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THE CONCEPTION OF GOD IN THE LATER ROYCE

by Edward A. Jarvis, S.J.

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the requirements for the degree of
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INTRODUCTION

In his Preface to the 1969 Edition of Royce's Social Infinite, John E. Smith notes "the puzzle familiar to every student of Royce--exactly how is the later theory of interpretation related to Royce's initial philosophy of the Absolute?"¹ This thesis undertakes to give an answer to this question from the point of view of Royce's later metaphysics of God. What is the similarity and difference between Royce's later conception of God and the argument for God's existence, as seen in The Problem of Christianity,² and the conception of God and argument for God's existence which appear in his early and middle periods? This is the question which the thesis asks and will try to answer. Such a comparative study of Royce's later conception of God has received little extended and explicit attention, and the question is made intriguing by the fact that commentators suggest widely different answers.

We might say that, in general, Royce's early conception of God, as seen in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy,

¹John E. Smith, Royce's Social Infinite (New York: Conn.: Archon Books, 1969), p. xiv.

²The Problem of Christianity (2 vols.; New York: Macmillan Co., 1913).

³The Religious Aspect of Philosophy (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1897).

is characterized by a monistic formulation which appears to leave no room for the integrity and freedom of finite moral agents, as his contemporary critics claimed. The transition in Royce's thought from his early to his middle period, as seen in the Supplementary Essay of The Conception of God⁴ and in The World and the Individual,⁵ is marked by vigorous efforts, particularly through a new emphasis upon "will" or purpose, to defend his concept of the Absolute from the criticism that it does not allow for human individuality and freedom. Royce's later conception of God in The Problem of Christianity was significantly influenced by the theory of community and of interpretation which he introduced at that time. The question is, precisely what is the difference between this later conception of God with its argument to God's existence and the arguments and the conceptions of God of the early and middle periods?

It is in answer to this question that we find widely different interpretations suggested by Royce's commentators. Some commentators think that no significant difference appears between the later metaphysics of God and the earlier metaphysics of the Absolute, but simply a different way of

⁴The Conception of God (New York: Macmillan Co., 1897).

⁵The World and the Individual (2 vols.; New York: Macmillan Co., 1899 and 1901).

stating, through the community of interpretation, the same basic concept of the Absolute. For example, Jacob Loewenberg says,

The union of One and Many--the heart of Royce's metaphysics--is denoted more explicitly by the term 'Community' than by the term 'Absolute.' A community, Royce states, is 'both one and many; and unless it is both one and many, it is no community at all.' The community, as defined in The Problem of Christianity, is one individual life of its many individual members precisely in the sense in which the Absolute in The World and the Individual is interpreted as an 'Individual Whole of Individual Elements.'

A detailed study of both these major works would unquestionably reveal differences as well as similarities. But not to regard the 'Absolute' of The World and the Individual as identical with the 'Universal Community' of The Problem of Christianity and vice-versa, is seriously to misunderstand the main thesis of both works.⁶

Gabriel Marcel appears to endorse this position, although he acknowledges an important difference when he writes, "The interpreter corresponds, if you wish, to the Absolute Knower of The World and the Individual, but its intelligible situation in the universe is defined in a much less ambiguous manner."⁷ However, in the Conclusion of his

⁶Fugitive Essays, ed. with an Introduction by Jacob Loewenberg (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920), p. 12.

⁷Gabriel Marcel, La Métaphysique de Royce (Paris: Aubier, collection "Philosophie de l'esprit," 1945). English translation, Royce's Metaphysics, trans. by Virginia and Gordon Ringer (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1956), p. 127.

work, Marcel apparently identifies the later community of interpretation with the earlier Absolute.

We have indeed taken care to comment previously that even the doctrine expounded in The Conception of God and in The World and the Individual is only intelligible when God is conceived as a Community. Royce was more and more under the necessity of making this clear, and hence the theory of interpretation in his later works can be regarded as the authentic and deepest expression of that fourth conception of Being which was formulated inadequately in his earlier works.⁸

In this passage Marcel identifies the earlier Absolute of Royce with the later Community of Interpretation. Since the earlier Absolute is conceived monistically, this identification implies a monistic interpretation of the later Community of Interpretation. Hence, Marcel can refer to "Royce's monism of interpretation."⁹

Otto Kraushaar also regards the later "world-community of mutually interpreting persons" as a redefinition of the earlier Absolute.¹⁰ Kraushaar concludes,

In The Problem of Christianity, he [Royce] addressed himself to the task of constructing the Absolute by way of the actual community of interpretation. But the bonds tying him to his original argument for the completed, perfect Absolute, the archetype of all lesser workings, were too strong to permit of a radical transformation in his conception of the One.¹¹

⁸Ibid., p. 147.

⁹Ibid., p. 129.

¹⁰Classical American Philosophers, ed. by Max H. Fisch (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951), p. 196.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 198-199.

J. Harry Cotton sees a "formal consistency between the social Absolute of the middle period and the ultimate community of the later period,"¹² although there was a development in Royce's thought which consisted in "a growth in the direction of greater concreteness."¹³ This is seen especially in "Royce's increasing interest in the importance of the individual."¹⁴

However, another group of Royce's commentators are inclined to see a more significant difference between Royce's later conception of God and his earlier Absolute. Their expressions of this difference vary in manner, and they are not confined merely to more recent interpretations. For example, G. Watts Cunningham takes note of Royce's statement in the Preface to The Problem of Christianity that his teaching is in essential harmony with the bases of philosophical idealism set forth in earlier volumes. Cunningham remarks,

There is reason to doubt whether in this view the author is strictly correct. It would be interesting to summarize this later formulation in some detail for purposes of comparison with the earlier, if space for the task were available. But it is not, and we shall have to content ourselves with the formulation as presented in the Gifford Lectures.¹⁵

¹²J. Harry Cotton, Royce on the Human Self (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 263.

¹³Ibid., p. 265.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 263.

¹⁵G. Watts Cunningham, The Idealistic Argument in Recent British and American Philosophy (New York and London: The Appleton Century Co., 1933), p. 260.

In a short appendix to his commentary on Royce's moral philosophy, Peter Fuss suggests a significant difference between the later Community of Interpretation and the earlier Absolute.

If a philosopher is entitled to at least one good riddle, his commentator, I should think, is entitled to one guess as to how it might be resolved. The riddle in Royce is whether or not his later substitution of the 'Community of Interpretation' for the 'Absolute Mind' or 'Absolute Will' of earlier years signifies an abandoning of the absolutistic aspects of his philosophical idealism. My guess is that Royce did in effect abandon his absolutism. Unfortunately, I have space for no more than a brief sketch of the evidence to support my guess.¹⁶

In conclusion, Fuss says, "If my guess is right, then perhaps Royce's later philosophy as a whole merits more careful examination."¹⁷

A contemporary commentator and a pupil of Royce was Mary Whiton Calkins whose article, "The Foundations in Royce's Philosophy for Christian Theism," elicited a letter of gratitude and general approval from Royce.¹⁸ In her article, Mary Calkins aims to show that the teachings of

¹⁶Peter Fuss, The Moral Philosophy of Josiah Royce (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 259.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 263.

¹⁸Mary Calkins, "The Foundations in Royce's Philosophy for Christian Theism," The Philosophical Review, XXV (1916), pp. 282-293. Extracts from Royce's letter follow the article. The entire letter is printed in The Letters of Josiah Royce, ed. with an introduction by John Clendenning (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 644-648.

Royce are in essential harmony with those of Christian Theism. Her exposition is based largely upon the middle works of Royce, but it also touches upon The Problem of Christianity. She does not think that Royce intends "to supplant . . . his earlier conception of the Absolute Self by the doctrine of the Beloved Community,"¹⁹ but she sees a difference between them.

