

The Idea of Universal Man: Dilthey, Collingwood and the Notion of Historical Understanding

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ABSTRACT**The Idea of Universal Man: Dilthey, Collingwood and the Notion of Historical Understanding**

This paper presents the theoretical foundations, development, implementation and contemporary position of the prevalent forms of historical understanding, as developed by Leopold von Ranke, Wilhelm Dilthey and Robin G. Collingwood. Starting with Ranke's opinion on historical understanding, it examines to what extent and in which manner Dilthey's and Collingwood's concepts of historical understanding relied on hermeneutics, and what were the theoretical consequences of those correlations. On the basis of what these two concepts included and excluded, Dilthey's method of re-experiencing and Collingwood's notion of re-enactment are discussed in regards to the possibilities and limitations of their visions to participate in acquiring historical knowledge. In conclusion, an analysis of their ability to approach or distance us from a better understanding of the past is followed by a critical inquiry of the contemporary position and potential for historical understanding(s).

Key words: *understanding, Wilhelm Dilthey, Robin G. Collingwood, re-experiencing, re-enactment*

POVZETEK**Ideja univerzalnega človeka: Dilthey, Collingwood in koncept zgodovinskega razumevanja**

Prispevek predstavi teoretične temelje, razvoj, implementacijo in sodobni položaj nekaterih izbranih izpeljav koncepta zgodovinskega razumevanja, kot so jih razvili Leopold von Ranke, Wilhelm Dilthey in Robin G. Collingwood. Začeni z Rankejevim mnenjem o zgodovinskem razumevanju, prispevek ugotavlja, v kolikšni meri in na kakšen način sta izpeljavi pojma zgodovinskega razumevanja, tako Diltheyeva kot Collingwoodova, sloneli na hermenevtiki in kakšne so bile teoretične posledice teh korelacij. Prispevek kritično obravnava Diltheyevo metodo podoživljanja in Collingwoodov koncept rekonstrukcije preteklosti. Poleg tega prispevek razpravlja o zmožnostih in omejitvah obeh konceptov v njuni viziji pridobivanja objektivnega zgodovinskega védenja. Analizi njune zmožnosti, da nas približata ali oddaljita od boljšega razumevanja preteklosti, sledi kritičen premislek, kaj je sodobna pozicija in potencial za zgodovinsko razumevanje oziroma zgodovinska razumevanja.

Ključne besede: *razumevanje, Wilhelm Dilthey, Robin G. Collingwood, podoživljanje [Nachfühlen], rekonstrukcija [re-enactment]*

Often exceeding the disciplinary boundaries of historical science, *historical understanding* is a broad, almost elusive concept lying at the core of how we teach, learn and write history. It is intrinsically entwined with the way we perceive and interpret past lives. Interpretations of past lives (in particular, their quality) rely heavily on the capacity of historical understanding to participate in producing relevant historical narratives. On the basis of those narratives, historical understanding again plays a significant role, this time in creating images of the past, along with visions of future. The paper aims to explain the theoretical backgrounds and the implementation of prevalent forms of historical understanding, to discuss their possibilities and limitations, and, finally, to rethink their ethical value and position within contemporary historical knowledge.

During the 20th century, history as a discipline was undergoing significant changes. In European and North American contexts, they first became visible in the choice of topics, followed by methodological changes surfacing in the second half of the 20th century. Along with the emergence of new research themes, values and objects, historians gradually developed different scientific approaches. Eventually, these alterations were followed by a critical self-questioning of the methods and tasks, as well as the purpose of history. Despite inevitable methodological changes, most historians' ideas about the task and purpose of history remained closely linked to older notions of historical understanding. Originally introduced by Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886) in the 19th century, these notions were later on theoretically shaped by Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), and subsequently modified by Robin G. Collingwood (1889–1943) in the first half of the 20th century.

For Leopold von Ranke, historical science was at the crossroads of hermeneutics and philology. He assumed a unity between the world of historian and actions and thought processes under investigation. Hermeneutics with their core elements, understanding and interpretation, implied that researchers can directly understand the object of their research, because “there is a common ground between the observer and the observed

that makes understanding possible”.¹ Ranke was also highly merited for implementing philological techniques in the work of historians, which represented a specific mode of interpretation of historical sources.² In order to restore the meaning of the text in its original form, philology wanted to avoid imposing contemporary values on the text itself, a method which was intended to shorten the gap between the past and the present, therefore allowing historians to reconstruct past events in the way they occurred.

