

Imagine the History of the Robin George Collingwood Way

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Abstract: Robin George Collingwood is an English philosopher and historian. He tries to separate how to well understand natural phenomena and historical phenomena. He assumes that both phenomena have different characters and searching for the truth leads him to a method of how to approach history. He thinks that history could not be understood without re-enacting the thinking of historical personage in historiography. His thought is categorized as the historical imagination which is a result of a combination between interrogating and interpolating. In addition, Collingwood's view on man and history will be explained in this paper and the method of "imagination" will be the main concern of this paper. To sum up, it is also described that the main aim of history, based on Collingwood's view, gains the liberty.

Keywords: Historical Imagination, Imagine, History

Introduction

Robin George Collingwood is an English philosopher and historian. He attempts to separate how to understand natural and historical events properly. He assumed that the two had different characters. The process of his search has led him to one way of approaching history. He saw that history would not be understood without re-illustrating the thoughts of the actors or historical figures in a narrative.

In Collingwood's approach, understanding history differs from explanation in the natural sciences because historians do not formulate empirical hypotheses but think through the actions of historical agents to be understood today. A historian, of course, does not have direct or empirical knowledge of historical facts, because what is referred to as historical facts is evidence from the past that is available in the present.

It would be interesting to review how Collingwood views historical idealism or in other words how historians must understand historical methods and explanations. Although there are many criticisms leveled at him, it seems as though he exaggerates thinking over religious awareness, reduces history too much as a history of thought, and is an individualist because it is limited by individual thoughts (Kuntowijoyo, 2003:190) but his views can be used as a starting point in understanding the latest intellectual history methodology. Remembering the adage that the present cannot exist without the past, and so the new direction of the methodology of intellectual history will be difficult to understand without understanding the methodological footing of R.G. Collingwood.

Methods

This research uses the literature study method, which is done by reading and studying in depth the relevant sources in the research. This paper wants to examine the Historical Imagination of Robin George Collingwood.

Result and Discussion

Humans and history in essence have a natural relationship. This is because humans always learn from experience and human experience is a study of history. Ali (2005:102) reveals that history is the human experience and the memory of the old experience. Therefore, the role of humans in history is as the creator of history because only humans make the experience into history. Furthermore, he has the assumption that humans cannot be separated from history because humans and history are two singular, humans as subjects and objects of history. History tells about human history; human history is told by humans; The story is read and experienced by humans as well. Gasset in Daliman (2012:9) reveals that humans have no nature and all they have is history. This is very useful for explaining human existence in a different world from the existence of the natural world. If the nature of matter is fixed and does not change because it follows a nature that never develops, then humans tend to change every second and every moment. There are no certain characteristics that can be entrusted to human life. Therefore, human nature is history. With its historical nature, humans have changed and the intended changes, both physically and spiritually, occur because humans are constantly evolving.

In his scientific study, a controversy arose about whether history was a science or an art. Perhaps the moderate stance that history contains both the dimensions of science and art deserves to be defended. From the point of view of the methods of collecting and interpreting data, history is no different from the methods of science in general (Gardiner, 1988: 69-72). But in the technique of preparing reports, the element of the historian's imagination plays an important role, and of course not wild imagination. Historical imagination is imagination controlled by the laws of logic based on facts. It is because of this imagination that historical works are also perceived as literary works. Then in terms of language, the language of history is closer to the language of the novel than the language of scientific texts. This is indeed necessary, because if not, who will feel at home reading historical works? Nevertheless, historical reports always demand accuracy within the framework of historical disciplines. The high and low quality of a historical work will greatly depend on the accuracy and

discipline of a historian in building his report. In historiography, the terms good history and bad history are known. The most troublesome thing is that “even the worst history is still history” (Renier, 1995: 22). The interest in the past is to reveal its significance and explain it through structural awareness, historical imagination, and to eliminate anachronistic thinking, namely a way of thinking that mixes different dimensions of time in a simplification (Abdullah, 1996: 7).

In an academic context, history is a field of science or field of study that requires a critical historical imagination in its study. According to Kartodirdjo (2000: 31), this is intended to place history in a phenomenological historical setting. History does not always involve "past events" or past events but also relates to or concerns current events. In this context, historians who act as ambassadors from the past not only provide information about the country at a certain time, but also its conditions and situations, economic, social, and political systems, as well as all phenomena of people's lives in various aspects.

