

The Appreciation of Natural Beings and the Finitude of Consciousness

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The highest that we can attain is not Knowledge, but Sympathy with Intelligence.

—Henry David Thoreau

The year 2000–2001 marks centennial of the Second Series of Josiah Royce's Gifford Lectures, entitled *The World and The Individual*.¹ The published version of the whole lecture series is divided along traditional lines: volume 1 (or the "First Series") presents his massive articulation of a general theory of being that takes as its point of departure the "Four Historical Conceptions of Being." In this volume we encounter at great length his teleological and social theory of being. Volume 2 (or the "Second Series") is a treatment of special fields of being: knowledge, nature, self, the moral world, and God. While the first series of lectures continues to provide impetus to Royce studies, the second series has been relatively neglected. The social theory of being in volume 1 invites comparison with his later thought, in particular his developing and maturing sense of religion, community, and God in works like *The Problem of Christianity* and his recently published *Metaphysics*. However, the extension of his idealism in the second series into domains such as epistemology and nature philosophy has been treated marginally if at all in the literature. I would like to offer a reading of what I call Royce's "social philosophy of nature" as it is developed in this second series of lectures and specifically as it addresses the issue of the possibility of social contact and communication with natural beings.

The use of the term "social" above is meant to indicate not so much the

1. Josiah Royce, *The World and the Individual*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1899, 1901); hereafter cited as "WI1" and "WI2."

shared experience of nature among ourselves, which to Royce's mind is an epistemological issue, but refers rather to our appreciative, interactive, and possibly communicative relations with natural beings *as other minds*—a metaphysical issue. This appreciative and speculative dimension of Royce's idealism suggests that not only do we share the character of mind with our fellow natural beings but that we should also treat them as ends in themselves rather than means to our own ends; for Royce holds that all conscious beings are ethical and rational beings and, hence, deserving of our moral respect.

My interest in Royce's vision of nature is partly due to the fact that he does not offer us a wholly traditional view of nature as commodity or resource, nor is nature portrayed solely as a setting or stage for the moral play of human beings. On the contrary, Royce offers us a vision of living conscious meaningful nature, whose remove from us, such as it is, is really only an illusion we need not suffer. In fact, Royce insists that we *can* and *should* come to view natural beings as fellow conscious beings, beings endowed with selfhood and intelligence. From this I think some very obvious conclusions can be drawn. I wish to state these conclusions up front so that readers may know why this speculative theory of nature is of interest.

Insofar as Royce characterizes nature as replete with finite conscious beings other than human beings, human interest and motivation is not the only legitimate interest in and with the natural world. According to Royce, nature is the expression of mental life such that individual natural beings have internal meaning and, therefore, conscious unity of purpose and drive to fulfill ideals. Given that nature-life is extended in time and struggles as we do to realize purpose, then natural beings have an undeniable right to express themselves and not be harnessed and transformed into commodities to service human meanings and their fetishes—even if that is *our way* of expressing meaning. In addition, if nature is comprised of fellow conscious beings, then the destruction of a species and the harnessing of "natural wonders" for our own purposes may be a form of genocide and slavery, even if on a cosmological scale.

This is not to say that Royce does not recognize the tendency towards the "mastery of nature" and after a fashion *promote* the pragmatic manipulation of nature as a resource for human ends; nevertheless, the *possibility* of treating natural beings as ends rather than means is suggested by his social philosophy of nature. He even goes so far as to assert that we need to "unlearn that atrocious Philistinism of our whole race which supposes that Nature has no worthier goal than producing a man" (WI2, 231). Further, he remarks that we have something to learn from "the countless communica-