By endorsing an old dream of historians that time distance enables discovering the truth about the past reality, Ranke posited hermeneutics and philology as a basis for historical understanding. His ambition was supported by a belief that applying hermeneutics leads to an understanding of the continuity of meaning, while philology guarantees an objective approach to historical sources. More importantly, the regulations of hermeneutics and philology inspired historians not to observe the people from the past as dead, and not to think of them as some sort of monuments. The line between the present and the past, between understanding and misunderstanding, was erased in the idea that people from the past are spiritually present among us and are, in that sense, available for establishing a noetic connection.

Re-experiencing with Dilthey

Wilhelm Dilthey agreed with Ranke that understanding is the basis of historical science. Seeing it as an important and long lasting mission of history, Dilthey also connected understanding with the utilization of philology and hermeneutics. In his vision, philology in the formal sense was the fundamental science of history, which “encompasses the scientific study of the languages in which tradition has been deposited, the gathering of the legacy left behind by the human past, the removal of errors from it, and the chronological ordering and linking that brings out the inherent relatedness of these documents”.³ However, while the methodical understanding is an interpretation performed by philology, Dilthey made clear that the science about philology

is hermeneutics.⁴ Making a hierarchy of that type meant that hermeneutics occupied a central theoretical place in his notion of historical understanding.

The first emerging question was how to fortify hermeneutics. That task required an explanation regarding the level of dependency between parts, and a designation of their position within the system. For Wilhelm Dilthey, hermeneutics was possible in historical research because there is a defined relation between the parts and the whole. The parts “receive a meaning from the whole, and the whole receives its sense from the parts”.⁵ An almost structural unity inside the field of hermeneutics represented a key starting point for his notion of historical understanding.

Hans-Georg Gadamer noted that this sense of unity proves Dilthey’s conscious acceptance of the hermeneutics of romanticism. Dilthey expanded that vision of hermeneutics into a historical method, even into a cognitive theory, by emphasizing that life interprets itself because it has a hermeneutical structure. His idea of “basing historical study on a psychology of understanding” indicated that the historian is placed in a position of “ideative contemporaneity with his object”.⁶ With this in mind, it becomes clear that his theoretical scheme contained not only a structural, but also a temporal unity, embodied in the notion of *spiritual timelessness*.

Along with the defined relation between the parts and the whole, *spiritual timelessness* is another important element of Dilthey’s historical understanding. This effacement of time and space lies in the core of his belief that people of the past and present must understand each other because the thought content of every set was and still is equal to itself, as “a judgment is the same for the person who formulates it and the one who understands it”.⁷ Dilthey subsequently complemented his idea by introducing two forms of understanding: *elementary* and *higher*. The notion of structural unity appears again in the concept of elementary understanding, while the additional layer of temporal unity is reserved for the more abstract form of higher understanding.

According to Dilthey, elementary understanding is mostly derived from the “interests of practical life, where persons rely on interchange and mutual communication”.⁸ Mastering the craft of elementary understanding, notably in perfecting skills of communication and gaining insight into the “inner nature of people”, sets a foundation for developing its higher form. Hence, historical understanding becomes achievable through a specific act of higher understanding, which Dilthey signified as *re-experiencing*.

What enables re-experiencing, and at the same time historical understanding, is an individual transposition, an ability to think inductively, and to recognize and shift between perspectives. Dilthey explained how “the position that higher understanding adopts toward its object is defined by its task of discovering a vital connectedness in what is given”. Moreover, “if the perspective of understanding requires the presence of the experience of one’s own psychic nexus, this could also be described as the *transfer* of one’s self into a given complex of manifestations of life”.⁹ In that manner and in order to situate re-experiencing, Dilthey introduced *individual transposition* or transfer as the instrument of personal detachment, a spiritual vessel leading towards a fulfilled historical understanding.