Unquestionably, Royce seems by certain statements to make the universal community equivalent to the Self of his earlier books Yet, in spite of expressions like these, I believe that Royce does not actually identify the Absolute Self with the Universal Community.²⁰

Rather, she believes that Royce "distinguishes God as spirit, counsellor, or interpreter from the church in which he expresses himself and from the world which he interprets."²¹

In his letter to Mary Calkins, Royce seems to approve generally both the idea of continuity and the idea of difference between the later conception of God and the earlier concept of the Absolute. Referring to The Problem of Christianity, Royce writes,

These reflections constitute for me, not something inconsistent with my former position, but a distinct addition to my former position, a new attainment,--

¹⁹Calkins, op. cit., p. 286.

²⁰Ibid., p. 287.

²¹Ibid., pp. 287-288.

I believe a new growth. I do not believe that you change in a way involving inconsistency when you reinterpret former ideas.²²

The Problem of Christianity . . . is the product of what for me is a new light, of a new experience, of ideas which are as new to me as the original form of my idealism was new to me when I first defined it.²³

In these statements Royce does not say what he regards to be the precise elements of continuity and difference between his later and earlier conceptions of God, but he seems to suggest a greater measure of newness and originality in his later work than would be allowed, for example, by the interpretation of Loewenberg,²⁴ and he does not suggest a revision of Mary Calkins' statement, "I believe that Royce does not actually identify the Absolute Self with the Universal Community."

These citations draw attention to the need for a detailed comparative study such as the present thesis undertakes. The thesis aims to determine the elements of continuity and difference between Royce's later conception of God and his earlier conceptions. The synthetic aim of the thesis requires that we first undertake a careful genetic study in

²²The Philosophical Review, XXV (1916), p. 294.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Cf. above, p. vii.

which each period of Royce's thought is analyzed to determine its precise mode of arguing to God's existence and the conception of God which it presents. This analytic study will occupy the major part of the thesis. When this is completed, the synthetic task of determining historical development can be attempted. We will summarize what appear to be the central elements of continuity and the major points of difference between the later and the earlier conceptions in sections four and five of Chapter IV, and this will be followed by a short general conclusion.

Since the thesis is concerned with an internal comparison of Royce's later thought with his earlier, no attempt will be made to trace or evaluate the various philosophical influences upon Royce except where Royce himself, in his arguments and conceptions of God, makes such reference. The first chapter will study the early period through an analysis of The Religious Aspect of Philosophy. The second chapter will present the middle period of thought by concentrating upon The World and the Individual, Royce's master work of that period. The Conception of God will be given only introductory consideration to this study since the central ideas contained in its Supplementary Essay are repeated with somewhat fuller development in The World and the Individual. The third chapter will be devoted to a study of Royce's later religious thought as seen in

The Sources of Religious Insight²⁵ and in the first volume of The Problem of Christianity. The third chapter will also present the important theories of community and of interpretation from the second volume of The Problem of Christianity. The reader may wonder about the connection between these considerations and the central question of the thesis. However, this connection will become apparent in the fourth chapter where they will be seen related to Royce's argument to the existence of God, his later conception of God, and the summary of the similarity and difference between his later conception of God and the earlier ones. The third chapter thus presents material preliminary to an understanding of Royce's later argument to the existence of God and his later conception of God which are contained in the fourth chapter.

²⁵The Sources of Religious Insight (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912).

CHAPTER I

THE EARLY THOUGHT OF ROYCE

1. Empirical Theism.

The Religious Aspect of Philosophy was the first major work of Josiah Royce and it established his reputation as a philosopher. The work is divided into two books, "The Search for a Moral Ideal," and "The Search for a Religious Truth." Since the thesis is concerned with Royce's Philosophy of God, our attention will center mainly on Book II.

Where does one begin his search for religious truth? For Royce, the question where to begin and how to proceed is epistemological. "It would seem that our religious philosophy must begin with the problem of all theoretical philosophy: What can be our knowledge of this world, and whereon can this knowledge be founded?"¹ If there is any religious philosophy possible, we must delve into it here.

This starting point immediately divides traditional philosophies of God into two broad but distinct classes, the empirical and the idealist. Royce's way is that of idealism.

¹The Religious Aspect of Philosophy: A Critique of the Basis of Conduct and of Faith (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1885), p. 231.

Before presenting his form of idealism, Royce considers the plausibility of what he variously calls "Traditional Theodicy," "Dualistic Theism" and "Empirical Theism." The epistemological basis of this Theism is understood by Royce as "the popular metaphysical concept of a separate external world, and of a thinker bound somehow to repeat the facts of it in his thought."² This world of facts is the empirical basis of the theodicy. It is a world of powers which act and interact in the external world, and produce effects upon other things or groups of things. In this world of powers, empirical theism finds evidence which proves God to exist, and God is thus conceived as a Power, the omnipotent Ruler of all things which are external to him as his products. Thus, the theism is dualistic, and the notion of God as Power is derived from the world of natural forces.

For the moment, Royce grants the epistemological basis and inquires whether the empirical basis, this world of facts, supplies evidence from which one can conclude to God's existence as the supremely good Creator. Royce does not think that this is so. One would have to find in the external world of powers the supremacy of goodness. This would indeed show genuine religious significance.³ However, when we

²Ibid., p. 233.

³Ibid., p. 236.

examine the external world, we find, first, a vast connected whole of moving matter subject to certain laws. The matter is dead, the laws are ultimate given truths, and all is predetermined. One sees in this no special moral or religious significance. When one looks for indications of moral goodness in and behind this world of powers, one finds what appears to be a scene of endless warfare. Should one cite evolution as evidence that natural law agrees with moral goodness, one must reply that evolution is but a transient fact in view of the more permanent fact that our universe is dying. In view of the dissipation of energy, the universe seems wholly indifferent to progress. If one is to reason from progress, one must show that progress is an essential truth about the world. The vast amount of evil in the world renders this view unlikely.⁴

Royce observes that "the question is, not what is compatible with evolution, but what can be proven from bare experience."⁵ This is the problem with the empirical Design-Argument. Mere experience leaves modern man in utter doubt concerning what powers, intelligent or not, are the sources of all our experience. Perhaps they are intelligent, perhaps they are not. If they are intelligent, they would

⁴Ibid., p. 248.

⁵Ibid., p. 282.

have to be shown to be more if they are to have religious significance. If there is design, it is not clear to Royce that the designer is demonstrably good. "And so the Powers that cause the inestimable might of evil in the world seem of very doubtful religious worth."⁶ The empirical world is not demonstrably the City of God.

In rejecting design, Royce qualifies design as empirical design. It is the point of departure, or what can be proven empirically, that is under question. Once a religious philosophy has been established on other grounds, one may return to the empirical world and view it with a newly gained vision.⁷

Royce also rejects the central thesis of theism that God is an infinite creative power. Part of his difficulty in accepting this view is the way in which it is forced to deal with the problem of evil. Evil is conceived as an external means which is used to attain a higher good. But, if the end was good, why was it not got without evil means? The implication is that God is not infinite.⁸ Nor does appeal to human freedom help to explain the presence of evil since only the evil that results from free choice can be justly

⁶Ibid., p. 287.

⁷Ibid., pp. 291, 460, 480.

⁸Ibid., pp. 267-269.

attributed to human freedom. The evil inflicted upon innocent victims is left unexplained.⁹

However, Royce's main difficulty with creation lies in the conception of creation itself.

The concept of producing an external thing involves, of necessity, a relation to a Law, above both producer and product, which determines the conditions under which there can be a product at all.¹⁰

Working under conditions upon which he depends, a creator must be finite. He must exist in a world of law external to himself which requires certain conditions in order that the effect may occur. These external conditions may be conceived as created by God, but the same question would arise about that creation, and so on ad infinitum.

2. Postulates. The Right to Believe.

The external world of empirical facts affords only doubt for one who is seeking to find religious significance. However, one may question whether this world is the only region where religious truth may be sought. Indeed, one may question whether the external world contains any absolute truth. What does the external world mean? It means, first of all, "no fixed datum, . . . but a postulate."¹¹ Now, if

⁹Ibid., pp. 272-273.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 274.