tions that we receive from our brethren of all grades, and of all time-spans" (WI2, 231–32). More, natural beings too have ideal and even "ethical rationality" (WI2, 232). Royce even dares to surpass his own egalitarian vision of social nature by suggesting that beings of other consciousness and time spans different from our own "whose rationality, whose dignity, whose significance, whose power to will, whose aptness to pursue ideals, might be equal to or far above our own without any relation to whether the appearance of this consciousness, in the facts of outer Nature, seemed to us like an inorganic process or not" (WI2, 228). If it is the case that natural beings are fellow conscious beings with dignity, significance, will, ideality, then we human beings are morally accountable to nature just as we are to one another. The thesis that we are morally accountable to nature in the sense I am suggesting is not a doctrine that one finds fully articulated in *The World and The Individual*. It is not a proto-environmental text. The obvious and irrevocable destruction of the natural world was just beginning to register in Royce's day, and it is by no means obvious that it was registering with Royce. Nonetheless, he does offer us a vision of nature where natural beings are characterized as in themselves full of life, meaning, and purpose and not simply in relation to our own presence and purposes.

Contrary to the prevailing dualism of modern philosophy that asserts that nature is essentially cleaved into mind and matter, Royce offers us a vision of man and nature as grounded in a whole that is social and ultimately one. By extending his general theory of being to the special field of philosophy of nature, the original nature of being shows us the intrinsic relatedness of man and nature, the community of human beings and natural beings. According to Royce, the doctrine of evolution, when seen in the light of his social theory of being, shows us that man and nature are not only related on a continuum of internal relations (each exhibiting self-similar phenomena and behavior) but that the course of being per se and, thereby, the course of nature is moving towards a kind of "universal Sociology."² Herein lies the possibility of meaningful contact and, ultimately, communication between natural beings and human beings. This possibility, I assert, necessitates that we review our relations with natural beings and in particular reassess these relations in terms of the appreciative categories of respect and sympathy.

Given the idea that natural beings and human beings are part and parcel of the same community (that is, the community of nature) and spring from

2. Josiah Royce, *Studies of Good and Evil* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1898), 206; hereafter cited as "SGE."

the same social origin (being), Royce perceives a curious limitation in the finitude of human beings: a limitation in our temporal conscious span. This limitation, says Royce, prevents us from realizing our deep social relations with nature and consequently prevents us from appreciating the inner lives of natural beings. I raise two questions: Just what is this limitation, and can we transcend it? This is to ask whether we can extend our appreciation of natural beings such as to transpose our selves beyond this boundary, perhaps achieving, if not communication and community with nature, then at least an appreciative sympathy. I think it a curious tension in Royce's view that the grounding of beings in social being should produce in those beings a limitation in communicative appreciation.

I proceed then to the thesis that natural beings are fellow self-conscious beings. In *The World and the Individual*, Royce characterizes natural beings as not only social but as having conscious minds, and these minds are said to be reaching out through time with purpose, significance, and, above all, selfhood. "All life, everywhere," he writes, "in so far as it is life, has conscious meaning, and accomplishes a rational end" (WI2, 240). He holds this to be a consequence of his idealism and explicitly suggests that to the extent that nature is the expression of mental life, it must have internal meaning and hence conscious unity of purpose. When we encounter a natural being, organic or inorganic, we are beholding not a lifeless or unconscious being but a self or the fragment of Self. In his 1898 paper "Self-consciousness, Social Consciousness and Nature," he writes, "We ought not to speak of dead nature. We have only a right to speak of uncommunicative nature. Natural objects, if they are real at all, are *prima facie* simply other finite beings, who are so to speak, not in our own social set, and who communicate to us, not their mind, but their presence" (SGE, 230). The very *presence* of natural beings indicates to us that they are minds, even if they do not give us verbal clues. The interior mental life of animals, for example, while not manifest to us, is "a fragment and a hint of a larger rationality which gets fuller expression in the evolution of the species or genus or order, or other relative whole of animal existence" (WI2, 241). What we see is "a temporally brief section of a person, whose time span of consciousness is far longer than ours . . ." (WI2, 232). Further, Royce even asks us to consider that an inorganic process, such as we might encounter through the study of geology,

would be a finite experience of an extremely august temporal span, so that a material region of the inorganic world would be to us the phenomenal sign of the presence of at least one fellow creature who

took, perhaps, a billion years to complete a moment of his consciousness, so that where we saw, in the signs given us of his presence only monotonous permanence of fact, he, in his inner life faced momentarily significant change. (WI2, 228)