However, not every higher understanding is necessarily a historical understanding, as it can sometimes be applied also to present circumstances. Conversely, every historical understanding has to be founded in the higher understanding, in the act of re-experiencing and ability to transpose ourselves through time and space. For that reason, Dilthey underlined their mutual importance, stating that “on the basis of the transfer or transposition arises the highest form of understanding in which the totality of psychic life is active: re-experiencing”. Dilthey also believed that “the triumph of re-experiencing is that it completes the fragments of a course of events in such a way that we believe them to possess a continuity”.¹⁰ The resulting psychology of understanding, highlighted by the significance of the re-experiencing, finds the source of energy in historical continuity and unchanged structure of life which eliminates the

difference between the thoughts of people from the past and the present.

Dilthey's scheme can be critiqued for its defined relations and the assumption about what is included in the content of understanding. For that reason, it is useful to start with Friedrich Schlegel's (1772–1829) and Wilhelm von Humboldt's (1767–1835) objections, pointing out paradoxes which follow every attempt of understanding. Schlegel explained his position aphoristically: if we want to understand someone, we must first be smarter than that person, then we must be as smart as that person, and, lastly, we must be as stupid as the object of understanding. Schlegel added that it is not enough to understand the true meaning of a confused work better than the author did. Rather, we must also be able to notice, describe and construct the principles of the confusion itself.¹¹ Humboldt meanwhile stated that every understanding is at the same time a misunderstanding, while every agreement on ideas is at the same time a disagreement.¹² Clearly focusing on the ambivalence of the process of understanding, they both revolved around the notion that it is equally important to understand which pieces are included and which are excluded from the content of understanding.

Following the question of content and its excluded parts, Dilthey's method can be critically approached by further asking the following question: is understanding of ourselves even possible? This particular question motivated Friedrich Nietzsche and represented the starting point for his inquiry on the limits of self-understanding. Nietzsche posited that people inevitably stay unknown to themselves, that we do not understand ourselves and, for that reason, "must confusedly mistake who we are".¹³ Hence, the inability to separate our personality from others is mutually connected with the inability to understand our own personality. These incompetences undermine the structural unity of Dilthey's notions of elementary and higher understanding, finally resulting in the rejection of Dilthey's scheme of historical understanding.

Georg Simmel (1858–1918) chose a slightly different approach,

by moving the starting point from the question of self-understanding to the possibility of understanding someone else. In his review of Dilthey's method, Simmel made a key distinction between understanding a person and understanding the meaning of their words. He claimed that we do not understand the person speaking. Instead, we can only understand the spoken words. Therefore, the claim that the spiritual life of other people could correspond to our own must remain a hypothesis.¹⁴ In contrast to Dilthey's concept of re-experiencing, Simmel strongly believed that thought set of every human is unique in its diversity. And what is highly significant for further analysis, Simmel acknowledged that the divergence between meaning people put in their words and their inner natures is frequently marked by various emotional states.

Prior to this section, the role of emotions in Dilthey's method was not discussed. However, emotions proved to be very influential, as one of the integral parts of historical understanding is compassion.¹⁵ Leopold von Ranke often emphasized its importance, which is evident in his statement that the final result of the historical science is indeed a compassionate knowledge of the universe.¹⁶ Expanding on Ranke's vision of understanding, Wilhelm Dilthey proclaimed sympathy and empathy to be crucial catalytic factors in the act of re-experiencing, stating that sympathy strengthens the energy of the act itself.¹⁷ Such a capacity for compassion – based on the assumption that a historian is capable of emotionally re-experiencing the challenges people faced in the past while remaining rational enough to scientifically explain them without losing the original meaning – takes an active part in Dilthey's formation of historical knowledge.

To analyze the previous paragraph, we need to turn once again to Georg Simmel's detailed comments. Simmel was skeptical about the historical knowledge acquired by Dilthey's method of historical understanding. He detected the enigma of that knowledge in subsequent formation of subjectivity, in experiencing emotions we do not actually feel. The difficulties of historical projection were, in his opinion, present in the

tendency that something which was shaped afterwards and only existed subjectively, had to be moved away from ourselves and transferred to a certain historical character.¹⁸ Hence, Simmel managed to put into question two notable aspects of Dilthey's method seen as the default ones: continuity and scientific approach. In particular, personal construction of emotions during the act of re-experiencing appears to be inseparably related to the construction of continuity, as both constructions have an aspiration to fit into a desirable image of one another. In that manner, anachronistic attribution of our thoughts to the thoughts of people from the past ultimately leads to abandoning the scientific approach to which historiography aspires.

