensable starting point for the flourishing and development of man's intellectual knowledge.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, both are careful in maintaining art as an autonomous domain. It has a value of its own that should not be compromised or relegated as inferior to the interests of the intellect.

### The Genius of the Artist

Collingwood and Croce express that art is the domain of human possibilities. The term "possibilities" points to the character of art as an activity that is oriented towards the future. This forward-looking orientation signifies art's prophetic nature. Collingwood is more explicit when he straightforwardly expresses in the *Principles* that art, by nature, is prophetic.<sup>10</sup> But both philosophers consider the artist as an individual who is gifted or naturally disposed to receive such prophetic visions. It is important to underscore that the capacity to be an artist is not a product of one's choice. An artist's capacity to receive and articulate prophetic visions can be regarded as a special vocation or a kind of calling, so to speak. Hence, it can be proposed that to be an artist is like a gift—a privilege, an endowed capacity.<sup>11</sup>

While Collingwood and Croce stress the distinguishing mark of the artist, they also express caution in over-emphasising this feature to the point of extolling the artist above the rest of humanity. If the artist is highly exalted, the artist shall consequently become segregated. As Collingwood points out, the artist, if he becomes isolated, gradually deprives himself of new sensation-emotions that can only be nurtured by remaining embedded in the daily concerns and activities of the community. If the isolation of the artist persists, this shall result, Collingwood warns, in the production of make-believe realities

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<sup>9</sup> This desire to gain more knowledge can also be traced in Collingwood's *An Autobiography*. He claims that man needs to acquire more knowledge if he is to equip himself with the capacity to understand and handle complex human affairs. See *An Autobiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), 29.

<sup>10</sup> Collingwood, *Principles*, 336. Browning mentions that the sense of optimism that can be felt in Collingwood's emphasis on art's prophetic nature can be traced in his experience as a survivor of war. Browning points out that Collingwood considers the laying of the foundations of the future as part of his main commitment and responsibilities. Margot Browning, "Collingwood in Context: Theory, Practice, and Academic Ethos," in *International Studies in Philosophy*, 25 (1993), 22. See also Collingwood, *An Autobiography*, 88-9.

<sup>11</sup> In view of art's givenness, De Gennaro also affirms that Croce sees the artist as having the natural ability to feel powerfully and profoundly. He adds that an artist who is able to feel deeply is born with this ability. If the individual lacks this, he can never achieve greatness in the realm of art. Angelo De Gennaro, "The Drama of the Aesthetics of Benedetto Croce," in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 15 (1956), 117.

as forms of compensation. For Croce, if the artist is elevated to a near-divine status, the artist eventually detaches and alienates himself from the world of sensation-impressions. In so doing, the artist is estranged from the realm that is supposed to be of importance in the articulation of art-vision in the concretisation of forms. Thus, both Collingwood and Croce emphasise the need for the artist to stay rooted in the *conditions* that nourish the life and gift of the artist. But what does the term conditions signify? Do they have the same understanding of the conditions that provide life to art? This question is important, since it is on the notion of the conditions that nourish the life of art and the calling of the artist that Collingwood and Croce differ.

## Part II: Dissimilarities between Collingwood and Croce

### Art as being Given

Where does the genius of the artist originate? How do we account for the artist's gift of access to the realm of possibilities? We have maintained that to be an artist, in Collingwood's and Croce's configuration, is a special calling or gift. This view suggests that art is given by a source, an origin that makes the life of art and the being of an artist possible. In the art-theories of Collingwood and Croce, both philosophers concur on art's givenness. But we have also stressed that Collingwood and Croce differ on their understanding of the *conditions* that define the givenness of art. In order to appreciate this difference, here is an elucidation of Croce's theory of art as intuition.