¹¹Ibid., p. 292.

this postulate affords no religious significance, "we who postulated once have the right to postulate again." This bold assertion places the right to believe religiously on the same epistemological footing as the right to believe in an external world. We see emerging in Royce's thought the place of Will, or the function of interest and purpose in human knowledge. It is Royce's theory of Postulates, or the element of what he will later call Pragmatism and Voluntarism in his theory of knowledge.

Royce states what he means by a postulate.

A postulate is a mental way of behavior. In so far it is like all other thought. In general, to believe that a thing exists is to act as if it existed. But the act may be forced upon one, or . . . one may voluntarily determine to act in a given way, not being rationally forced to do so, and well knowing the risk. In such cases one voluntarily takes to himself the form of belief called a postulate.¹²

All truth prompts action in view of that truth. However, postulates are not concerned where truth forces itself upon one, as in the example that $2 + 2 = 4$, or where truth is certainly demonstrated, or where the data of immediate consciousness is concerned. One does not postulate that he hears sounds, or sees colors, or feels a toothache.¹³ But in all other areas, from the common occurrences of everyday life,

¹²Ibid., p. 297.

¹³Ibid., p. 302.

such as asking for directions or planning for tomorrow, to the basic postulate of an external world, postulates are involved in human knowledge. Royce carefully distinguishes the postulate from blind faith. Blind faith is an emotion which dares not question. Postulates are voluntary assumptions, deliberately adopted for the sake of a higher end and with full knowledge of the risk of deception involved. So to postulate is reasonable since otherwise one could not take action which he sees to be worthwhile.

It is somewhat paradoxical that, while to the religious view the empirical world is a mass of inexplicable facts, to the scientific view the world does not appear as irrational. "The doubt confuses us only when we talk of religion. That the world as a whole is dark, nobody admits more cheerfully than does the modern scientific man."¹⁴ Yet, this admission does not undermine the scientist's dedication to and confidence in his principles and methods although these assume that the universe is rationally structured. There is no logical necessity to believe that the universe is rational, nor does it lie within the experience of any man. Thus, that the world is rationally structured is met-empirical and needs to be postulated. Science so postulates because of its special interests and purposes which thus lie at the root of scientific knowledge.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 293.

The need of the religious man is different from that of the scientist. While the scientist is motivated by the conviction "that universal, order-loving reason is somehow the truth of things,"¹⁵ the religious man is motivated by the conviction "that universal goodness is somehow at the heart of things." What both interpretations have in common is "purpose," that is, neither describes the whole of reality as factually given, but rather interprets it in light of its own postulate. Each contains an implicit point of view, a prejudiced interpretation of the world as a whole.

The parallel is clear. "Why, as the scientific man postulates a theoretical rationality in the world, may we not postulate a moral rationality in the world?"¹⁶

As the faith of science helps to make life rational, so the religious faith helps make life in the highest sense moral, by insisting that the ideal labors of our moral life are undertaken not alone, but in harmony with the world as known by the Infinite.¹⁷

Thus, "Just as science is undaunted by the vision of the world of confusion, so shall our religious faith be undaunted by the vision of the evil of the world."¹⁸ Consequently, the religious aspect of the world lies in this, that "despite the contradictions of the world of sense, we may, and indeed, morally speaking, must postulate, that the

¹⁵Ibid., p. 331.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 330.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 295.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 329-330.

Eternal, of which this world is the mere show, is in itself absolutely righteous."¹⁹

Although Royce is concerned to show that religious faith is reasonable, and as reasonable as the postulate of science, these appear as special applications of a fundamental theory of knowledge. "Postulates, theoretically uncertain, but practically worth the risk, are at the foundation of our whole lives."²⁰ In the general popular conceptions of reality, we find the first use of postulates. Popular belief about an external world is for the first an active assumption of something more than the data of consciousness. What is given directly to our minds is not external. Hence, an assertion of an external world, going beyond the data of consciousness, must begin in an activity of judgment that does more than merely reduce present data to order. "Such an assertion must be an active construction of non-data. We do not receive in our senses, but we posit through our judgment, whatever external world there may for us be."²¹

Royce thinks that our knowledge is determined by two factors. One consists in simply receiving impressions from

¹⁹Ibid., p. 297.

²⁰Ibid., p. 331.

²¹Ibid., p. 302.

without, such as sensations, or, on a higher plane, statements of truth; the other consists in modifying and organizing these impressions. The latter involves independent reaction upon the material furnished to us from without, and, in simpler forms of knowledge, manifests itself in the active processes of attention, recognition and construction. Attention is the same activity that in a more developed form we commonly call Will. We attend to one thing rather than another because we will to do so, and our will here is the elementary impulse to know. Recognition makes the present in some way familiar. The present is assimilated to the past; the new is made to seem as familiar as possible. Construction is the active process by which we build up our ideas of past and future out of what comes to us from moment to moment. Without this active intervention by our minds, everything would be but a present and there would be no time. Moreover, definite belief in external reality is possible only through the active addition of something of our own to the impressions that are actually given to us.²²

All of this active construction from sense impressions expresses certain fundamental interests that our human spirit takes in reality. We want to have a world of particular character and so, from sense impressions, we are constantly

²²Ibid., pp. 307-322.

trying to build up such a world. We are prejudiced in favor of regularity, necessity, and simplicity in the world, and so we continually manipulate the data of sense for the sake of building up a notion of a regular, necessary and simple universe. "Thus all knowing is, in a very deep sense, acting; it is, in fact, reacting and creation."²³

The function of the Postulates will remain a permanent part of Royce's theory of knowledge. In "The Eternal and the Practical," Royce identifies the Postulates with the spirit of Pragmatism with which he agrees.²⁴ As late as The Problem of Christianity, Royce affirms his acceptance of the theory of the Postulates, calls it Voluntarism as well as Pragmatism, and cites the partial influence of William James in regard to "this philosophy to which I myself adhere."²⁵ A close parallel is evident between Royce's treatment of the postulates of religion and science and a similar treatment by James in The Will to Believe.²⁶ However, despite this agreement and influence, Royce from the beginning

²³Ibid., p. 322.

²⁴"The Eternal and the Practical," Philosophical Review, XIII (1904), pp. 118-125.

²⁵The Problem of Christianity (2 vols.; New York: Macmillan Co., 1913), Vol. 2, p. 293.

²⁶William James, The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1912 (1897)), pp. 1-31.

was in clear disagreement as to the adequacy of the postulates in regard to the question of truth in general,²⁷ and in regard to their sufficiency for the religious consciousness. "We confess at once that we want something much better than a postulate as the basis of our religion, in case we can get it."²⁸ "For the postulates are indeed, in themselves, not enough."²⁹ With true religious insight, Royce sees that religion needs more than postulates in the manner of science, for the postulate of religion is not encouraged by ready empirical tests. "Life has its unheroic days, when mere postulates fail us . . . and, worse than all, . . . that there is any worth or reason in our fight for goodness, seems to desert us."³⁰ Royce's way of providing something better than a postulate was through philosophical demonstration.

3. Idealism as an Hypothesis Based on Postulates.

Before making this demonstration, Royce provides helpful background to his own understanding of Idealism by

²⁷Cf. "The Eternal and the Practical," pp. 125-131.

²⁸The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, p. 300.

²⁹Ibid., p. 336.

³⁰Ibid., p. 385.

presenting idealism as an hypothesis based merely upon postulates. He asks us to suppose a correspondence theory of human knowledge.³¹ Let us say that the sequence of human ideas corresponds with a real world external to human thought. In order to simply and adequately explain this supposed theory of human knowledge, let us suggest an hypothesis concerning the nature of the external reality. Let this hypothesis be that of Berkeley with certain alterations.

According to Berkeley there exist conscious beings, more or less like ourselves, of whom the head and father is God. Now external to all beings besides God there is a real world. This real world is made up of the eternal system of God's thoughts.³²

Royce considers three aspects of Berkeley's hypothesis, only one of which he retains. The first is that there corresponds to our consciousness another and farther reaching consciousness, containing all that is in our consciousness, and much more besides. This content of the higher consciousness provides the real world external to our consciousness with which our consciousness is to correspond. This is the core of Berkeley's hypothesis which Royce adopts. A second aspect of Berkeley's hypothesis is causal. Not being caused by myself, Berkeley reasons that my ideas have an external

³¹Ibid., p. 338.