Re-enacting with Collingwood

Persistently striving for that elusive scientific approach, Robin G. Collingwood remained a firm advocate of the position that the comprehension of past thoughts could be achieved through an act of thinking them again for ourselves. Since historians are not eyewitnesses of past events, Collingwood claimed that for that very reason they must *re-enact* the past inside their own minds, and that "the re-enactment of past thought is not a precondition of historical knowledge, but an integral element in it".¹⁹ Collingwood understood that the main issue in regards to the act of re-enactment is making a distinction between the thoughts of our own and those that occurred in the past.

Eager to discuss this issue and establish re-enactment as a driving force of historical understanding, Collingwood considered that knowing what someone thinks or thought includes thinking it for oneself, which implies that history as a science of past thoughts (acts of thinking) is possible. He believed that the power of *memory* bridges the temporal gap between our present thought and its past object. This assessment led him to conclude that "historical knowledge is that special case of memory where the object of present thought is past thought".²⁰ By having a clear perception that the past is spatially and temporally far away, Collingwood rejected Dilthey's idea of spiritual simultaneity. On the other hand, his concept of re-enactment presents an

almost fairy-tale scenario for historical understanding. The past thoughts, laid in a state of hibernation, wait for the human memory in the role of mediator to revive them by the virtuous “kiss” of re-enactment.

Collingwood’s theoretical project thus essentially reduces the whole discipline of history solely to the history of thought.²¹ Furthermore, Collingwood strongly believed that knowledge acquired through re-enactment is objective. He supported this opinion with two postulates. The first asserts that “the act of thought in becoming subjective does not cease to be objective; it is the object of a self-knowledge which differs from mere consciousness in being self-consciousness or awareness, and differs from being mere self-consciousness in being self-knowledge: the critical study of one’s own thought, not the mere awareness of that thought as one’s own”.²² The second postulate, that “those elements in experience whose being is just their immediacy (sensations, feelings, etc. as such) cannot be re-enacted”,²³ separates his idea from Dilthey’s concept of re-experiencing. Therefore, re-enactment of the past is equal to knowing past acts of thinking, liberated from feelings and emotions.

By eliminating emotional factors from the equation, Collingwood’s intention to establish re-enactment as the key factor of historical understanding ignored one crucial aspect: neglecting compassion alienated re-enactment from the ethical method of understanding.²⁴ Also, one of the questions arising from his concept is how can emotions be derived from the act of thinking, and vice versa. Furthermore, how can the interpretation of the known be based on an emotionless disposition? Is such an interpretation de facto a return to the problems Dilthey’s method faced in regards to constructed meaning and continuity?

Aware of these issues, historiographer Keith Jenkins criticized both the idea of compassionate re-experiencing and the idea of re-enactment. Instead he openly stated that empathy as a method of historical understanding is not possible and suggested that the way we accept empathy is the result of our education,

academic pressures and ideology. He furthermore pointed out that the contemporary educational system supports re-experiencing different roles and situations, guided by the desire to develop a sense of inclusion and also to personalize learning and teaching. He found the basic settings of empathy in liberal ideology. In his opinion, these settings represent a return to John Stuart Mill's idea of reciprocal freedom, suggesting a "pragmatic weighing up, and a balancing of viewpoints, a consideration of the pros and cons /.../, and the banishment of all extremes as rational choices for action".²⁵

Via emphasizing the importance of rationality and balance, Mill's approach is a foundation for the demands to put ourselves in the position of someone else. Jenkins considers that type of harmful consequence to be visible in the spatial and temporal universalization of ideology of liberalism and in transferring of Mill's reflections into the minds of people who couldn't have known his ideas.²⁶ In historical understanding based on Dilthey's or Collingwood's schemes (but also in emphatical understanding), Jenkins sees an anachronistic procedure which creates an illusion of coming closer to the past, while in reality it moves us away from establishing a closer relation with the past.