To such a geological being, the formation of the Niagara gorge or the Grand Canyon would be instantaneous and grasped for that being as a mere "Present." The idea here is that all beings, whatever their natural manifestation may be, are conscious minds spread out through time. The difference is a difference not in rationality but in what Royce calls "conscious span" or "time span." Natural beings have "Selfhood," are "Persons," that have inner lives and communicate this, even if in a limited way, through the very act of their presence. It is the span of this presence and its accompanying gestures that offer us the prospect of deepening our relationships with "our brethren of all grades, and of all time-spans" (WI2, 232).

The problem is that we human beings do not respond to the selfhood of natural beings; our own consciousness is not adapted to appreciate the temporal-mental stretch characteristic of most organic and inorganic beings and their processes. In fact, the appearance, to our common sense, of a radical separation between mind and matter is owing to a limitation in our own temporal conscious span. In the introduction to *Studies of Good and Evil*, Royce writes, "My own thesis is that the mere removal of this one limitation would in and of itself involve a lifting of the veil that is proverbially said to 'hide' reality. . . . The 'separation' exists in truth only as a certain characteristic limitation of conscious span . . ." (SGE, xii).

For our purposes, the temporal limitation implies at least three things: (1) that we human beings are unable to appreciate the majority of natural beings as conscious beings, although this limitation may not be absolute; (2) the conscious span and temporal rate of most natural beings is such that they, as natural beings, are either too slow or too fast for us to grasp; and this suggests that (3) most beings of nature are not self-conscious rational beings within the same time span that we are. The nature of time is such that there are dimensions of time, or what Royce calls "time-spans," in which we function and with which we involve ourselves in our dealings with nature. What we witness when we encounter and engage a fellow natural being is the fragment of a self, a moment in the conscious life of a self, a slice or phase of consciousness better witnessed by considering the life span of the species rather than this or that individual (WI2, 241).

Is this not a curious and inviting metaphysical doctrine? The plants and animals, the mountains and rivers that we encounter are conscious beings,

beings with psychic interior lives and ethical dignity whose modes of self-consciousness and selfhood are such as to be stretched out over untold eons, or, per chance, miniscule moments. How might we communicate with these fellow selves? How can we become more involved in their temporal regions? Ultimately, how can we transcend our own finitude and make contact?

From the preceding analysis, it is manifest that Royce's theory of time is intimately bound up with his philosophy of nature. Since the time of Aristotle, at least, time has been treated as part of subject matter of nature studies and generally associated in one way or another with a concomitant theory of motion. While this also characterizes Royce's thought, Royce treats motion as a subject matter better left in the world of description and in the hands of science. Time, on the other hand, belongs to the qualitative world of emotion and appreciation, as it is so germane to our sense of selfhood and is the medium in which, or through which, we strive to realize our goals. For my present purposes, however, I will consider his vision of time only insofar as it characterizes the nature of temporal span in the relation of our selves to our fellow natural beings and how their temporal span stands into relation to us.

The meeting of time and motion is always a tangled issue, and Royce's thought is no exception to this rule.³ Let the following suffice to exhibit its character in this context. Royce considers four types of motion, or processes, characteristic of natural beings and human beings that suggest a continuum of internal and, by hypothesis, interdependent relations among them. (WI2, 219–23). The first is the presence of irreversible processes. Not only do humans, plants, and animals grow old, but mountain gorges once worn can not be refilled, ecosystems once fully destroyed can never return; the natural world passes through stages of generation, growth, and decay, and it witnesses construction and destruction. In short, Royce writes, "energy passes from available to unavailable forms," and there is a "tendency of matter to pass through similarly irreversible series of changing configurations" (WI2, 216). The irreversibility of time and motion links them at a considerable metaphysical depth inasmuch as both are subject to a permanent kind of

3. This problem will continue to haunt everything I say. The interaction of time and motion, the merging of qualitative life with quantitative description, the pivotal polarities of the world of appreciation and the world of description, and ultimately the presence in Royce's thought of a value-fact dehiscence are all germane to the issue of contact with natural beings. Royce's conception of motion and change and how these are related to time, at least in *The World and the Individual*, is at best ambiguous.

change.