³²Ibid., p. 340.

cause, and the only intelligible cause is an active spirit. Royce waives for the moment this causal aspect, and simply assumes correspondence. A third aspect of Berkeley's hypothesis is the teleological aspect. God creates finite spirits so that their conscious states should within limits correspond with his higher consciousness, and this correspondence constitutes what we mean by truth. Royce also omits this teleological aspect. With causality and teleology omitted, what remains is, "Our thought is true by reason of its correspondence to the facts of an actual consciousness, external to our own."³³

Royce asks us to suppose that the sensible facts that constitute real objects are given to this hypothetical consciousness and are in it in a way that somehow corresponds with the sensations and possibilities of sensation which for a human consciousness constitute the real object. The real object is in the hypothetical consciousness, independent of human consciousness which may thus cease without the real object ceasing. In this way all the facts of nature would be in the hypothetical consciousness which would thus constitute a real world independent of us, but having a certain correspondence to our sensations. Let us suppose that we tend to be in agreement with this consciousness, that progress in

³³ Ibid., p. 342.

this respect is possible, and that this agreement constitutes truth. But for the world-consciousness there is no question of its own truth and falsity since it will exist in and for itself. It will not have to create a real world; it will be a real world. It is not a Creator, but a Seer. The states which it sees are its own, and these pass in succession according to an ultimate and inexplicable law of sequence. But the universal consciousness remains.³⁴

Meanwhile Royce purposely leaves vague the relation between individual intelligences and the universal consciousness. Thus far it is viewed as one of independence. The sequel will show whether we can rest content with this. The individual minds and the universal consciousness make up together the sum total of reality. One of the consequences of the hypothesis is that it answers the puzzling question sometimes put to idealists, what existed before there was any conscious life on the planet? There existed whatever geological science may declare to have really existed; it existed as a fact in the universal consciousness. This hypothesis has in its favor that it is simple and plausible.³⁵

The question remains, why do our minds agree with this reality? Why not postulate causality to explain

³⁴Ibid., pp. 343-350.

³⁵Ibid., p. 359.

correspondence? Upon reply to this question hinges Royce's approach to the real world. If causality explains correspondence, causality is the more fundamental postulate, so that knowledge of the external world is derived, not from internal likeness, but from whatever one may postulate the external cause to be. This appears to Royce a primitive way of judging reality, since one may opt for whatever his emotion may dictate.³⁶ However, the deepest motive of our purely theoretical postulates about reality is that our ideas have something beyond them which corresponds to them. This postulate is deeper than causality since we postulate that to "the idea of a necessary causal relation, there corresponds a reality external to the idea."³⁷ Similarly, our belief in past reality as such is prior to our belief that our present state has been caused by the past. So, too, our belief in the reality of our fellow men is implied in the idea of working with and for them. Thus, the conception of reality furnished by search for causes is always secondary to the "first postulate" which is that "our ideas have something beyond them and like them."³⁸ Royce regards the role of causality as subordinate to the first postulate by helping

³⁶Ibid., p. 354.

³⁷Ibid., p. 355.

³⁸Ibid., p. 356.

us discover in what the corresponding likeness consists. Causality accomplishes this by reducing to unity our growing experience.³⁹

Another postulate of Royce's idealism is that the external reality exists for consciousness and only for consciousness. Royce gives his reason for this by asking a suggestive question. "Can the external reality be conceived as being, although in nature like our conscious states, yet in no necessary relation to consciousness, as being neither a consciousness nor for a consciousness?"⁴⁰ If, on the one hand, the external reality is outside consciousness, and if, on the other hand, corresponding inner likeness rather than causality is primary in judging external reality, it must follow that external reality, if it is knowable, is like our conscious states. But, this can be only if reality is either a consciousness or for a consciousness, that is, existing for corresponding inner likeness.

Royce distinguishes two forms of likeness between idea and external reality. One may be a likeness between one's present conscious state and a past or future state of his own, or between his present state and the conscious state of another human being. The second may be a likeness between

³⁹Ibid., pp. 358-360.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 360.

one's present conscious state and a possible experience. A "possible experience" refers to the possibilities of sensation that are actually never realized either in ourselves or in any other known creature, but are permanently possible experiences expressed by the scientific laws of nature. Royce agrees with the consensus of post-Kantian idealism that by these two postulates the whole notion of external reality is exhausted.⁴¹

The possible experience plays an important part in Royce's reason for postulating a universal consciousness, and it will reappear in subsequent works. Royce distinguishes a possible experience from an empty possibility or arbitrary imagination whose existence resides only in the actual conscious idea of it. Possible experience refers to real objects external to consciousness, such as icebergs in the polar seas or the molecules of oxygen one breathes. Such objects are not actually within present consciousness, but are still real as possible experience; that is, there exists the law that "were I present I should see them, were I to touch them I should feel them, and that both seeing and feeling would be determined in certain ways beyond the control of my will."⁴² We are led to believe in the real existence

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 362-363.

⁴²Ibid., p. 365.

of such objects because we postulate that nature is uniform beyond our present experience, and this is due to the causal postulate which science accepts because of its uniformity.

It is here that Royce sees a dilemma in the theory of possible experience. A possible experience is for me but a representation in my present actual consciousness since I am not actually aware of the iceberg or the molecule. Yet, a possible experience is not a mere representation because it is not a mere imagination, but refers to an objective iceberg or molecule. As "possible" it cannot reside outside consciousness; as "real" it is valid beyond consciousness. "How," asks Royce, "is this postulate to be satisfied unless by assuming an actual world-consciousness?"⁴³ The dilemma which Royce sees facing idealism is that the objects of possible experience are either not real, or they are the independent beings of realism. In the former case, they would be merely imaginary, which is false. In the latter case, the postulate of idealism, that reality exists only for consciousness, would appear to be denied. Royce's solution concedes to realism that the objects of possible experience are independent of human consciousness, and grants to idealism that these objects exist only for consciousness, but for a world-consciousness for whom they are objects of actual experience.

⁴³Ibid., p. 368.

Thus, the hypothesis of the world-consciousness appears in the role of a "hero."⁴⁴ It satisfies the postulate of the possible experience, and this postulate implies all the others: that external reality is postulated, not given, and is conceived in nature like the facts of our consciousness; the postulate of causality according to which we conceive the external reality as a united and uniform whole of facts; and the postulate that the external reality is real only for consciousness. However, Royce grants that thus far all is mere postulate. Now he will attempt a transition from "an imperfect form of idealism as a mere postulate . . . to . . . an absolute idealism as demonstrable theory."⁴⁵

4. Skepticism and the Possibility of Error.

In the Preface to The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, Royce calls attention to the relative originality of

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 369.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 383. Royce consistently uses the term, absolute, to mean objective, as opposed to subjective. Thus, Subjective Idealism "believes that my mind is concerned only with its own ideas." (p. 378). Absolute Idealism is "objective," (p. 379) that is, it recognizes that the mind must pass beyond the subjectivity of its own ideas to find truth in objectifying grounds, or in real extra-mental grounds. These grounds must be demonstrated from the nature of Thought. In short, "absolute" is a synonym for "objectively true," either shown to be extra-mental through demonstration, or existing as the extra-mental grounds which confirm the truth of a particular judgment.

