

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF
BENEDETTO
CROCE: THE PROBLEM
OF ART AND HISTORY**

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The philosophy of Benedetto Croce: the problem of art and history by H. Wildon Carr

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H. WILDON CARR

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PREFACE

At the end of the volume I have given a list of Croce's principal works on Philosophy and of the English translations.

I have not made use of the English translations in the present study. My references are to the original Italian, and where I have made quotations I am entirely responsible for the rendering. In no case are the passages in quotation marks literal translations; they are freely paraphrased. What I have endeavoured to do is to understand the philosophical meaning and express it in my own manner; so much so that in many cases the quotation marks are put for reference purposes only.

English readers are deeply indebted to my friend, Mr. Douglas Ainslie, the translator of Croce's works, for his indefatigable zeal in spreading the fame of his author and obtaining recognition for the originality of his philosophy.

On one important point of terminology I find that I differ not only from Mr. Ainslie but from others who have written on Croce's philosophy, and this is not mere caprice. They use the term spirit for what I call mind.

I do not deny that there is some ground for choosing to render *lo spirito* spirit, rather than mind, inasmuch as there is a very common use of the term mind which restricts it to intellect, and *lo spirito* is more than intellect. On the other hand, I find it quite impossible to express the meaning by the word spirit, simply because to speak of an idea coming into the spirit or of an image being present to the spirit, or even to speak of the life of spirit, seems to me contrary to ordinary or desirable usage. Moreover, it seems to me that the essential doctrine of Croce is somewhat obscured by the use of the term. It is an intelligible and easily recognised doctrine that mind is reality outside which (to use a spatial expression which literally is inapplicable) there is nothing; but it seems, to me at least, unintelligible to say that spirit is the whole of reality. When I use the term spirit it is to mark a distinction from matter. I am pleased to find that in this I am supported by the authority of the late Professor William Wallace, who has given reasons for translating *Geist* by the word Mind and not by the word Spirit (Introduction to *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, p. xlix).

I have not attempted to deal with all the problems which find a place in Croce's philosophical writings, nor with all the new interpretations, theoretical and practical, which his philosophy necessitates. A critical commentary on his whole work is quite outside the scope and purpose of this study. I have selected certain leading ideas which seem to me of supreme importance in the present state of philosophy.

I have to express my grateful acknowledgment to Mr. Bernard Bosanquet for the help he has given me. He read the MS., and notwithstanding that so many of the doctrines are in more or less disagreement with the doctrines expounded in his own works, especially his works on Aesthetic, his sympathetic criticisms have helped me to clear up many points which otherwise would have been left obscure or even misleading.

I have also to thank Professor J. A. Smith, whose own writings have been of great assistance to me in this work, for kindly reading the proof and giving me valuable suggestions.

I have to thank Signor Benedetto Croce for kindly sending me some of his recent addresses and contributions to Academy Journals, not easily accessible, which have been of great value to me in the elucidation of some of his theories; also for a most useful manuscript epitome of his philosophical doctrines.

H. W. C.

September 1917.

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