The second shared characteristic is that of communication. Royce points to the tendency of one part of nature to "influence" another part by drawing an analogy between the way "minds tend, in social intercourse, to be influenced by other minds," the way in which ideas "tend to assimilate other ideas," and how this is like the phenomena of nature described as "wave-movements" (WI2, 220). The self-similar and self-same repetition of waves through the natural world invites one to consider self-manifesting patterns characteristic of both natural beings and human beings. For not only do ideas influence and assimilate other similar ideas and spread wavelike throughout the community and the generations, but even the continuance of the same self through time shows a kind of repetition. And time itself, insofar as it is conceived as a dynamic whole consisting of past, present, and future, tends to show this same temporal configuration throughout its flux. Consider also the forms of nature that not only repeat as species through time, as when we observe that oaks produce oaks (self-sameness), but also the way in which these beings maintain themselves through change, as when the same tree produces many self-similar leaves and does this year in and year out. According to Royce, both what we recognize as the stable characteristics of selfhood, such as habits, and what we observe as "rhythms of nature," such as foliation, seasonality, and the planetary orbits, are at bottom showing us the same phenomenon. In both cases, the motions of natural beings and that of human beings show shared and hence universal characteristics. The coevolution of natural beings and human beings is the same evolution, undergoing the same motions. But these motions themselves only show us lines of continuity and similarity. No matter what internal relations are exhibited by the confluence of time and motion, it is the lived character of time that presents us with the possibility or impossibility of contact with the selves of nature.

According to Royce, it is our experience of change and, in particular, our experience of succession that most directly bears on how we grasp time. With any experience of succession, we encounter relations among the successive events that form an order. The order of the successive moments is such that each follows upon the other, and we can give an account of that order by saying that "a" followed "b" which was itself followed by "c" and so on. Of this sequence "a, b, c," we also have the experience of "a-b-c" as a whole. Hence we can say of any sequence that each of the events under consideration is present to me serially or punctually, and the sequence is also present to me as a whole. This corresponds to a twofold character of the "present," as Royce understands it. On the one hand, we can discern by our

attention each punctual moment in a sequence by noting that some parts are no longer while others are not yet. This allows us to focus our attention on some one element or motion. On the other hand, the whole can be viewed as having an internal unity. To witness a squirrel crossing the road is to discern a before and an after the crossing, a no-longer-crossing or a not-yet-crossing. In addition, one can view the whole inclusive (serial) motion: the squirrel scurrying across the road. When thus viewed as part of a time stream, the before and after (the no longer and not yet) give us the differences between the present, the past, and the future.

In this vein, Royce refers us to James's notion of the "specious present." He writes that the specious present is experienced "as a serial whole, *within* which there are observed temporal differences of former and latter" (WI2, 122). Of this whole, however, its length seems to vary with the circumstances but is "never more than a very few seconds in length." This notion of the length of time consciousness or "the time-span of consciousness" is what we want to focus on.

When we speak of the present, and we mean the whole present and not some punctual moment constituting a sequence, then we are addressing a stretch or region of time Royce describes as "world-embracing." He writes:

in whatever sense we speak of the real present time of the world, this present, whether it is the present second, or the present century, or the present geological period, it is . . . truly a divisible and connected whole region of time, within which a succession of events take place, as it is a world-embracing and connected time, within whose span the whole universe of present events is comprised. (WI2, 128)

We may speak, he suggests, of "the present minute, hour, day, year, century." The present is then spanned and spanned after such fashion as to be both my own limited span and the span of the universe.