Searching for different examples of ideologically imposed forms of understanding, Jenkins investigated Collingwood's idea of understanding the people from the past through re-enacting their acts of thinking. Collingwood reckoned that there is a clear difference between historian's intention of being someone and knowing someone. Jenkins criticized that stance using the example of the relation between Thomas Cromwell (1485–1540), the English statesman, and the British historian Geoffrey Elton (1921–1994) to show that we cannot empathise with Cromwell directly, as we only get to know him through an indirect source (through Elton or some other historian). That mediation is filled with accumulated meaning, conducive in fact to forming an emotional connection with Elton's thinking, much more than with Thomas Cromwell's.²⁷ In that manner, Collingwood's notion of historical understanding is faced with a problem of mediation and interpretation of meaning.

Dilthey's method of re-experiencing and Collingwood's idea of re-enactment both ignored the circumstance that not every act of thinking can be perceived as rational. For that reason, E. H. Carr admitted that "human beings do not always, or perhaps even habitually, act from motives of which they are fully conscious or which they are willing to avow".²⁸ Jenkins added that any reading of the people in the past, grounded in faith in a constancy of human nature, proves to be without foundation.²⁹ In this respect, discussing the limitations of Dilthey's and Collingwood's methods reveals their utter reliance on rational human behaviour, and noticeable lack in understanding of the situations in which the behaviour is primarily driven by emotions or the situations in which the border between rational and irrational fails to be deciphered.

Considerable obstacles also appear when we are trying to analyze human behaviours as the results of acting in accordance with specific moral principles. The lack of knowledge regarding past reality prevents a historian from reconstructing what people from the past could have accepted as truth.³⁰ Additionally, as Paul Veyne pointed out, introspection and common sense hardly help us find out what the normality of a given period was.³¹ These issues of individual comprehension of truth and collective perception of normality, along with the previously mentioned barrier in separating rational and irrational human motives, become increasingly complicated with an implementation of the contemporary vocabulary used in representing the past reality.

There is a clear discrepancy between the language used today and the language(s) used in the past. The vocabulary of the modern world, for example, is very different from the vocabulary of the Middle Ages. However, those are not the only discrepancies, as the issue of language should be observed in accordance with two important aspects: the difference between the words used and the difference between meaning given to them. The first aspect is highly visible in the process of interpretation, in which historians often use words and expressions completely unfamiliar to the previous generations.³² As a result, the created interpretations show a significant number of anachronisms, and,

from the start, fail to provide a vision in accord with the past.

The second aspect (the difference between meaning given to the words used) can be explained by calling upon Collingwood's notion of re-enactment. Namely, Collingwood claimed that we can understand someone's thoughts expressed in writing only if we come to the reading prepared "with an experience sufficiently like his own to make those thoughts organic to it".³³ Meanwhile, contemporary theory of history believes that this idea is unrealistic, as languages shape the dominant forms of thinking in various epochs.³⁴ To a large degree, our experience is molded by the thinking expressed in language, which is a result of continuous cultural and historical changes.

In summary, it is worth noting that most of the information we gain about the people from the past, we actually gain through a specific mediation, usually in the form of reading (or hearing) the interpretations of their lives and thoughts. We do not understand those people entirely because we meet them again with every new reading or hearing. We cannot claim to know them as we constantly attach new meaning and context to their beings. Acknowledging the mediative nature of our access to the lives of previous generations eventually results in admitting that we are unable to directly understand them, since we obtain our historical knowledge under the impression of convincing interpretations and accumulated meanings.

Conclusion

Intrigued by the idea of establishing a spiritual bond with the past, Dutch historian Johan Huizinga coined the term *historical sensation* in 1920s. He described historical sensation as an immediate contact with the past, a sensation as deep as the purest enjoyment of art, an almost ecstatic perception of no longer being ourselves, of flowing into the world around us, touching the essence of things, experiencing Truth through history. Huizinga hastened to add that such a mystical experience of immediate contact with the past has little or nothing to do with the historian's profession. A historical sensation does not

produce historical knowledge and certainly does not offer a privileged insight into the past. It does, in Huizinga's words, stimulate *passion for the past*: love of historical research and care for what is nowadays called *historical heritage*.³⁵ According to him, historical sensation is a poetically transcendental act. Although it allegedly allows establishing a closer relationship with the past, its nature is incompatible with the notion that historical understanding should be a scientific method aimed at the expansion of historical knowledge.