In Croce's art-theory, man's theoretical consciousness has a dual component, namely: intuition and the intellect. In this respect, Croce argues for the primordial status of intuition in relation to the intellect as he holds that forms are already present in the domain of intuition. It is also good to reiterate a point previously rose that such forms are characterised as universal and complete in nature. In view of this universal and complete status, Croce commits to the notion that forms do not need to become concretised. Moreover, a human vantage point cannot have a direct access to pure form. Man can only become aware of the presence of forms when forms are concretised or particularised. Now, Croce contends that the concretisation of forms only takes place when matter enters the domain of imagination. In this respect, we put forward the position that this production makes it possible for man to discover the nature of forms and the constitution of the world of phenomena. And since, in Croce's theory of art, forms already exist in the domain of intuition, they can be compared to threads that have been previously sewn into the basic fabric of intuition's nature.<sup>12</sup> Thus, art as an

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<sup>12</sup> Dorflès points out that Garguilo is one of the few Italian philosophers who go against the Crocean position that forms in intuition take precedence over perception. For Garguilo, perception-expression is the fundamental basis of art and art is essentially united through its medium. Gillo Dorflès, "New Current in Italian Aesthetics," in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 12 (1954), 186.

activity has a given nature. We may add that like things that are given, art reveals a new entity to look at and a novel occasion to experience.

Unlike Croce, Collingwood does not speak of forms that are already present in man's domain of intuition. The forms that Croce talks of somehow correspond to one of the capacities of the faculty of imagination. As we have seen in the first chapter, Collingwood considers imagination as the locus where sensation-emotions are provided with shape or identity. It is through imagination that matter is conquered and stabilized from its fleeting conditions. Accordingly, we can say that Collingwood considered the faculty of imagination as a fertile ground where visions and images are received. Unlike Croce, Collingwood does not talk of complete forms that are already present in the faculty of intuition which, when concretised by matter, become visible to the consciousness of an artist.

Thus, we may now infer that there is a subtle yet significant distinction within the two types of givenness expounded by Collingwood and Croce. For Collingwood, the capacity of an artist to receive art as prophetic imagination is the initial sense of givenness. Here, the locus of art in imagination is a fertile ground capable of receiving and accommodating art-vision. For Croce, his sense of givenness refers to an artist's receptivity or openness to the particularisation of forms, which can also be interpreted as being disposed to having access to matter-impressions for the concretisation of universal forms. Hence, forms, in the Crocean standpoint, wait for their particularisation, resulting in an art-vision that an artist discovers and expresses as intuited art.

### **Art and Sensation-Impressions**

Concerning the realm of sensation-impressions, Croce also suggests that it is a domain that is always there, something that is permanently present yet, external to man. And on this point, we can see another important point of difference between Collingwood and Croce.

Croce's view on sensation-impressions implies that there is no need for man to oversee the status or condition of such a domain. Thus, Croce does not talk of the need to renew the area of sensation-impressions. This stance indicates that impressions are foreign to us. In fact, as we have previously argued, this is a domain that man must permanently deal with, for it is like an on-going conflict caused by its sporadic and fleeting character. Despite its character, the realm of sensation-impressions is required in the concretisation of forms. At the same time, it is also a domain which man must effectively deal with through the process of mental objectification.

For Collingwood, this domain does not exist independently of human influence and contribution. The artist cannot live in an ivory tower. For if an artist lives in isolation from the life of a community, the flow of new sensation-emotions is blocked. As a result, sensation-emotions become monotonous and make-believe realities—in the form of art as amusement—take the place or role of sensation-emotions. Or, routine-like sensation-emotions are temporarily utilised for fantasy building. When the situation obtains in which

the artist becomes ensconced in an ivory tower, he eventually experiences a drought of new sensation-emotions. This consequently means that, in due course, the life of art dies, since there are no novel sensation-emotions to express. So unlike Croce, Collingwood considers the renewal of sensation-impressions necessary for the continuity of the life of art. Hence, an important condition that he requires is that the artist must live with the community.<sup>13</sup> This condition guarantees the regeneration and production of new sensation-emotions which brings forth new objects of imagination. In the absence of this condition, art eventually loses its novelty, which is an intrinsic and life-giving feature of art.

Considering such points, we are of the opinion that the sensation-emotions for Collingwood are not merely confined to the inner operations of one's consciousness.<sup>14</sup> It can be argued that his idea of sensations is embedded in socio-cultural meanings and processes that an artist experiences within the context of the living practices of a community. It can also be inferred that art for Collingwood can be interpreted as something that expresses and embodies the deepest sentiments and sensation-emotions of a particular community. Hence, in moments when the community is on the verge of forgetting their practices and traditions, art's role is to remind the individual members of the collective to a vision of their identity. It can be noticed that the uniqueness in Croce's position lies in his perception of impressions. This is because for Croce, impressions belong to an external and separate domain; hence, it cannot be regarded as something that is embedded in the life of a community.

