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Royce and the Destiny of Idealism

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In America the time for idealism, it seems, is past. Only *sub specie aeternitatis* can one renew the issues of the old Philosophy 9 course, "Metaphysics," taught for two decades by Josiah Royce at Harvard University. This course represented the last, best hope of absolute idealism, and in many ways it was the last stand of *inner* meaning that still aspired to the eternal. From 1894, when the first lecture was given, until 1916, when Royce's voice last reverberated in the lecture hall, a certain destiny in American thought was played out. By the end it seems it was idealism itself that was played out—left, to be sure, to be carried on by a few stragglers who had not yet gotten the message that the world had turned, and that a new spirit—or lack of spirit—was abroad in the land.

There are many factors that could explain the demise of idealism. The advent of scientism, the marginalization of religion, the trauma of the Great War and the hostility toward the Germanic legacy that resulted—all these could certainly be counted reasons. These, however, are extraneous to idealism as a proactive philosophical enterprise. Equally telling, I suggest, are developments that took place within idealism itself. I propose here to explore some of these developments, particularly as they gained critical momentum in Royce's masterwork, *The World and the Individual,* an essay in two volumes given originally as the Gifford Lectures.[1]

The thrust of this rethinking is retrospective. I begin, however, by introducing a second retrospective element, namely Royce's own late reappropriation in 1916 of his earlier work during the last year of his life. This reappropriation took the form of the final Philosophy 9 course that Royce was to give, bearing the simple but bold title, "Metaphysics."[2] In this course, *The World and the Individual* is extensively quoted. But this is not simply a

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1. Josiah Royce, *The World and the Individual,* 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1899, 1901; rpt. Dover, 1959); hereafter cited as "WI."

2. Royce, *Metaphysics,* ed. W. E. Hocking, R. Hocking, and F. Oppenheim (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998); hereafter cited as "M."

matter of Royce's self-exposition. Within the framework of reaffirmation a fundamental development takes place. Royce continued to be challenged in his formulations by the catalyst offered by his contemporaries. In his later years, Royce was able to add to his earlier idealist and pragmatist influences a host of further concerns ranging from Perry's "egocentric predicament" to the so-called new realism of Russell.

In the midst of this, Royce continued to hold fast to his essential commitments. Most especially, Royce remained true to the ontological schema of absolute idealism that was developed in his earlier work, which we will explore shortly. In the 1916 lectures, however, there are also some arresting formulations that seem to mark a departure certainly in exposition if not in underlying theme. These divergences, I propose, signal a decisive moment in the destiny of idealism in America.

I illustrate this point by means of two quotations, given first without context or comment. (1) "To be is to signify something" (M, 269). (2) "The question of metaphysics is the question of the sense in which statements [propositions] are true" (M, 262). I shall return to these matters at the end of our discussion. In the meantime, we must develop Royce's earlier classification of metaphysical positions, or ontologies, into his famous Four Conceptions of Being. This is the most distinctive work of *The World and the Individual.*

I. The Crisis Leading to Royce's Four Conceptions of Being

By the year 1899, when Royce gave the first of his Gifford Lectures, he had already weathered his first crisis as an idealist. His beginnings were innocuous enough, his youthful experiment with skepticism having been supplanted by the absolute or concrete idealism of Hegel. This accorded well with his growing interest in natural religion. Guided by his onetime teacher LeConte, he began to flesh out the implications of a still somewhat romantic conception of natural process conceived in relation to an inspiriting power he did not blush to call the Absolute.

Just as everything seemed to be coming together for him, Royce had been left reeling by a crisp exchange in Berkeley with the American philosopher George Holmes Howison, an idealist of the critical-moral-transcendental variety. For Royce the harvest of this encounter was a sharpened perception of the need to account for the role of the individual within the framework of the kind of idealism that he had come to champion. The Gifford Lectures became the proving ground for Royce's revisions as well as some new initiatives. He sought to develop an idealism supple enough to accommodate the degree of autonomy of the individual necessary

to support moral judgments without losing the capacity to speak in terms of larger units of integration, purposiveness, and meaning, the very largest of which he understood to be deity itself.