This doubling of time into a perceptual or psychological time (our experience of time) and the time of the world is justified (he holds) by his theory of being and by our own experience of time. He notes that world-embracing time is still the world where finite internal meanings struggle to reach their other, their goals, to achieve their purposes and not merely a chronological, mathematical projection. There is a difference, however unitary or reciprocal, between a quantitative chronological abstraction and the qualitative appreciative temporality of life. In pursuing goals, one necessarily "does time." How that time appears to appreciating consciousness

depends on the type of consciousness and its peculiar span. It also depends on the nature of the involvement with the spanned happening of world time, that is, the stretch of time embracing all forms of time consciousness, since all beings are conscious beings. If the elasticity or "spannedness" of the present is such that it can be an element in my experience of succession or the whole of that sequence, then we can apply this doubling to the stream of world time. What we have is a present that can be the stretch of some finite consciousness as it strives to realize its meaning and selfhood—whether in this moment or as a "lifetime"—and a present that embraces all finite conscious times taken together, namely, world time or universal time.

Consider then this plural sense of the present as spanned. When I encounter a natural being who seems to me to be just a natural being and no more, I am in fact running up against a limitation in my own span. The oak tree that lives in my yard with which I have daily commerce is not appreciated by me as a fellow conscious being because from my perspective I am witnessing only a tiny portion of its conscious inner life. My span limits my involvement and ability to communicate with the oak and to receive communication from it. Further, not only may the oak tree's mental life be such that I perceive only a moment of its whole personal life, when viewed from its time span, but I may be witnessing a moment in the life of the species oak that is a broader region of time, a more august stretch of presence. Not only is my present involvement with the oak a limited appreciation of its own life span, but the oak and I both may be unaware, due to our own respective limited spans, that the oak tree per se is only a moment in the considerably longer spanned consciousness of the conscious species "oak." Royce writes, "Our whole theory presupposes that individuals may be included within other individuals; that one life, despite its unique ethical significance, may form part of a larger life; and that the ties which bind various finite individuals together are but hints of the unity of all individuals in the Absolute Individual" (WI2, 238). At this point he goes so far as to ask us to imagine a condition such that our conscious span differs from what it seemingly is: "[S]uppose that our consciousness had to a thousand millionth of a second, or to a million years of time, the same relation that it now has to the arbitrary length in seconds of a typical present moment" (WI2, 227). We would be no less conscious, he claims, and our mental fluency no less full or meaningful.

The "spannedness" of time is the key to beginning to see our deep affiliation with natural beings. Our relations with natural beings are founded on the same temporal principle of conscious span and on the same social principle as our life with our fellow human beings. The relations of my

spanned present to the world-embracing present in part depends on the overlap of conscious spans of myself and the spans of my fellow natural beings. Whatever our differences, together we make up or constitute the present of world-embracing time. If there is a shared span wherein social contact can be made between human beings and natural beings, then it lies in the synthesis of the embrace of time; perchance our respective spanned presents might dovetail into the same world-embracing moment and the resulting presence would relate mind to mind. After whatever fashion, Royce maintains that the self-manifesting presence of the oak is an act of communication on the part of the oak tree or the oak species even if we have a very vague idea about its inner life and the language it uses to discourse. Maybe it is, as already noted, not so much a matter of unconscious nature as uncommunicative nature, "whose mental processes go on at such different time-rates from ours that we cannot adjust ourselves to a live appreciation of their inward fluency, although our consciousness does make us aware of their presence" (WI2, 225–26). Presumably the same could be said of animals, insects, rivers, clouds, and perhaps the whole planet.

What of this presence? All around me the natural world spreads out. I participate in a world-embracing time that is the medium I share with natural beings. My own limited span makes me unable to appreciate larger and smaller temporal rates, and likewise faster and slower rates pass me by as they are unable to recognize my self as a conscious being. It seems we are at an odd metaphysical impasse. There is a mutual lack of appreciative space open between our selves and natural beings. Royce seems to recognize this when he writes about "how this world was individuated, in what sense its minds, so intimately linked by universal intercommunication, were still in a sense sundered into the lives of relatively separate Selves, our hypothesis would leave for a deeper consideration elsewhere" (WI2, 229). No such consideration, in this context, is forthcoming in *The World and The Individual*. But I would like very briefly to sketch such a consideration.