Chapter IX, "The Possibility of Error," in which he attempts to demonstrate absolute idealism from the possibility of error. Commentators agree that his approach is novel and bold, and it no doubt relates to an earlier period of skepticism in his life. Royce tells us of his skepticism following his study of Kant's Kritik. Kant had said that experience of itself can give no certainty about general principles, and so we must bring our principles with us to experience. But, why, asks Royce, just those principles required by Kant and no others? "Why may not our thought get a new fashion someday? . . . Do we then know a priori that our a priori principles must always remain such? If so, how come we by this new knowledge?"⁴⁶ Royce concluded that "it is only by means of postulates that our thought even seems to have any unity from moment to moment."⁴⁷

Royce also relates how he escaped from this skepticism by asking the question, "If everything beyond the present is doubtful, then how can even that doubt be possible?" One must answer by stating a certainty, namely, "All but the immediate content of the present moment's judgment, being doubtful, we may be in error about it."⁴⁸ This truth transcends the present moment.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 387.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 388.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 389.

Having overcome complete skepticism by questioning its supposition, Royce employs it methodically to pass from idealism as postulate to absolute idealism. Skepticism is "the very basis of our positive doctrine,"⁴⁹ and the possibility of error is "the steadfast rock on which we build."⁵⁰ Skepticism believes that there is no foundation whatever for our postulates, that everything is doubtful, that we may be in error everywhere, and that certainty about the real world is unattainable. Royce asks what this position implies. It implies that we can be in error about an external world, and, if we may be in error, we may also have the truth about the real world, but we suppose this to rest upon a doubtful postulate. But, this supposes a real difference between true and false statements concerning the real world. Skepticism supposes that error is possible, so that the possibility of error is certainly true and cannot be doubted.⁵¹

Royce next considers the doctrine of the Total Relativity of Truth which differs from genuine skepticism.⁵² Genuine skepticism admits a real distinction between truth and error, but despairs of achieving truth beyond doubtful postulates. The doctrine of Total Relativity tries to put to

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 228.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 372.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 390.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 373-379,
393-396, 420-421.

rest even genuine skepticism by denying a real difference between truth and error. Royce confesses that he once tried to hold this doctrine,⁵³ and he describes it as follows.

There is no real difference between truth and error at all, only a kind of opinion or consensus of men about a conventional distinction between what they choose to call truth and what they choose to call error.⁵⁴

In this view, assertions are no more than clear accounts of how we put our ideas together, or narratives of what goes on in our minds. The problem with this position is that, if statements are sincere accounts of how things appear to us, they must all be true. If you say that Darwinism is true, and, if I say that Darwinism is false, both statements must be true as sincere accounts of what each of us thinks. Real error is thus impossible. But, if error is impossible, what becomes of the doctrine of Total Relativity? The theory loses all meaning unless there is at least one absolute truth, namely, that absolute truth does not exist. But, if this is admitted, there is an absolute difference between truth and error, and error is seen as possible. If this is not admitted, the theory has no meaning.⁵⁵ No evidence can be brought in favor of the theory without thereby denying it, since the theory holds that no

⁵³Ibid., pp. 375, 394.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 393-394.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 376.

judgment is true beyond itself. And, if the theory is neither true nor false beyond itself, it cannot be affirmed at all as the truth. What the theory does is to set up a world of separate, private disorganized thoughts which have no objects common to other thoughts which could judge them true or false. But is this world true or false? If true beyond private opinion, the position is contradicted. If not true beyond mere private opinion, what meaning does this world-theory possess?⁵⁶ The position is meaningless so that there is a real difference between truth and error, and the possibility of error cannot be doubted.

Royce's analysis of skepticism shows more than the certain truth that error is possible. It also shows that truth and error cannot be reasonably regarded as a matter of mere private opinion. There must be common grounds where two assertions meet so that one may be really true and the other really false. Without such common grounds, there can be no real difference between true and false statements. In short, truth and error to be possible require objectivity, that is, objects external to judgments which are common to other judgments.⁵⁷

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 421.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 378. Royce's insistence upon objectivity to constitute truth and error marks the point where he departs from the theory of the postulates and from pragmatism as adequate explanations of truth. Cf. p. 12, footnote 27.

5. Common Sense and the Problem of Error.

Unlike the doctrine of the relativity of truth, common sense readily acknowledges that error is both possible and actual. However, common sense meets difficulty when it tries to explain how error is possible and what are the logical conditions which make it possible. Royce believes that difficulty is due to the supposition of common sense that error is explained adequately by considering each separate judgment as it stands in relation to its object. Each judgment "stands out alone, looking at its object, and trying to agree with it. If it succeeds, we have truth. If the judgment fails, we have error."⁵⁸ Royce believes that for error to be possible another judgment is required, one which comprehends the first judgment and its object, and is aware that the judgment fails to agree with its object.

Logicians are agreed in defining an error as a judgment which does not agree with its object. Subject and predicate are so combined as, in the object, the corresponding elements are not combined. Royce finds obscure in this definition the assumed relation between the judgment and its object. What is meant by the object, and by the possession of the object implied by the pronoun, its, is unexplained.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 393.

The object is neither the subject nor predicate of the judgment, but exists external to the judgment. Now judgments can have many possible objects. Why does this judgment have just this object? Because, reasons Royce, the judgment has intended just this object. Then, the judgment has as object only what it intends, and must conform only to what it intends to conform. But, the essence of intention is knowledge of what one intends. But, one cannot fail to agree with what one knows. Therefore, error is impossible. This seems to be the result of trying to understand how error can occur in terms of one judgment only.⁵⁹

One may object that Royce uses the word, "known," ambiguously, and that the object of the erroneous judgment is known enough to constitute it the object, and not enough to prevent the error about it. Royce agrees. There must be a known aspect in order for it to be the object, and an unknown aspect in order for error to occur. What Royce does not see is how the same judgment can account for both aspects. The object is what is intended by the judgment. But one must know what he intends. "In the judgment, choosing and knowing the object seem inseparable."⁶⁰ Hence, this one judgment can have as object only the known aspect of the object, and on

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 396-399.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 399.

this basis error cannot occur. Consequently, one judgment considered in relation to its intended object is not sufficient to explain how error is possible. Another judgment is required whose higher view grasps what to the first judgment was the unknown aspect, thus making the error of the first judgment possible. In short, error is intelligible only in view of truth, a higher truth which comprehends it, and thus no single judgment can account adequately for its error.

At this point in his analysis, Royce inserts what he calls a "provisional psychological description of a judgment as a state of mind,"⁶¹ which he hopes "may serve to lead us up to the true insight that we seek into the nature of error."⁶² The analysis also gives needed supplement to the prior analysis. Royce accepts the definition of judgment as "the Consciousness about the objective validity of a subjective union of ideas." His psychological description of its elements is as follows.

The elements are: The Subject, with the accompanying shade of curiosity about it; the Predicate, with the accompanying sense of its worth in satisfying a part of our curiosity about the subject; and the Sense of Dependence, whereby we feel the value of this act to lie, not in itself, but in its agreement with a vaguely felt Beyond, that stands out there as Object.⁶³

⁶¹Ibid., p. 402.

⁶²Ibid., p. 403.

⁶³Ibid., p. 402.

Royce's analysis now turns upon the last mentioned element, the "Sense of Dependence." He describes this as follows.

The judgment feels itself not alone, but looks to a somewhat indefinite object as the model after which the present union of ideas is to be fashioned.⁶⁴

The intention to agree with the object is contained in the sense of dependence upon the object, and remains for this judgment incomplete, like the object itself. Somewhat vaguely this single act intends to agree with this vague object.⁶⁵

This psychological description stands out in sharp contrast to the otherwise clear and austere analyses in this chapter of Royce's book. It speaks almost mystically of obscure feelings, a vaguely felt Beyond and vague intentions. In another passage, Royce says approvingly of common sense that it "dimly feels that to some . . . judge of truth, appeal is made when we say that a thing is false not merely for us, but in very truth."⁶⁶ It would seem that, in Royce's view, only by such dim feelings and appeals can separate judgments go beyond the immediately known. For Royce, consciousness terminates in subjective impressions. What is given is not external. What the psychological description

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 403.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 404.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 427.

expresses is the felt need to transcend these subjective grounds for objective truth. And this is the importance of these passages. They attempt to refer separate judgments to what is real beyond subjective data. And this is of central importance to Royce's argument, for without such external reference there could be no common object for the separate judgments and the inclusive judgment. In view of its key position in the argument, the idea seems to lack sufficient development. It appears that Royce was aware of this since he will develop this idea into his fourth conception of Being in The World and the Individual.