While Royce did not believe that he would have to abandon the essential commitments of his idealism, he did recognize the need, at a minimum, for a thorough review of the grounds of his position. Thus began an effort to rethink the question of the ultimate ontological basis for philosophical belief. Royce needed to situate his new thinking in a framework that would allow his solutions to emerge into clear relief: clear in themselves, and clear also as against paths not taken. It was in this context that Royce came up with his characterization of the "Four Conceptions of Being," his own being the fourth.

Briefly, the conceptions may be named as follows: (1) realism, (2) mysticism, (3) critical rationalism, and (4) concrete idealism. Royce's intention was to show initially how the first three positions fail, and, secondly, how the fourth position succeeds on its own merits while at the same time answering to the nisus implicit in the first three formulations.

II. The First Conception: Realism

Let us turn first to the doctrine called realism. For Royce this designates a philosophical commitment to the premise that reality, whatever it turns out to be, must be grounded independently of any idea or experience of it. As Royce puts it, "the real . . . is in one sense given, or immediate, just because no knowing process . . . creates, affects, or otherwise mediates the known real object" (WI1, 67).

The hallmark of realism thus is epistemic separation, initially the asserted difference between knower and known. But by virtue of a projection, this separation is also imputed to the world at large. Distinctness is then grasped as essential to the being of all that is. In realism, this being is hypostatized as independent of the meaning through which it is grasped. A specific act of self-denial or inversion in the meaning process itself is required to effect a salutary relation to what is meant. With no act of deliberation or conscious awareness of what has been done, meaning itself has thereby been exiled to a status that Royce will call "external."

The basic conviction of the realist is grounded in the need to acknowledge the autonomy of the external world. The practical consequence of this, and also its proof, is taken to be the fact that it is not the world that must adapt to me, but I who must adapt to it. As Royce remarks, "Realism asserts that mere knowledge of any being by any one who is not himself the being known 'makes no difference whatever' to that known Being" (WI1, 93).

Nevertheless, Royce points out, the knower can never be completely erased, and will therefore always be a fly in the ointment of realism. As an ontological consequence, this cannot stop short of implying absolute dualism (WI1, 143). And this, of course, is decidedly not the desired result.

The overcoming of realism, for Royce, involves getting the thinker to take a greater measure of self-responsibility, extending also to the way the world is construed and how the meaning of being itself is grasped. In a way this entails reaching back into a kind of individuality of a different order, an order that in fact has moral connotations. This is the individuality I experience in my own sense of self-direction and orientation to the world. By taking responsibility at this level, I abjure the notion that the world comes ready-made and pre-partitioned, waiting only to be known, and present in a way that absolves me of any responsibility for it.

In his final diagnosis of realism, Royce's conclusion is that something more than epistemic exigencies are actually afoot. The real interests are extra-philosophical. To make a long story short, realism boils down to "an interpretation of the folklore of being in the interests of a social conservatism" (WI1, 74).

III. The Second Conception: Mysticism

The Second Conception of Being is that of mysticism. Now Royce readily acknowledges that certainly not all, and perhaps very few, mystics are actually philosophers: "Mysticism as a mere doctrine for edification, is indeed no philosophy," he writes. But he hastens to add, "Yet a philosophy has been based upon it" (WI1, 77). It is this hasty addition that provides Royce the inroad into his somewhat complex relation to the mystical, a relation that will be both appropriative and critical.

Admittedly Royce's preparation in the area of mysticism was modest at best. In readying for his lectures, he chose to review primarily the *Upanishads,* certain parts of which he discusses in some detail. Presumably priority is assigned to this text because of Royce's impression that it was the first significant effort of its kind. In addition, he seemed to have at least passing acquaintance with Meister Eckhardt and Angelus Silesius. The rest of Royce's conception was filled out by the shards of "mystical influence" found in metaphysical thinkers as diverse as Aquinas and Spinoza.