First of all, we need to wonder about the shared time we have with natural beings and the nature of their presence. Royce, as we have seen, tells us that the lack of a deeper appreciation between we human beings and all other natural beings arises due to our respectively bound conscious spans, and he seems to accept this as simply the case. On the other hand, at the beginning of this paper we witnessed his suggestion to the contrary: that we can learn from them, that their presence alone is a communicative act, that perhaps some opening and shared communicative space is not only possible but actual, and that there is a possibility of experiencing their inner lives and personhood. The point of convergence, it seems to me, is "the Present and

its Presence." I suggest, by way of distinction, that the limit Royce recognizes is no limit at all but rather a slip in his conception.

The problem as he sees it is that our conscious temporal span is quantitatively too short or too long to appreciate the self-manifesting minds of natural beings. In contrast to this, I suggest that the limitation is not quantitative but qualitative. Consider the following: "If we are to be inwardly conscious of anything, there must occur some change in the contents of our *feelings*, but this change must not be too fast or too slow (WI2, 227, emphasis added).

I believe that Royce conflates the quantitative measured world of description with the qualitative, felt (valued) world of appreciation. The result is that he fails to appreciate the qualitative communications we see manifested by the sheer presence of natural beings. The measured span of consciousness, our "attention span," if you will, tells us nothing about how we feel and appreciate beings. Even an attention span of a thousand years, for example, will fail to make contact with natural beings if it does not enter into contact with them in the appreciative mode. The quantitative limit of temporal span is a limit of our attention to facts but it is not necessarily a limitation on our appreciative attention to values and affections like beauty, love, care, and sympathy. I suggest that the convergence of human beings and natural beings in the pervasive character of social being (the Fourth Conception of Being) implies that in the mode of appreciation, we share not quantity and measure but pathos with nature. In answer to my earlier question as to whether we can surpass our limited span and make contact with natural beings, I say that we must strive to lengthen not our attention span but to attain *sympathos* with intelligence, a synthesis of feeling. Where and when the present of a sympathetic mind reaches out to embrace the present of another being, there one will encounter the possibility of convergent presence or world-embracing time. An open heart to nature will stretch us further than mensural attention to details. The type of transcendence needed is not that of measure but of affection. Only the transposition of our affective-appreciative life into nature will open up the possibilities of making contact with natural beings.

When viewed from the perspective of the present and its presence, I suggest that the present is in no way a punctual moment bounded by a quantitative "before" and "after." It is rather a qualitative stretch of the self. The quality of each moment is not something that a chronological measure can evaluate. When Royce looks to encounter natural beings socially, he invokes not the world of appreciation, which is the world of qualities, values, emotions, and subjectivity, but the world of description, which projects on

nature a mere quantum but fails to open to any deeper consideration. This conflation of quality and quantity arises in part because of the historical affiliation of time and motion. Motions can be measured, and if time is considered to be nothing more than the measure of motion, then it is understandable that the measuring of motion would be reflexively applied back to time, thus confounding the two and making motion the measure of time.

But this conflation also arises due to a deep resistance to natural beings. I refer now to my opening remarks where I suggested that a tension pervades Royce's social philosophy of nature; a tension between natural beings as fellow conscious beings and nature as a resourceful domain to be mastered and controlled by human beings. I believe that this tension shows up here, as the will to ignore our qualitative affinity and affiliation with natural beings. The conflation of quantitative span with qualitative conscious stretch confines Royce to a limit that veils the internal relations of the present and thereby prevents the intrinsically valuable world of natural beings from affecting a deeper register within our own social nature. In short, he maintains both that there is no communication between us (and hence that the mental life of nature can only be inferred), and then affirms in principle the social and psychical character of the natural world and that we do share a social space. The effort to prioritize nature and natural beings in relation to human beings inevitably leads to contradictions. We do not tend to conduct our relations with natural beings in the mode of sympathy and freedom, after all, but through the categories and measures of culture and science; as often as not we are motivated by use, commodity, and resourcism. The effort to adapt our consciousness to natural beings presents us with a challenge. It is possible that we lack the affective or appreciative fortitude and selflessness to engage natural beings. It is possible that we lack the courage to see natural beings in the light of an idealism that suggests that natural beings are not only part of our social community but are ends in themselves and as such not reducible to commodity and measure.