It is exactly in this attempt to create a pristine method of inquiry, and, at the same time, a unique and valuable concept, that the importance of Dilthey's and Collingwood's ideas lie. Nevertheless, their theoretical visions cannot be separated from what Johan Huizinga called the passion for the past and love of historical research, the emotional states that prove to be a strong motivational factor in every phase of historical thinking. Contrary to Huizinga's sensation of no longer being ourselves, Dilthey and Collingwood chose another approach. They insisted that historical understanding could be achieved through an act of thinking, which would allow us to always remain ourselves and rational enough to explain the nature of the acquired knowledge. In accordance with Dilthey's idea, the main intention of their concepts could be summarized in the stance that knowing persons from the past is a higher form of truly knowing ourselves.

However, their concepts possess a pernicious trait: they impose an image of a *universal man*. Dilthey's idea of re-experiencing and Collingwood's notion of re-enactment imply that all people, regardless of their culture and their past are essentially the same. In other words, their theoretical projects not only delete the difference in time but also delete differences between people.³⁶ Consequently, their concepts end up denying ideas they wish to promote. They end up negating the complexity of individual personalities, of their past realities and power relations hidden behind the notion of universal man. As a result, we are only left with a possibility to know the people that history has allowed us to know, under imposed conditions, through continuous

mediation and created contexts. Under those circumstances, historical understanding does not succeed in obtaining a profound knowledge of others or ourselves, and ultimately fails in establishing a genuine emotional connection with the people from the past.

The nature of many historical events in the 20th century changed the focal point of historical understanding. In light of the devastating consequences of war crimes and concentration camps, *empathy* became a key factor in understanding previous generations. Applying empathical understanding in praxis is connected to the emergence of oral history, which tried to empower the individuals whose stories could not be heard otherwise.

However, the concept of empathy needs both its practical and theoretical sides. Without theory, we are prone to fall into the trap of the notion of universal man and start believing that universal empathy is also achievable.³⁷ But a thorough examination of the concept actually requires a rejection of extreme standpoints, mainly the postulates that empathy is always achievable or that it is never possible.³⁸ For that reason, one of the most salient tasks of contemporary theory of history is to investigate empathy as a concept, and to determine conditions and mechanisms leading to its occurrence. Through the interconnection between the subject and the object of empathical process, it should research the attributes of acquired information, and, finally, use those findings to improve our relation with the present and past Other.

In conclusion, to use Michel de Certeau's words, historical thinking cannot be separated from thinking about the *past Other*. The task of historical science is indeed to show *otherness*, an entity which defies complete understanding.³⁹ De Certeau's stance leads us to conclude that, as in the case of empathy, the concept of historical understanding is far too complex to be reduced only to the ubiquitous extremes of complete existence or non-existence. Different cultures, traditions, languages and geopolitical positions are just some of the factors to have enticed contemporary historians to abandon the singular form "history"

for the plural form *histories*. Similarly, it would be pertinent to start using the term “understandings”, as the singular form no longer corresponds with the theoretical task of acknowledging differences.

Nevertheless, the process of discussing and evaluating the concept of historical understanding/s is not yet finished. As the debates regarding history/histories have shown, the complexity of our world is reflected in the existence of several temporalities. The changes happening in the “accelerated” time are leaving less time for decision making, therefore presenting a continuous challenge to the way/s we perceive and write history. That challenge also evokes a need for self-reflexion as re-thinking the relevant topics and the validity of the (historiographical) responses provided. Perpetual desire to find new solutions confirms that the question of historical understanding/s remains open.