### Successful Art

In its givenness, art, as it has been shown, is only revealed to a few individuals. On this consideration, the question that can be raised here is: How do Collingwood and Croce ascertain that the artist has successfully expressed art? And, in view of this question, is there a significant difference that exists between Collingwood's and Croce's perception on successful art? To answer these queries, we shall begin with a short review on the purpose of art.

For Collingwood, art serves as the realm of possibilities that leads the artist to discover his relation to a living community. Since art reveals this side of the artist, art serves as an invitation for the artist to continuously participate in the practices and customs that constitute the community's way of life. For Croce, however, art reveals possibilities to humanity. In this way, art serves as

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<sup>13</sup> This position coincides with Fell's stance that artistic creation is not reduced to an individual act of a genius. For him, Collingwood's notion of art is even a form of social undertaking in which the artist draws in a variety of ways on the work of other artists. A.P. Fell, "The Hermeneutical Tradition," in *International Studies in Philosophy*, 23 (1991), 5. Fell also notes that this standpoint is shared by Thomas who considers an artist's articulation of his art-vision through a public medium as a painful and voluntary work. Dylan Thomas, "Notes on the Art of Poetry," in *Modern Culture and Arts* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), 272.

<sup>14</sup> As Black remarks, "To the extent that a work of art communicates anything, it must arise out of a common understanding." David Black, "Collingwood on Corrupt Consciousness," in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 40 (1993), 395.

a meeting point where human possibilities unfold. It appears to us then that there exists no significant difference between Collingwood's and Croce's position on the forward-looking function of art.

In the case of Collingwood, he holds that there is a two-fold condition to guarantee that art reaches full expression. The initial requirement stipulates that the artist must not be prevented by a corrupt consciousness. A corrupt consciousness is described as the denial or suppression of one's sensation-emotions, which results to an incomplete effort in the expression of sensation-emotions in art.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, it is only through an uncorrupt consciousness that the artist could determine whether he has expressed or failed to express his sensation-emotions. The second condition requires that the work of art must succeed in leading a community in articulating its sensation-emotions.<sup>16</sup> Croce also presents a condition to guarantee the successful expression of art. For him, art is successfully expressed when the artist avoids self-deception. Here, self-deception happens when the artist fails to take into account the full details or entirety of his art-intuition. This failure means that the artist has engaged in selecting elements in the expression of art form.<sup>17</sup>

From the foregoing discussion, we can observe a significant difference between Collingwood's and Croce's position on the conditions of successfully expressed art. It is evident that in Collingwood's stance, he assigns the community as the point of reference whether or not the artist has succeeded in the complete expression of art-vision. The role of the community can be adjudged as an external criterion. This criterion holds, since the sensation-emotions are to an extent shared because they are tied up to a community's practices and beliefs. With this stance, we are not in agreement with Kavanagh's position that Collingwood's theory of art is entirely abstract and dissociated from human practices and cultural settings. Although Kavanagh is correct in his analysis that Collingwood's separation between craft and art downplays any serious discussion on the role of matter in craft, Kavanagh failed to recognise that the conditions that allow the life of art in Collingwood's prophetic imagination stresses the inseparability of art from a specific living community context.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast, Croce's view on successful art-expression maintains that the artist alone can decide whether or not he has fully articulated his art-intuition. He is limited to an internal criterion. One basis for this is the absence of community's role in assessing whether an artist did fully express his art-intuitions. There is also no community standard that could indicate that the

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<sup>15</sup> Collingwood, *Principles*, 283. Collingwood presupposes that the artist already knows what an uncorrupt consciousness entails. A genuine artist cannot fail to know that he has expressed or failed to express his art-vision. Jones, *op cit.*, 62.

<sup>16</sup> Collingwood, *Principles*, 315. Jones also specifies that there are two conditions for the occurrence of art: "certain unexpressed emotions, and the wherewithal to express them." Jones, *op cit.*, 47.