However this may turn out, Royce does provide us with a glimpse of nature as social, even when considered from the perspective of our shared relations with other human beings. Consider, by way of extension, the epistemological argument Royce uses to affirm our belief in the natural world. The guiding motif is social: External reality is a function of our belief in our fellow human beings. Our involvement with one another leads us to believe that we are each conscious finite minds because other human beings present us with meanings different from our own; as Royce says, others are the source of new and novel ideas that do not spring from our subjectivity. When we engage them,

They answer our questions; they tell us news; they make comments; they pass judgments; they express novel combinations of feelings; they relate to us stories; they argue with us, and take counsel with us. Or, to put the matter in a form still nearer to that demanded by our Fourth Conception of Being: *Our fellows furnish us the constantly needed supplement to our own fragmentary meanings.* That is, they help us to find out what our own true meaning is. Hence, since Reality is through and through what completes our incompleteness, our fellows are indeed real. (WI2, 171–72)

Here Royce extends the argument to human bodies. Our bodies are expressive; they are the instruments of social communication. A person's physical gestures and words "stand for, and phenomenally accompany, his inner life" (SGE, 227). Finally, the penultimate extension: we cannot separate the body of our fellow from the rest of physical nature, namely, physical processes, the availability of food, the air we breath, the material of our clothing; to that extent we simply cannot draw a sharp enough line between where our body ends and the rest of nature begins. "If, then, one's fellow is real, the whole of the phenomenal nature from which his phenomenal presence is continuous must be real in the same general fashion" (SGE, 228).

To be real in this sense is to be a finite conscious being. Is it not the case then that to prove the reality of the natural world by this social consideration is to also show that nature, insofar as it too is social, provides supplements to our own meanings? Does nature not respond to us in like manner, just as our fellow human beings do, even though we are often inattentive to or unappreciative of the response? Is it not nature that completes our incompleteness? Royce feels compelled to argue, against what he takes to be common sense, that it does. While nature may not chatter on with the sentential discourse we are so proud of in ourselves, it does provide us with, as yet, an inexhaustible wealth of new ideas. When we venture to explore it, it offers us differences in meaning from our own expectations and theories. Nature most definitely increases our meaning and fulfills so many of our purposes that we almost by habit think of it as "resource." In terms of motion, Royce asks us to consider that nature's physical moments are indicative of its life, as may be shown by the seasons, the climate, the repeatable stages of growth and decay. Moreover, when we strive for self-understanding, we find that nature provides us with the whole of our best metaphors for understanding one another and ourselves. Is this not giving and wealth, which no science can pretend to exhaust, since it manifests itself in every aspect of our lives through responsive meaning and communica-

tion? Why do these movements not “stand for” the mental lives of natural beings and nature as a whole as the body’s gestures do?

I say that it is not the quantitative limit that prevents us from appreciating natural beings, but rather a qualitative withholding of our own appreciative lives—it is sheer presumption to think that our exploration of nature-life has yet shown us limit. The very presence of the oak or the glacial canyon is an act of a mind, irrespective of its august temporal span; it is a physical expression and therefore an act of social communication. No quantitative limit veils our appreciation of nature, for nature is always there, waiting for the one who will question it and open the lines of communication. It is we who fail to extend our emotional, appreciative life to nature. We do not open ourselves to the possibility of sympathy with intelligence. ■