Thus far, Royce has considered the general nature of error. We might compare his solution to a triad whose base is a single judgment related to its object by vague intention and whose apex is an inclusive thought which evaluates the relation of judgment to object. Royce now turns his attention to two special classes of error; one concerns error about the mind of one's neighbor, the other concerns error about matters of experience. In these types of error, the triad becomes more complex. The apex, the inclusive thought, will remain the same, but the base will include two sets of judgments, so that the inclusive thought brings into harmony, not a single judgment with its object, but two such relationships. We see the seed of the later theory of community.

When common sense tries to explain how error can occur concerning the mind of one's neighbor, it again meets difficulty. This time the problem lies in the supposition of common sense that the objects of our judgments exist as separate beings independent of consciousness. How is a mistaken judgment possible concerning the mind of one's neighbor, if we suppose him to be an independent being who is not even partly in our thoughts?⁶⁷ Royce agrees with common sense that we have only representative knowledge of our neighbor's mind.⁶⁸ But this presents a problem in understanding how error can occur about one of his thoughts. Royce illustrates the problem by imagining four people taking part in the conversation of two. There are the real John and the real Thomas, John as Thomas conceives him, and Thomas as John conceives him. Royce continues.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 408.

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 407-408. Royce contends this in brief reference to the Scottish School of common sense realism which maintained a direct or presentative knowledge of objects. This school was represented in America at the time chiefly in the writings of James McCosh. Beyond this brief reference, Royce gives little attention to immediate realism. This lacuna existed more generally on the American scene. Contemporaries like James, who regarded themselves as realists, maintained a mediate realism. Perry and Montague, who were to help create the later school of Neo-Realism, were also mediate realists. It was not until later, after Royce's death, that immediate realism, in the form of Critical-Realism, was given prominence in America by such men as Roy Sellars and Arthur Lovejoy. In regard to the immediate realism maintained in scholastic thought, William Montague says,

When John judges, of whom does he think? Plainly of that which can be an object to his thoughts, namely, of his Thomas. About whom can he err? About his Thomas? No, for he knows him too well. His conception of Thomas is his conception, and what he asserts it to be, that it is. About the real Thomas? No, for it would seem, according to common sense, that he has nothing to do with real Thomas in his thought, since that Thomas never becomes any part of his thought at all.⁶⁹

Two suppositions are implied in the difficulty, both of which Royce attributes to the common sense view. One is that real John and real Thomas are separate beings, independent of consciousness. The other is that each can achieve only a representative knowledge of the other.⁷⁰ The question is, how is error possible within the context of these suppositions? John can err neither about the real Thomas nor about his thought of Thomas. Nor can real Thomas be the object of a comparing judgment because we suppose him to be independent of all consciousness. We will await Royce's solution to this problem and turn our attention to the next class of errors which concerns matters of experience.

"The great Thomistic realism of the Catholics was unfortunately regarded by the non-Catholics as too closely bound with theological dogmas to be of any significance for scholarly thought." (William Montague, "The Story of American Realism," quoted from The Development of American Philosophy, ed. by W. Muellder, L. Sears and A. Schlachach (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 479).

⁶⁹The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, p. 408.

⁷⁰Royce does not share the first postulate as it contradicts the thesis of idealism that real objects exist only for consciousness. Royce agrees with the second supposition. External reality is known only through inner likeness.

Errors about matters of experience or matters of fact are clear enough in nature. They are errors about our actual or possible experience. We expect or postulate an experience that at a given time, or under given conditions, turns out to be other than it was postulated or expected to be. How are such errors possible? "When I say, Thus and so will be at such and such a future moment, I postulate certain realities not now given to my consciousness. And singular realities they are. For they have now no existence at all."⁷¹ To appreciate Royce's discussion at this point, recall that, for error to be possible, there must exist a real object for judgment, otherwise the judgment is a mere description of subjective states. But judgments about future experience seem to lack real objects since "they have now no existence at all." It seems natural enough to postulate that future events are now, as future, non-existent. "Yet," adds Royce, "I postulate that I can err about them."⁷² How such error is possible, we again await Royce's solution.

Another aspect of the problem is how to compare past and present experience so as to ascertain whether past expectation is presently fulfilled. The problem is that

⁷¹Ibid., p. 418.

⁷²Ibid., p. 418.

when the event comes to pass, the expectation no longer exists. They are each separate thoughts, far apart in time, each having a life of its own ideas. How can they be brought together to see whether the experience expected is identical with the experience fulfilled? Appeal to memory does not help since the same question would recur about memory in its relation to the original thought. How can the two ideas be brought together when "we have supposed the two ideas to be widely separated in time, and by hypothesis they are not together in one consciousness at all?"⁷³ The hypothesis is the natural postulate "that time is a pure succession of separate moments."⁷⁴ This postulate does not allow the separate moments of past expectation and future fulfilment to be presently real objects for a consciousness which could compare expectation with fulfilment, and evaluate the fulfilment as true or false in view of the expectation. Again, we await Royce's solution.

6. Solution and Conclusion to Absolute Idealism.

Royce returns to the example of John and Thomas, and he offers two possible solutions to the difficulty of how they can err about each other's thoughts. "If Thomas could

⁷³Ibid., p. 419.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 422.

know John's thoughts about him, then Thomas could possibly see John's error."⁷⁵ This solution is intriguing for its simplicity and it fulfils the requirements for the possibility of error which Royce previously established from his rejection of skepticism. There is a judgment (John's) whose real object (the real Thomas) is common to another comparing judgment (that of Thomas). It supposes that John knows something, but not everything, about real Thomas, and that Thomas through some medium knows John's judgment about him. It also supposes that Thomas knows more about himself than John knows.⁷⁶ However, Royce dismisses the solution because, "The judgment must disagree with its chosen object. If John never has Thomas in thought at all, how can John choose the real Thomas as his object?"⁷⁷

The second possible solution is to suppose a "spectator, a third person, to whom John and Thomas were both somehow directly present, so that he as it were included both of them."⁷⁸ This spectator could compare John's judgment of his representative Thomas with the real Thomas, and declare

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 409.

⁷⁶This solution appears to be the kind of knowledge which Royce will employ in his Theory of Interpretation some twenty-seven years later in The Problem of Christianity.

⁷⁷The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, p. 409.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 410.

the judgment true if it agreed, and false if it disagreed. However, this solution again contradicts "the natural presupposition that John and Thomas are separate self-existent beings."⁷⁹ Royce is now ready for his solution.

But on this natural presupposition neither of these two subjects could become object to the other at all, and error would here be impossible. Suppose then that we drop the natural presupposition, and say that John and Thomas are both actually present to and included in a third and higher thought.⁸⁰

Concerning the solution, we notice, first, that the natural postulate that John and Thomas are "separate self-existent beings" is given up. It is an assumption of common sense and it has the value only of a postulate. However, the possibility of error is not a mere postulate, but a doubtless truth. Hence, it requires the postulate to give way to the need of explaining possible error. Secondly, what is given up is that John and Thomas are "separate self-existent beings," that is, beings independent of consciousness. It is not, however, conceded that John and Thomas cease to be external to each other's thought which would return the situation to the purely subjective and relative view of truth which has been rejected. Rather, their whole reality is understood as being for a higher including thought.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 422.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 422.

This solution of Royce's idealism rests upon the need to explain the possibility of error within the context of a theory of knowledge in which ideas immediately terminate in subjective impressions.

Royce continues.