In investigating an event, historians should distinguish the outside of the event and the inside of the event. Historians should discuss not only the outside of events but also the inside of an event (Collingwood, 1985: 265). Historical events are not phenomena that must be seen only in chronological flow but must be understood and contemplated by the thoughts contained in them. The historian should not try to imitate the scientist in looking for causes or laws about events. For science, events are acquired by seeing them and further investigation of their causes is done by placing them in their class and determining the relationship of that class to the others. For history, the object to be obtained is not merely an event but the thoughts expressed in it. Getting the thought already meant understanding it. Once the historian has determined the facts, there is no further process to investigate the causes. If he knows what has happened, he also knows why he acted the way he did (Collingwood, 1985:266). The historical process is not only concerned with events that have two aspects, namely action, and thought. What historians are looking for are thought processes because history is essentially the history of thought. Historians can understand these thoughts by thinking about them in their minds, for example when reading Plato's work, we try to find out what Plato was thinking when he

voiced his views in certain words. In other words, historians are trying to understand the sayings that come up. It can be seen that in human and historical relations, Collingwood believes that an event will be easily understood only if a historian, through his mind, understands the external aspects of events in the form of historical figures or actors' actions as well as internal aspects in the form of historical figures or actors' thoughts. In this way, historians will find the facts that exist in historical reality.

Kartodirdjo (1993:88) explains that the main ingredient in compiling a story or historical analysis is facts. That fact is essentially a construct made by historians which contains subjective factors. The subjectivity of a historian is strongly influenced by the values he adheres to such as ethical values, religious values, social class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and ideology. This value factor then determines the relevance of the facts to the context, as well as one-sidedness, in working on the facts. If values are left unchecked, it will affect the processing of facts and the honesty of science begins to loosen. However, the truth in the view of the idealists is not related to objectivity or subjectivity but is related to the agreement of the facts made by the historian with the facts he finds from his mind (Collingwood, 1985: 297). In compiling this reality the historian will need imagination. Imagination has a task like cement that glues the two facts in an event because often one fact is not related to the other. Collingwood's historical imagination seeks to develop the intellectual work of Immanuel Kant. The perfect historian is a historian who has a strong imagination so that the things he writes are memorable and beautiful. So far, historians have looked down on imagination because it seems to be a decoration for a narrative, whereas imagination has a structural function. Humans will find it difficult to understand the nature around them without using imagination. An illustration that can be developed is when we look at the sea and see the ship and the ship will then move. We will naturally imagine how the ship moves and this is a small example of doing historical thinking (Collingwood, 1985: 300). In essence, historical imagination is based on space, time, reason, and historical sources (Collingwood, 1985:307). This is done because an event is bound to a space or spatial element where historical actors or figures act in a certain place. Human

activities that are bound by spatial elements are also bound by time, both in the present and in the past. If the activity is passed, then a good description of the past can be done only if the historian uses his mind to absorb and act as a historical figure or actor in acting in a particular event. Every present has its past and every reconstruction should be based on imagination to construct a narrative of the past for the present (Collingwood, 1985:309).

However, the images that can be done should be supported by the existence of historical sources. This is very useful for distinguishing between historians and artists in imagining things. Collingwood (1985:308) argues that historical sources are not historical knowledge that is available or simply swallowed by the mind of historians but historical sources are used as evidence in compiling an event. The historical sources in question can be in the form of written or document sources, oral sources, and artifactual sources. The past is not a fact that can be understood empirically by sight. Historians are not gatherers of the facts he wants to know. Knowledge of the past is usually in the form of intermediate and indirect. The intermediary in question is not descriptive, but historians should not know the past directly from the informant who saw events and left historical sources. When historians receive information from information providers, historians should provide criticism of the sources obtained. Therefore, historians must understand what happened in an event by reimagining the past in their minds (Collingwood, 1985: 354). If one thinks historically, the existing documents are human remains in the past. Therefore, what is meant in the document will be difficult to understand without knowing the purpose of the person or agency who wrote it. Thus, historians will know the meaning more precisely (Collingwood, 1985:355). The process of depiction must be done carefully because human thought can be understood only if humans use their minds to imagine what is being thought. If humans reject this view, it means that they are humans who reject their natural nature as thinking creatures (Collingwood, 1985: 362). Everything that makes sense in the human mind is essentially subjective, so humans must think about achieving objectivism (Collingwood, 1985: 367). Historical knowledge is a special memory in which the object of present thought is past thought. The gap between

the present and the past is not only connected with the power of present thinking in thinking about the past but also with using the power of past thinking to build itself in the present (Collingwood, 1985: 369).

Conclusion

History is written because of the interests of humans today in the form of freedom. Collingwood wants to show how human knowledge about freedom will be achieved if humans think about their past. Historical thinking means teaching humans to think scientifically in natural science procedures. Changes made by humans from time to time are basically to gain freedom and act freely. This can be realized because humans tend to be controlled or forced to do certain things. This statement does not imply that humans may do what they want as animals do (worldly desires and satisfaction of needs) but humans are free to design their actions through thinking activities and one of them is imagination.

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