Mysticism, Royce claims, is too often misunderstood as amounting to little more than a nebulous attitude, or an attitude toward the nebulous, a vaporous orientation to a "voiceless and incomprehensible Absolute" (WI1, 79). To think of it in this way, however, is to misunderstand its real significance. Instead, Royce believes that "the true historical importance of

mysticism lies not in the subject to which it applied the predicate real, but in the view it holds of the fundamental meaning of that very ontological predicate itself" (WI1, 80).

The meaning of being, as Royce discovers it in mysticism, he describes by employing an Hegelian term: pure *immediacy.* Thus "Mysticism consists in asserting that to be means, simply and wholly, to be *immediate* . . ." (WI1, 80). Now, after Hegel, to be immediate means "not to have been mediated," while to be mediated means to have been worked upon by the operation of thought. Therefore it follows that, as Royce says, "[the mystic] gets his reality not by thinking, but by consulting the data of experience" (WI1, 81).

Now of course the data of experience, unmediated by thought, are indeed somewhat nebulous. Certainly one cannot make with respect to them any synoptic or synthetic claims purporting to describe the world at large. That description is a highly mediated concept, perhaps the most of all. By contrast, Royce finds the mystic thrust radically back upon the self. So far Royce is on safe ground. But next comes his fateful move: He generates, on behalf of the mystic, an argument. The argument functions as a refutation of realism. As a refutation, it has cognitive or mediational value. Its result, therefore, is something purporting to be known. And, according to Royce, what the mystic purports to know is simply that, in his words, "the real cannot be wholly independent of knowledge" (WI1, 189). Not only is this monism with a vengeance—that is, absolute monism—it is *subjective* monism (WI1, 158). Having come this far, Royce feels emboldened to press on to his larger conclusion: "Mysticism . . . seeks Being within the very life of the knowing process" (WI1, 179). No reference whatever can now be made to mysticism as a way of unknowing.

Thus, for Royce, the ultimate import of mysticism is indeed a cognitive thesis about what is real, about being. As merely immediate, however, it is a failed thesis. This is easily demonstrated by showing how any extension of the thetic implications of its passive monism takes it abroad into the plenum, where it is powerless to function in any articulate way under the terms of its premise. It is therefore no less oriented to the nothing, no less a nihilism, than is realism. Nevertheless, because it is honest with itself about this result, mysticism has a fundamental advantage over realism.

I find this to be a revealing point. In fact, much of Royce's expository strategy is invested in employing mysticism to dispatch realism. One almost senses an obsession here. Over and over again in his discussion of mysticism, Royce begins a paragraph with a mystical formulation only to end it with yet another point that counts against realism. The object seems to be to transfer all funds from the realist's account, leaving the realist with no viable

currency. As just one example: "The mystic," Royce declares, ". . . is the only thoroughgoing empiricist" (WI1, 83).

This prepares the way for Royce's final assessment. His view is that, while realism aspires to an ultimate meaning that is purely extrinsic, mysticism settles on purely intrinsic meaning. Dialectically, this works out beautifully. He writes: "In fine, mysticism is, as a conception of Being, the logically precise and symmetrical correspondent of realism. In its inner-most conception it is the mirror picture, so to speak, of its opponent" (WI1, 179).

Whether this represents a forced conclusion in relation to mysticism in particular, we shall have to see. At this point it is sufficient to say that for Royce's purposes both realism and mysticism are analogously flawed: "each doctrine, pursued to the end, culminates in a passive abandonment of all our actual ideas about Being as vain . . . Both end in a *reductio ad absurdum* of every definite finite idea of the real" (WI1, 180).

IV. The Third Conception: Critical Rationalism

The Third Conception of Being Royce has dubbed "critical rationalism." This position has moved away from the twin immediacies of information and inspiration, realism and mysticism. In this conception of being, it is functionally recognized that the reality with which we are engaged is not available apart from our engagement with it. It is pointless to pine after experience in the pure case: We are simply better informed when we have probed, tested, and analyzed our experience than when we leave it undisturbed in an imagined pristine state.