<sup>17</sup> Croce, *Aesthetic*, 51, 117.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Kavanagh, "Aesthetics and A Theory of Craft," in *International Studies in Philosophy*, 23 (1991), 5.

artist did not engage in self-deception, or partial, or incomplete self-expression. This is also one reason why we maintain our position that Croce's art-theory puts more weight on the individual art. But a possible reason why Croce does not introduce an external criterion in judging whether art is successfully expressed or not is the insight that there is no other better judge than the artist himself. This may serve as criticism to Collingwood's position because he allows other members of the community, who are not artists, to judge the work of the artist. But who is better qualified to judge an artwork than the artist himself? This matter is still open to further debate.

### **Part Three: Possible Criticisms between Collingwood and Croce**

#### **Collingwood's Criticisms of Croce's Art-Theory**

In *Principles*, Collingwood does not profess a direct criticism of Croce's art-theory. But this should not hinder us from formulating some possible critical remarks that Collingwood could throw at Croce's theory of art as intuition. If we take a closer look at *Speculum Mentis*, Collingwood forwards a two-fold criticism: firstly, Croce failed to establish the identity of intuition and expression; secondly, he overlooked the pedagogic nature of art.<sup>19</sup>

These critical remarks, configured along Collingwood's standpoint, can be advanced within the context of Croce's claim that universal forms already exist in the domain of intuition. This claim posits the view that universal forms are art in potency. This is because when universal forms become concretised and particularised, they result in an entity called art. Since Croce did not elaborate on why the universal forms are naturally present in the domain of intuition, we have argued that this is one of his fundamental presuppositions. With this presupposition, he does not see the need to explicate the reasons for his assumption.<sup>20</sup> Because of this lack of explanation, we detect a problem or difficulty in Croce's acceptance of the a-priori nature of universal forms. This assumption of the pre-givenness of universal forms may serve as the background against which Collingwood forwards his thesis that Croce failed to establish the identity of intuition and expression.

On the account that universal forms are potential art, it suggests that forms already embody meanings or content. This statement coincides with Croce's view that forms are already complete. In fact, he stresses that forms do not really need to become particularised, since they are already complete by nature. The role of matter is only confined to circumscribing the forms, since

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<sup>19</sup> Collingwood, *Speculum Mentis*, 74-5.

<sup>20</sup> This notion of the nature of presupposition is based on Collingwood's discussion of presupposition as relative presupposition and absolute presupposition in his *An Essay on Metaphysics*. Collingwood, *An Essay on Metaphysics*, 29, 31. Saari remarks that the term presupposition in Collingwood generally refers to an underlying ground that allows certain positions to be inferred or deduced. Heikki Saari, "Some Aspects of R.G. Collingwood's Doctrine of Absolute Presuppositions," in *International Studies in Philosophy*, 33 (1991), 61.

it does not contribute anything to the content of forms, which are already regarded as universal and complete. On this consideration, the question that Collingwood could raise to Croce is: Where does the meaning of the forms come from? Or, on what ground the content of forms and the content in concretised art forms are based, given that forms are presupposed to pre-exist in one's mind? In other words, what is to be expressed in art as intuition if art's content has not been taken into account?

An attentive consideration of *Aesthetic* shows that Croce does not present an account of the origin of the content or meaning of pre-existing forms. Since Croce does not articulate the source of the meaning of forms, Collingwood could argue that the content or meaning of particularised art forms could not be presupposed, since meaning can only originate within the realm of relations. In addition, it is in the domain of relations where the conditions of the life of art are met and renewed.

As has been previously discussed, the conditions of the life of art in Collingwood refer to the artist's continuous interaction with the community that he is living with. This is so because it is through this connectedness that the community generates and renews sensations-emotions which an artist eventually receives and articulates in art. The importance of the community further suggests that the sensations and the emotional charge that always accompany every sensation are at all times coloured and shaped by the practices and traditions of a specific community. This position is consistent with our claim that sensation-emotions in Collingwood are not mere psychologistic or mentalist products. For him, impressions stand for meanings embedded in, and derived from, a community's way of life.<sup>21</sup> It is then tenable to assert that Croce failed to establish the identity of intuition and expression. This explains why Collingwood contends that the life-conditions of art as prophetic imagination are not fulfilled in Croce's *Aesthetic*. In the absence of such life-conditions, the artist cannot articulate something in expression. Hence, from Collingwood's vantage point, Croce's concretised intuition is empty of content, since it is devoid of meanings, which for him, can only originate from the living practices of an existing community.