NOTES

- 1 Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Middletown, Connecticut, 2005), 124; *ibid.*, “Racionalnost i istorija”, *Letopis Matice srpske*, god. 191, knj. 495, sv. 1–2 (2015), 133.
- 2 As early as the 18th century, Giambattista Vico propagated the importance of philological method, stating that it allows for the great fragments of the ancient world “to shed great light when cleaned, pieced together, and restored.” Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico: Unabridged Translation of the Third Edition (1744)* (Ithaca and London, 1984), 106.
- 3 Wilhelm Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences* (Princeton and Oxford, 2002), 280.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 238.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 284.
- 6 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London and New York, 2004), 221, 226.
- 7 Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World*, 226.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 228.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 234, 235.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 235.
- 11 Friedrich von Schlegel, *Schriften und Fragmente: ein Gesamtbild seines Geistes; aus den Werken und dem handschriftlichen Nachlaß* (Stuttgart, 1956), 158.
- 12 Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Linguistic Variability and Intellectual Development* (Philadelphia, 1972), 43.
- 13 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality and Other Writings* (Cambridge, 2017), 3.
- 14 Georg Simmel, *Problemi filozofije istorije* (Novi Sad, 1994), 17.
- 15 Hayden White notes that the first phase of nineteenth-century historical consciousness took shape within the context of a crisis in the late Enlightenment historical thinking. The pre-Romantics – Rousseau, Edmund Burke, the *Stürmer und Dränger*, and especially Herder – shared a common antipathy for the rationalism of Enlightenment and believed in empathy as a method of historical inquiry. Hayden White, *Metahistory. The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore and London, 1973), 38.
- 16 Leopold von Ranke, *Das politische Gespräch und andere Schriftchen zur Wissenschaftslehre* (Halle/Saale, 1925), 52.

- 17 Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World*, 235.
- 18 Simmel, *Problemi*, 44, 54.
- 19 Robin G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History: With Lectures 1926–1928* (Oxford and New York, 1994), 282, 290.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 293, 294.
- 21 Keith Jenkins pointed out that for Collingwood, “all history is the history of mind(s). Consequently, to gain historical knowledge, we must get inside such cultural remains/traces to the minds that infused them with life, to see the world as they did.” Keith Jenkins, *Rethinking History* (London and New York, 2004), 53.
- 22 Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 292.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 297.
- 24 Collingwood’s theoretical work undoubtedly made an impact. Edward Hallett Carr, mostly known for his work on the history of Soviet Russia, criticized Collingwood, while, at the same time, admitted to be under the influence of his idealism. That influence can be seen in Carr’s statement: “History cannot be written unless the historian can achieve some kind of contact with the mind of those about whom he is writing.” Edward Hallet Carr, *What is History?* (London, 1990), 24. John Tosh agrees with Carr on this matter, adding that historian should firstly try to enter the spiritual world of the people who created historical sources. In his opinion, the main trait of a good historian is the ability to imagine the mentality and atmosphere of the past. John Tosh, *Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History* (London, 1991), 139.
- 25 Jenkins, *Rethinking History*, 53–56.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 55.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 51.
- 28 Carr, *What is History*, 48.
- 29 Jenkins, *Rethinking History*, 56.
- 30 Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History* (New York, 1994), 308.
- 31 Paul Veyne, *Writing History: Essay on Epistemology* (Middletown, Connecticut, 1984), 175.
- 32 For that reason, Veyne claims that history of historiography is in a way a history of anachronisms caused by *ready-made ideas*, invented by historians as *ad hoc types*. Paul Veyne, *Writing History*, 129.
- 33 Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 300.
- 34 Alun Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (London and New York, 2006), 144.

35 Johan Huizinga, “Het historisch museum”, in: *Verzamelde werken, vol. 2* (Haarlem, 1948), 566; taken from: Herman Paul, *Key Issues in Historical Theory* (London and New York, 2015), 18.

36 Terry Eagleton suggests that the idea of a universal humanity has been one of the most brutal ways history has found to eliminate the otherness of others. Terry Eagleton, *The Illusions of Postmodernism* (Oxford, 1996), 49. Keith Jenkins also concludes that “the only way to bring people in the past (who were so different to us) under our control is to make them the same as us”. Jenkins, *Rethinking History*, 55.

37 As Steven E. Aschheim points out, “universal empathy is usually more rhetorical than real.” Steven E. Aschheim, “The (Ambiguous) Political Economy of Empathy”, in: *Empathy and its Limits*, eds. Aleida Assmann and Ines Detmers (New York, 2016), 30.

38 Hannah Arendt gave a valuable evaluation of this matter: “Compassion, by its nature, cannot be initiated by the suffering of a whole class or group of people, it cannot reach further than what one person is suffering and still remain what it should be: co-suffering.” Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London, 1963), 80.

39 Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History* (New York, 1988), 85.

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