For critical rationalism, however, the key notion is that the knowing process cannot be arbitrary. Everything is centered around the concept of validity. Validity itself, then, becomes an ontological criterion. But it takes more than passive reception of data to achieve validation. Strategies of hypothesis and verification must be devised, and these require imagination. Royce writes in summation, "Plainly, then, the realm of Validity has a good many persuasively ontological characters. When we enter it, we need not come as sceptics or as mere victims of fantasy. What we there learn is that constructive imagination has its own rigid and objective constitution, precisely in so far as its processes unite freedom with clear consciousness" (WI1, 226).

Royce then proceeds to consider historical examples of philosophies that fall broadly within this Third Conception of Being. We will not tarry over this treatment, other than to note that the category is extraordinarily broad, and encompasses the potential for much cognitive dissonance. Kant is featured alongside Mill, and Descartes is left to contend with Augustine,

Anselm, and Thomas Aquinas as well as a cadre of empiricists. Clearly the identification of an ontological conception common to such diverse philosophies does not by itself serve to mediate their disputations. And Royce himself returned to these regions repeatedly in later life, not only to slay the odd dragon, but to collect an occasional nugget as well. Nevertheless, on the whole his overall estimate remains intact, and this conception as a whole remains marked for elimination.

V. The Fourth Conception: Royce's View

The fourth way attempts to bring into harmony the essential *motives* of the other three (WI1, 386). The fourth, of course, is Royce's own brand of absolute idealism. In one formulation, Royce gives this conception in terms of the following criterion: "That is real which finally presents in a completed experience the whole meaning of a System of Ideas" (WI1, 61). This is a good basic statement to the epistemological community, redolent perhaps of the coherence theory of truth as pointing to the limiting condition of epistemology itself. But Royce is attempting an *ontology* that requires that the question of the ground of the possible completeness be asked. And here the *Grundfrage* breaks immediately into two possible interpretations. The task of the fourth way will be to reconcile these interpretations.

The first interpretation that suggests itself pertains directly to what is required to think a meaningful holism. Royce writes, "All appearance of isolation in finite beings, all the fragmentariness of their finitude, these are indeed but aspects of whole truth. The One is in all, and all are in the One. All meanings, if completely developed, unite in one meaning, and this it is which the real world expresses" (WI1, 394).

This suggests, in effect, a God's eye view of the meaning of being. Nor does Royce himself shy away from the implications of this conclusion. He continues, "God is the Absolute Being, and the perfect fulness of life. Only God, when thus viewed, is not other than his world, but is the very life of the world taken in its wholeness as a single conscious and self-possessed life. In God we live and move and have our Being" (WI1, 394–95).

But this is only half of the story. In tension with the above, Royce finds that the Fourth Conception also appeals to the self of each individual thinker *as* an individual. To be sure, he confesses to a certain imponderability in the notion of individuality. Of particular difficulty is the principle of distanciation between selves. But that this individuality is a central factor with which his ontology must come to grips is never doubted. Thus, he writes, "however mysterious may be the difference between you and me, we are . . . such . . . different beings, that the unity of Being must find room for our variety.

Above all, our ethical freedom . . . [our] moral independence of one another, must be preserved" (WI1, 395).

Yet for Royce the problem of the individual does not end here. The irreducibility of individual interests forces Royce to the most radical break with the tradition of German idealism he was ever to contemplate. This is the break with the idealized concept of nature itself. The ontological irreducibility of the human person suggests to Royce that such a person may not be conceived as either embedded in or emergent from a nature specifically conceived to allow for this purpose. In consequence, he concludes that "an idealist to-day must be unwilling to talk of nature as coming for the first time to self-consciousness in man" (WI1, 416). And again: "our Idealism will undertake to explain the unity of the world, without becoming, upon that account, merely anthropocentric in its accounts of nature" (WI1, 417).

With this emerging conception of the individual set over and against his still radical holism, Royce has thus far only succeeded in heightening the tension between the two interpretations of the Fourth Conception. Any solution, if it fails, faces the prospect of a dissolution of the whole idealist program.