To explain the possibility of error about matters of fact seemed hard, because of the natural postulate that time is a pure succession of separate moments, so that the future is now as future non-existent, and so that judgments about the future lack real objects, capable of identification. Let us then drop this natural postulate, and declare time once for all present in all its moments to an universal all-inclusive thought.⁸¹

Again, the natural postulate gives way to the certain truth that error is possible. But this requires, in the case of judgments concerning temporal experience, that both past and future experience be presently real for a consciousness which can thus compare them with judgments of given present experience to ascertain agreement or disagreement. We notice that the conclusion makes all the moments of time presently actual to the universal consciousness. It does not conclude that all moments of time are so present to the human consciousness. It is because they are not so present that their presence to the universal consciousness is required for error concerning them to be possible, and this presence constitutes their whole reality.

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 422-423.

Let us summarize the argument by presenting what appears to be its three basic stages.

(1) Error is possible. Royce showed this to be certainly true in his rejection of skepticism.⁸²

(2) The requirements for possible error in general are: (a) a judgment, (b) its external object, and (c) an inclusive thought which compares and evaluates the judgment as agreeing or disagreeing with its object. Royce established this in rejecting the common sense supposition that error requires only (a) a judgment, and (b) its external object.⁸³

(3) The requirements for possible error in regard to the mind of one's neighbor, and in regard to matters of fact demand an inclusive thought to whom (a) the judgment is directly known, and (b) the object of the judgment is directly known since these have being in and for this inclusive thought. Thus, (c) this inclusive thought appears as a "universal consciousness" to which are present in one insight all judgments and their objects, and all time past, present and future.⁸⁴ In showing this, the natural postulates of common sense that John and Thomas are separate beings

⁸²Cf. above, pp. 20-24.

⁸³Cf. above, pp. 25-29.

⁸⁴Cf. above, pp. 29-35.

independent of consciousness, and that past and future are non-existent, gave way to the necessity of explaining the certain truth that error is possible. Thus, from the possibility of error Royce has argued to Absolute or Objective Idealism. This conclusion emerges only in the third stage of the argument. However, the third stage logically depends upon the second, and the second stage logically depends upon the first.

7. Absolute Idealism and the Nature of Error.

Royce sums up the result of the argument.

And to sum up, let us overcome all our difficulties by declaring that all the many Beyonds, which single significant judgments seem vaguely and separately to postulate, are present as fully realized intended objects to the unity of an all-inclusive, absolutely clear, universal, and conscious thought, of which all judgments, true or false, are but fragments, the whole being at once Absolute Truth and Absolute Knowledge.⁸⁵

The "many Beyonds," which are vaguely postulated, refer to the desire of single judgments to transcend subjective confinement for objective reality. The Universal Thought fully knows this reality, unknown but vaguely postulated by the single judgment, and thus acts as judge of correspondence between vague postulate and fully known object. But, more than this, the Universal Thought so unites

⁸⁵The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, p. 423.

vague intentions with real objects that they become "fully realized intended objects." We interpret this statement of Royce in the following way. In case the judgment is declared true by the Universal Thought, this declaration completes the incomplete intention of the separate judgment whose purpose was this known and approved agreement with the real object. In case the judgment is declared false, the intention of the judgment nonetheless was to aim at truth. But, in this case, the truth is that the judgment's intention, which aimed at truth, is completed and realized by the Universal Thought which truly declares it false in light of the true knowledge of the object which corresponds to and corrects the false judgment.

Royce adds that all judgments are but fragments, the whole being at once Absolute Truth and Absolute Knowledge. Real truth and error are not in the separate self-enclosed judgments. Real truth and error include the judgment, the external object, and the evaluation of agreement or disagreement by the Universal Thought. The separate judgment is an element or fragment of this Whole; it exists in and for this Thought as one of its elements joined to other elements. The term, Absolute, now means both "objective" and "whole," objective truth being contained only in the Whole. Royce illustrates this wholeness by an analogy drawn from human consciousness. Human thought includes and

reduces to unity the many elements of any complex assertion. Take, for example, the complex assertion, "This color before me is red, and to say that it is blue would be to make a blunder."⁸⁶ The assertion contains the perception of red; the judgment, "This color is red"; and the erroneous judgment, "This is blue." These elements are brought into the unity of an inclusive thought which is simply the whole assertion grasped in one insight. In this way the Universal Thought is related to my thoughts and their objects, bringing them into unity.⁸⁷

Royce continues.

In short, error becomes possible as one moment or element in a higher truth, that is, in a consciousness that makes error a part of itself, while recognizing it as error.⁸⁸

This is exemplified in Royce's analogy above. We might also illustrate the meaning as follows. Let the erroneous judgment be: "A is X and Z." Let the higher truth be: "The judgment 'A is X and Z' is false, since A is clearly X and Y and non-Z." The inclusive judgment makes the erroneous judgment part of itself while recognizing it as error. Thus, error becomes part of the Universal Thought only as a

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 423.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 378.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 424.

moment or element in its higher truth. Royce says that "error implies a thought that includes it and the corresponding truth in the unity of one thought with the object of both of them."⁸⁹

Royce gives the following definition of error.

An error, we reply, is an incomplete thought, that to a higher thought, which includes it and its intended object, is known as having failed in the purpose that it more or less clearly had, and that is fully realized in this higher thought.⁹⁰

In this definition, error is identified in part with the separate judgment which Royce calls "an incomplete thought." It has failed of the purpose which it more or less clearly had. However, the error is only partially constituted by the incomplete thought since it lacks an external object, and, as such, can be neither true nor false. The constitution of error requires all the elements of the triad: the judgment, object and inclusive thought. Elsewhere, Royce states that the Universal Thought is "necessary to constitute the relation of truth and error."⁹¹ The Universal Thought supplies the knowledge of the real object which is required for possible error so that it enters the constitution of possible error.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 425.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 425.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 427.

Royce also concludes that the Universal Thought is infinite and eternal. Royce previously concluded that the inclusive thought transcends time, all of whose moments are presently actual to its vision. It is moreover infinite. "The possibilities of error are infinite. Infinite then must be the inclusive thought."⁹² However, Royce, is not content to show that the inclusive thought is infinite from the infinite possibility of error, and here his thought becomes obscure. "Nor is this mere possibility enough . . . But in order that the judgment should be false when made, it must have been false before it was made."⁹³ Thus, the infinity of possible error is not merely possible, but actual. "All the infinite series of blunders that you could make . . . not only would be blunders, but in very truth now are blunders, though you personally could never commit them all."⁹⁴ Thus, we have an infinity of actual errors which humans do not commit. "All the thoughts are therefore in the last analysis actually true or false, only for the all-including Thought, the Infinite."⁹⁵

These passages are obscure. They remove the human element from error and place it all in the Universal Thought. This is foreign to the prior analysis which regarded the

⁹²Ibid., p. 431.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 431.

⁹³Ibid., p. 424.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 432.

human judgment as required for possible error and attributed to the Universal Thought the truth which makes human error possible. The literature on Royce does not clarify this area of obscurity. It is my interpretation that at this point Royce is regarding possible error as logically similar to possible experience. Each occupies a similar logical position in the argument for an all-inclusive thought. Royce refers to "the previous chapter concerning the nature of possibility itself."⁹⁶ I take this to refer to "possible experience." There Royce showed that possible experience cannot be regarded as merely possible, but must refer to an actual object, an iceberg, a molecule, which is actually experienced by a world-consciousness.⁹⁷ Perhaps he regards possible error in the same light. Merely possible error would be a merely subjective experience, so that it must refer to what is actually experienced in the Infinite Thought. This seems to be the unexpressed middle term in Royce's thought. However, there is this unhappy difference that possible experience refers to what is valid beyond itself without ceasing to be human possible experience, whereas possible error, in becoming the Infinite's actual error, ceases to be human possible error. It seems that the

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 429.

⁹⁷Ibid., pp. 363-368. Cf. above, pp. 18-20.

real point of similarity is that the objective grounds of possible error are like the iceberg and molecule of possible experience. Both are valid beyond human actual experience. Just as the world-consciousness knows the iceberg and molecule, and this knowledge makes human "possible experience" intelligible, so the Infinite Thought knows the objective grounds of possible error, and this knowledge makes error possible. It does not, however, of itself constitute error, according to Royce's prior analysis. It provides the objective truth in light of which human error is possible. Thus, just as possible experience does not have to be actual human experience in order for it to be a real object for a world-consciousness, so possible error does not have to be actual error in order for it to be a real object for Infinite Thought.