In view of Collingwood's second critique, we make the case that he is right to state that Croce failed to articulate the pedagogic nature of art. By pedagogic, Collingwood refers to the instructive nature of art. Based on our discussion on the goals of art, we have maintained that art has individual and community goals. In the context of the individual goal, art aims for self-knowledge. In this respect, art is interpreted as the starting point of self-knowledge as art makes us discover personal sensation-emotions. In the context of the community, the function of art is to help us realize that an important part of who we are is the community that we are living with. In this aspect, it is evident that Croce has not met such conditions. It is on this

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<sup>21</sup> This position coincides with Jones' stance on the meaning of sensation-emotions. He mentions that the languages we have for expression determine our sensation-emotions. This means that the English tongue expresses English emotions; the French expresses French music; and so on. Jones, *op cit.*, 54.

ground that we can say that Collingwood is right in his second assessment of Croce's theory of art. However, this present discussion runs into conflict with Croce's view on the purpose of art as a domain that reveals human possibilities that may also be considered as pedagogic in nature. As we have stated, Croce considers art a route revelatory of human possibilities. On this account, we raise the following questions: How does Collingwood's notion of revealed possibilities differ from that of Croce? Does Croce's stance on art as revelatory of possibilities exhibit a pedagogic character?

Pursuing the same line of reasoning with which we have employed to affirm Collingwood's reading that Croce failed to establish the identity of intuition and expression, Croce's view on human possibilities that are revealed in art-intuition is also abstract and empty.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, within Collingwood's term, it does not make sense to derive meaning from possibilities that are disconnected from a community's way of life.

Since Croce's projected possibilities are devoid of specific meanings, it would be difficult for Collingwood to accept Croce's claim that through art man becomes inspired to contemplate the revealed possibilities. Collingwood could even contend that the possibilities derived from Crocean art could be considered as an alienating type of possibilities. For such possibilities are messages that an individual has to force on himself especially if such an individual is conditioned to think that art guides and leads them to better and more fulfilling living.

It is thus reasonable to suppose that the followers of Crocean art are reduced to live in reality that is close to a make-believe domain, since the intuition-vision that has been revealed in art does not meaningfully belong to them. This is significantly what Collingwood wants us to avoid in amusement art. For him, the only way for us to live passionately in life is for us to get in touch with, and articulate, our own sensation-emotions. If art leads us to ourselves,<sup>23</sup> it should bring us to the discovery of the sensations-emotions that strengthen our commitment to the practices and traditions of our own specific ways of life. The emphasis on the particularity of a community is one important gain in Collingwood's art-theory.

### **Croce's Possible Criticisms of Collingwood's Art-Theory**

Unfortunately, Croce did not present some specific challenges to Collingwood's theory of art as prophetic imagination. In this section, we shall take the cudgels for Croce and try to criticize Collingwood's art-theory along the Crocean lines of thought. Considering that Collingwood stresses that the

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<sup>22</sup> Steinman notes that Santayana critically considers Croce's art-intuition as a product of an abstract poet whose mind is compared to a barren kaleidoscope for the endless intuition of all possible things. James Steinman, "Santayana and Croce: An Aesthetic Reconciliation," in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 30 (1973), 251.

<sup>23</sup> In relation to self-knowledge, Jones remarks that Collingwood does nothing to show how anyone makes the step from self-knowledge about himself to a justified belief about the presence of the external world. Jones, *op cit.*, 56.

life of art can only survive and be sustained if the artist remains within the matrix of his communities' practices, Croce could point out that this view restricts the scope of the possibilities that art reveals. In Collingwood's position, the possibilities of art as prophetic imagination are visions that cannot be addressed to humanity. Instead of bridging the gaps between communities, Collingwood is moving into the direction of separation or segregation. This is because he accentuates the dissimilarities between different communities. In this sense, art becomes a marker of divergence, since it manifests and embodies a calling to fully strengthen and articulate the community's uniqueness. Croce could argue that this is a negative implication from Collingwood's theory of art. Owing to the fact that art is restricted to the living conditions of a community that sustains, replenishes and renews the life of art.