Royce needs to provide an answer to the problem of external versus internal meaning. Pure externality, or realism, is no more satisfactory than pure internality, or mysticism. Critical rationalism has failed to achieve a stable rapprochement. While a convergence is fundamental to the fourth way, this will have to be more than a premised act of bringing them together while holding them apart. We must discover a unity of intrinsic and extrinsic meaning that is genuinely ontological.

Royce finds the prospect for this union in the irreducible role of *will*. For one thing, he finds this will, when experienced in its distraught form as discontent, is the ultimate ground of the rejection of fragmentary meaning. We experience the drive to fulfillment of meaning as a fulfillment in life itself, as compelling an instinct as we have. The kind of meaning that Royce has in mind is one that one navigates not by will alone, but by will coupled with informed representational cognition.

To be sure, the central role of will had long been suspected even among the critical rationalists, who co-opted its function by yoking it to the role of judgment in propositions that make a claim to truth. But here everything depended on the adequacy of the cognitive representation in relation to which the will, though active in its assent, is passive in its reception. The possibility of truth uniquely discoverable through will alone is broadly neglected, and for Royce this neglect lies at the very heart of the need for the transition to the Fourth Conception.

The motif central to this new concept of being is that of active engagement with others in the world. For Royce, the world itself *is* the fulfillment of purpose (WI1, 459–61). If this seems to court mere subjectivism, consider this: Purpose itself, even when it is our own, can be a very inscrutable thing. To speak with Kant, there is a noumenality to purpose that is no less than that of things themselves. Royce adds only that things themselves, and other selves, too, are always and everywhere encountered in the light of some present purpose.

This holds true even if the purpose is as barren as that of simply encountering something, as it would be for the pure epistemologist, if such a person existed. But here is the decisive point: *My* purposes, as I come to experience and clarify them in the context of living my life, are already inextricably interwoven with my sense of *your* purposes. This, in turn, creates a mutually convergent awareness of the world as a matrix of possible resistances to, as well as fulfillment of, all present purposes.

Thus there is not a perfect coordination here, self to self and self to world, but the situation is such that any discordance is experienced precisely as discordant purposiveness. My very sense of myself as an isolated entity may even be said to be rooted in the fragmentary set of perspectives deriving from this primordial experience of discordance. But then my sense of separation is precisely something wanting to be healed, a primordial wound that purposiveness itself purposes to make whole.

If we expand this ground of ontological unity to the level of the whole species, we reach the measure of what Royce calls his "social conception of reality." With respect to this he writes:

> In the form of finite social intercourse, amongst human beings, we find exemplified a type of unity in variety, and of variety recalling us always to the recognition of unity. . . . The social life finds room for the most various sorts of mutual estrangement, conflict, and misunderstanding amongst finite beings; while, on the other hand, every form of social intercourse implies an ultimate unity of meaning, a real connectedness of inner life, which is precisely of the type that you can best hope to explain in terms of our Fourth Conception of Being. (WI1, 416–17)

We find that we can speak like Hegel here: At the level of meaning, the division between the external and the internal falls within the internal, so long as the internal in the second sense is properly construed. To construe it properly is to think meaning as intrinsically coordinated by and through the

dynamics of its purposive enactments. There is a strong sense, then, in which the fourth way features a conception of being such that no *deep* construal of it may rest upon a fait accompli, but must regard it as a *task*. We could express the matter this way: The truth of the human situation lies in the conditions of possible activity and is available to inspection only through the very activity that reveals these conditions. We thus confess a strongly pragmatic effect. But upon one supplementary point Royce remains clear: Pragmatism itself ontologically rests upon an ideal of completion that, if shorn from its self-conception, would undermine the whole integrity of the enterprise.

The proof of this lies in the nature of the higher tasks Royce conceives to be faced by humanity. Beyond the questions of the exigencies of survival and satisfaction of appetite lies the question of the purpose of life itself. To face this issue alone, provided only with one's pauper's share of hope, is to face the near certainty of despair. Royce therefore insists upon the necessity for a higher-order resolution of purposiveness capable of functioning in a kind of ontologically prismatic role with respect to individuals. Thus we might come to think of ourselves as meaningful not only in an isolated sense, but as citizens of a higher realm, and only thence as participants in the drama of creation itself.