Since it can be maintained that Croce puts emphasis on art as the domain that opens up the possibilities that bridge communities, Croce's theory establishes art as a marker of unity and universality.<sup>24</sup> This is the consequence of his view that universal forms are already present in one's domain of intuition, which only needs to be particularised or concretised.

Another criticism that Croce could possibly mount against Collingwood is Collingwood's charge that Croce's notion of universal forms are abstract and empty of content. In view of this criticism, Croce could counter-argue that the term "universality" does not necessarily point to homogeneity and neutrality.<sup>25</sup> The term "universality" in Croce's universal art forms could be interpreted as a manifestation of a cosmic play<sup>26</sup> that seeks to connect and link all other types of artistic images originating from wide-ranging cultural milieus. This is one plausible reason why Croce contends that art-intuition unfolds possibilities for humanity as a whole.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Reiser traces Croce's notion of universality of art from Vico. He notes that Vico has created the concept of a "fantastic universal" where the designation of an individual becomes the designation of a whole class of things which art exemplifies. Max Reiser, "The Aesthetics of Guido Calogero," in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 30 (1973), 25.

<sup>25</sup> Nahm interprets Croce's art as intuition-expression as an activity that is primarily related to freedom. He adds that aesthetic expression is an occasion that motivates and inspires humanity to engage in genuine and creative freedom, which is to be understood in terms both of choice and originality. Milton Nahm, "The Philosophy of Aesthetic expression: The Crocean Hypothesis," in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 13 (1954), 468.

<sup>26</sup> De Gennaro reads Croce's notion of art-intuition as something that is universal; yet it is not an abstract and empty term. In fact, he considers art-intuition as cosmic, organic and universal – to use his phrase, "In the artistic image palpitates the life of the universe." Angelo De Gennaro, "The Drama of the Aesthetics of Benedetto Croce," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 15 (1956), 119.

<sup>27</sup> This line of thought is also in keeping with Steinman's position that Croce's art-theory hopes to link all perceptions with all other perceptions. In this sense, art as intuition is a theory that seeks breadth – looking forward for universality. James Steinman, "Santayana and Croce: An Aesthetic Reconciliation," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 30 (1973), 251.

## Conclusion

Collingwood shares with Croce the idea that art is properly located in the mental realm. For Collingwood, art is received in the domain of imagination. For Croce, art is received in the realm of intuition. For both, art is received by a select group of individuals, commonly known as artists.

With the view that art is received in the mental domain, Collingwood also adopted Croce's notion that art is identifiable with expression. In this respect, every form of art is able to articulate something. This is possible because art is also perceived as a complete, clear and particular whole. As a result of art's clarity, the artist is called to do his share in the expression of art—to communicate art to other individuals. Since art is received in the mental domain, Collingwood also adopted Croce's position that art happens in the context of the individual.

In view of the preceding discussion, we may raise this question: Where does the originality of Collingwood lie in view of Croce's theory of art? Collingwood's originality in so far as we interpret it against the backdrop of Croce's art-theory, is situated in his stance on the conditions that provide and sustain the life of art. In Collingwood's perspective, the life of art cannot be dissociated from the living practices and traditions of a shared way of life in a community. This is an absolute requirement. Hence, Collingwood considers the community as the reservoir of sensations-emotions that makes the life of art possible. In the absence of the community life, the artist will have nothing to deal about.

However, in Croce's position, the community does not play a significant role in the life of art. He presupposes that universal and complete forms are already present in the domain of human intuition. Art exists and happens when these universal forms become concretised or particularised through matter or sensation-impressions. This makes Croce's art-theory lean towards the notion of pre-determined art-forms which also conditions its universality. This is another reason why we can further underscore the point that in Croce's account, art lives not for the sake of an artist in a community but for humanity as a whole. As Croce boldly holds, art must represent the pulse of the universe.

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