VI. The Purposes of Persons as Ontologically Generative

This commitment involves Royce in the conception of an organic social bond that has ontological status, registered at the level of essential personhood. Because Royce conceives this personhood in a fundamentally active way, and its essence as something that is generated from this very activity, the organic social bond itself is still a "work in progress." The point is that human concourse is itself ontologically generative. A word needs to be said about the dynamics of this generation.

There is a sense in which Royce's Fourth Conception implies the preexistence of the kind of unity of which he speaks. For better or worse, my acts and yours are inextricably interwoven in their energistic effects, regardless of what we intend or choose to think about them. Writ large, then, we could say that the whole of humanity and, in a somewhat different way, nature, too, comprise a kind of energy matrix or complex. With reference to nature, however, Royce thinks our encounter with it cannot get past the role of a system of possible resistances to some set of possible purposes. Ultimate mutuality is not possible here, and thus the kind of meaning invoked will never be able to shed its extrinsicality.

But at the level of mutuality that may be grounded in conscious

acceptance, the matter is quite different. To share a purpose with another person is to efface the boundaries of separateness and expand the horizon of intrinsic meaning. Something more by way of integration of meaning is thus possible. And now a remarkable consequence arises: Two converging meanings mutually empower each other, creating a matrix of mutuality that holds out possibilities for further conscious intention and engagement, giving rise to a configuration of meaning that is larger than the sum of the parts. This is a complex not just of energy but of consciousness, a generative array of intelligence that can continue to serve as a resource from which further intelligent purposes may be drawn and an altar at which future purposes may be dedicated. Instead of a simple social energy complex, therefore, we have the beginnings of what may be called, to lend a little terminology, a social memory complex.

VII. In Praise of Idealism

It hardly needs to be pointed out that such a conception as this would hardly be taken as self-evident or established in our own time. And this is true despite Royce's best efforts at further thematic development, in important later works like his *Philosophy of Loyalty* and *The Problem of Christianity.* For some of us, this constitutes idealism at its best. But, as we have said, idealism is now dead. I, however, come not to bury idealism but to praise it. To praise it in our time we must move past the place Royce left it. This inevitably means we must efface Royce. In American idealism, however, to peel away a layer of Royce is to find—another layer of Royce.

So this is where I will conclude these reflections. Royce's fourth conception, I maintain, clearly contains elements suggestive of mysticism. But because of his particular understanding of the mystical, Royce cannot fully acknowledge the continued importance of this dimension for his own thought. Instead, the properly mystical dimension, namely that of higher-order purposive unities, is taken up as something already subsumed to the function of discursive thought. As such, it is conceived in a state of dialectical tension with realism, its mirror image.[3]

Meanwhile, Royce's later discursivity is less proactive, less dialectical and, as it were, less *phenomenological* while being more oriented to problem solving. His approach continues to have its strengths and weaknesses. On the

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3. For a thorough treatment of this point, see Randall Auxier's essay, "Mysticism and the Immediacy of God: Howison's and Hocking's Critique of Royce" in this issue of *PF.*

positive side, the hypothesized unity with the Absolute is not something presupposed as being merely *logically* with us from the beginning, something to which we have merely abstract access. It is, rather, something lying at the heart of the question of meaning in the deepest sense: namely, the solution to the *problem of extrinsic meaning.* Just how deep or how full or how meaningful this meaning becomes is not prejudged by any epistemic criterion presupposed at the outset. The relation to the Absolute is therefore in Royce free in a sense that is unthinkable in, for example, Hegel.[4] Royce has the opportunity to see in this freedom the most central function not only of the cognitive but of the mystical life. He has the opportunity to see mysticism itself not as nihilistic acquiescence in all-embracing unity but as active self-transformation working directly with will. But he does not. The doctrine of absolute unity is something he argues for as a strictly "rational" conclusion, epistemically grounded in a certain problematic that, in the process of being argued, attains a kind of spurious closure. Royce is prepared to take on all comers. Many of his problems, and the problems of idealism, I believe, stem from this.

VIII. Conclusion: The Destiny of Idealism

I would like now to return to the two statements quoted at the beginning of our discussion. These, again, were as follows: (1) "To be is to signify something" (M, 269); and (2) "The question of metaphysics is the question of the sense in which statements [propositions] are true" (M, 262).

Let us reflect upon these remarks. If "to be" is to signify something, and the question of being is to be referred to the issue of truth of the proposition, we have certainly pared the claim idealism may have upon us down to a bare minimum. These formulations are refined and limited in such fashion as might fit neatly into an analytical discussion of competing theories of truth within a propositional calculus. Truth, it might be said, is necessarily a function of the operation of the calculus in toto. It is not, therefore, to be assigned to some extraneous source out beyond the realm of the calculus itself. It is not something grounded in a putative reality beyond the reach of what is already significant. It is, in short, still something *ideal* in Royce's conception of that term.

But how far we have come from the Royce who felt the warm breath of the Absolute on his neck!

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4. For a thorough treatment of this point, see the essay by Gary Cesarz, "A World of Difference," in this issue of the *PF.*

Now I, for one, do not believe that Royce had any intention of abandoning the Absolute, or leaving it forlorn and undefended. To him, the proposition that the truth is in the proposition is no concession at all. For the biggest and fullest proposition is always to be found in the mind of God. But Royce did allow himself to be driven into a small and largely epitemologized corner in defense of his idealism, particularly as against the new realism he confronted. To be sure, this is not without its reasons. Realists like Bertrand Russell did not resemble the "social conservatives" Royce had earlier taken all realists to be. One does have to ask, however, whether in making accommodation to the particulars of new movements, Royce did not allow himself to be moved off center from his deepest and most sustaining inspiration.

Listen, finally, to two more proclamations dating from his 1916 metaphysics course: (3) "The whole intention with which we approach our idealism is the intention to be as realistic as we can" (M, 255); and (4) "This world is of course monistic *and also* pluralistic" (M, 270; emphasis added). I do not believe the younger Royce would make any accommodation to realism at all; he would have thought it a moral failing. But most telling of all is the final quotation, and in the small phrase "and also": "The world is of course monistic and also pluralistic." In younger years, before he was beaten down by the relentless assault of the world, would Royce not have said something else? Would he not have said that the world is monistic *and therefore* pluralistic? Sometimes it is with regard to just such small things that big concessions are made.

In my reading of the situation, however, the ground for the shift in Royce's center was prepared much earlier, in fact in the Gifford Lectures themselves. Or rather, one might say that the ground was in fact *not* prepared, and this is the problem. The account of mysticism from the beginning constitutes a weak link. And this is not because it is a sign of weakness to draw upon the mystical. On the contrary, I believe this dimension to be Royce's greatest strength. The difficulty is that he did not find a way to maintain it as a resource. Once Royce had gleaned the inspiration for his absolute monism, he proceeded to circumscribe the mystical within unnecessarily narrow limits. As I have argued, the reasons for this in reality have more to do with his strategy for refuting realism than they do with the mystical itself.

In *The World and the Individual,* we find the following remark as Royce describes how the mystic sees the world: "The world is One—why? *Because I feel it as one* . . . I myself, in my inmost heart, in my soul, am the world-principle, the All" (WI1, 158).

Although this statement is attributed to the Hindu mystic, Royce himself holds it no less true. The gap that emerges between the Hindu's subjective idealism and Royce's concrete idealism comes later. In particular, the gap pertains, in the terms of the Gifford Lectures, to individuality. But in the actual course of Royce's thought, Royce himself is able to find a higher order of individuality in the consanguinity of the species, not just of the flesh, but of consciousness. This may be Royce's greatest contribution. But how much does one hear of it in our time? How could this conception fail to have been helped rather than hurt by a philosophical view in which the thinker is allowed to reach to an ideal as yet unsupported by a conceptual infrastructure seeming to suggest it as a necessity?

But in order to achieve this, a rethinking of the category of the mystical would be necessary. This would be a worthy undertaking in the interests of securing for Royce his most salient thought, namely, the "general place of personality in the universe" (WI2, 418).