Besides being infinite and eternal, Royce concludes that the Universal Thought constitutes a "rational unity" as opposed to an aggregate of truths since error is possible not only as to objects but as to the relations of objects. "And to know all relations at once is to know them in absolute rational unity, as forming in their wholeness one single thought."⁹⁸ Royce is referring to "all the possible relations of all the objects in space and time." In a

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 425.

similar passage in The Spirit of Modern Philosophy, Royce points out that such questions as "where matter was at any point of time in the past, what is to become of the world's energy," are matters of truth, and truth is necessarily present to the world-consciousness, so that the world is surely intelligent, rational and orderly, although to us this rationality may be mysterious.⁹⁹

Royce sums up the conclusion of his argument. "All reality must be present to the Unity of the Infinite Thought."¹⁰⁰ Royce regards this as the only possible solution. "Either there is no such thing as error, . . . or else there is an infinite unity of conscious thought to which is present all possible truth."¹⁰¹ Royce's reason for arguing from error is pedagogic. While the same result could be reached by analyzing the question, what is Truth, this approach would not convince the skeptic who would not admit that men possess any truth.¹⁰² The argument reflects how Royce overcame his own skepticism.¹⁰³ It is precisely in its inability to explain how error is possible that the

⁹⁹The Spirit of Modern Philosophy: An Essay in the Form of Lectures (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1892), p. 380.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 433.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 424.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 432.

¹⁰³Cf. above, pp. 20-21.

skepticism of total relativity of truth shows its incoherence.¹⁰⁴

8. The Problem of Evil.

We have seen how Royce regards the whole of reality as absolutely true. As it is true, so is it also good. "The world then, as a whole, is and must be absolutely good, since the infinite thought must know what is desirable, and knowing it, must have present in itself the true objects of desire."¹⁰⁵

This consideration leads to Royce's discussion of the problem of evil. Royce brings to this discussion the same logical structure which he employed in solving the problem of error, and he calls attention to the connection in the Preface.¹⁰⁶ An understanding of this connection is important in appreciating Royce's special approach to the solution to the problem of evil. In general, just as truth and error are really distinct, so are good and evil.¹⁰⁷ Just as the erroneous judgment lacks correspondence with its vaguely intended object, so evil viewed externally is just an evidence for us that there exists something desirable which we have not and cannot just now get.¹⁰⁸ And just as

¹⁰⁴Cf. above, pp. 22-24.

¹⁰⁵The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, p. 444.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., pp. xvi-xvii. ¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 466. ¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 444

the erroneous judgment is declared not to correspond with its real object as known by the infinite Thought, so evil is reproved as not corresponding to the absolute desirableness of the good which the infinite Thought possesses.¹⁰⁹

Royce's special concern lies with the problem of moral evil and in showing how it enters as an organic element into a whole which is morally good. He does this in the pattern of his solution to the problem of error, which required the subordination of the erroneous judgment to the true insight of an infinite Thought so that the whole itself is absolutely true. Thus, just as error, without ceasing to be error, is transcended into a higher truth, so moral evil, without ceasing to be moral evil, is transcended through incorporation into the higher viewpoint of the Infinite whose condemnation constitutes its own triumphant goodness.¹¹⁰ Thus both error and evil remain as conquered aspects of the Infinite's truth and moral goodness, and this constitutes its triumph.¹¹¹

Royce explains this through analogy with human consciousness, just as he did with the question of error.¹¹² In our moral acts, we experience good and evil impulses warring implacably. When one acts morally, he makes the

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 445.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 466.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 452.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 467.

evil impulse a part of his good consciousness in overcoming it. Only through this inner victory over evil that is experienced as a conquered tendency does the good will have its being. In this way we experience how evil impulses are organically joined to the triumph of the good will which momentarily subordinates the evil to the good.¹¹³ Royce applies this analogy to God. Moral goodness is not mere innocence, but realized insight which is victorious. Since the perfect life of God must have the absolutely good will, it must be conscious of such a victory. "And what we here experience in the single moment of time, . . . God must experience, and eternally."¹¹⁴ As man's moral triumph is over evil impulses, God's moral triumph is over men's moral evil. Thus, the wicked will of men enters the organic life of God as part of a total good will, just as the evil impulse of the good man forms an element in his realization of moral goodness.¹¹⁵ God's moral goodness requires this moral conflict and victory to be eternal.¹¹⁶

Royce points out that his organic solution to evil avoids the reproach that God uses moral evil as an external means to an end. "Moral evil, viewed as an external opaque

¹¹³Ibid., p. 452.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 453.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 455.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 466.

fact, is inexplicable, disheartening, horrible."¹¹⁷ Royce's solution has the merit of neither avoiding evil as a real force opposed to good, nor of keeping God aloof from the evil in the world. However, Royce's solution seems to encounter two other problems. First, it seems that Royce requires moral evil for the victory of God's moral goodness; and, secondly, how is one to compose the concepts of victory and eternal struggle?

The first problem arises out of Royce's rigid adherence to his analogy of human moral goodness which requires an evil impulse to be overcome. In God's moral goodness, the place of the evil impulse is occupied by the human wicked will. It is one thing to say, as Royce does, that human moral evil is explained as an integral element in the triumph of God's moral goodness;¹¹⁸ but it is another thing to say that God's moral goodness requires the existence of human moral evil, which Royce also seems to say. Since moral goodness is the overthrow of the evil will in the good will, "then, whenever the world contains any moral goodness, it also, and for that very reason, contains, in its organic unity, moral evil."¹¹⁹ Here Royce departs from treating

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 465.

¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 456-457.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 465.

evil with the same logic applied to error. Error was not required that God know truth, but vice versa. But here the nature of God's moral goodness seems to require human moral evil. The difficulty does not seem to lie with the inner logic of the organic view of evil, but with the rigid application of the analogy with human moral experience. What by nature is required for human moral goodness might be conceived by analogy as de facto requiring God's reprobation, thus showing God to be morally good, yet not be required by the nature of God's moral goodness, provided God has other ways of being morally good. Yet, other ways of showing God to be morally good are thus far outside the scope of Royce's theodicy which sees God simply as a higher victorious thought. However, when Royce next treats this problem in The Spirit of Modern Philosophy, he softens his position so that human moral evil is not seen as necessary to God's moral goodness, but God's moral goodness is seen as necessary to explain de facto human moral evil. "Many of these moral agents, then, will sin, will fail in the conflict of life."¹²⁰ Thus, some men glorify God "as vessels of his wrath." Others glorify God "as vessels of honor."¹²¹ This returns the treatment of moral evil to the logic of Royce's treatment of truth and error.

¹²⁰The Spirit of Modern Philosophy, p. 456.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 461.

A second difficult concept for Royce is that the divine life seems involved in endless conflict without final resolution. Endless conflict avoids "the laziness of an infinitely vacant life." Yet, God as Absolute goodness must also realize a final resolution. Royce likens this tension to the conception of Heraclitus. God's life is this infinite rest, "not apart from but in the endless strife, as in substance Heraclitus so well and originally taught."¹²² We can feel the tension of opposites in "this absolute rest above the real strife and in the midst of the real strife."¹²³

Besides moral evil, there is another kind of evil which Royce calls the "accidents of existence."¹²⁴ Death, the cruelty of fate, the unavoidable pains of life, are evils whose resolution we do not inwardly experience, and so we cannot know how they must be in God universal good.¹²⁵ Yet, we have no reason to complain about them since God experiences them, and must experience them somehow as elements in a perfect life. From this we may take comfort. However inexplicable to us, they are not something God wishes to be otherwise, "but they are organically joined with the rest of the glorious Whole."¹²⁶

¹²²The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, p. 459.

¹²³Ibid., p. 468.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 451.

¹²⁵Ibid., pp. 454-455.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 451.

Royce's solution includes God's experience of evil. This has been criticized, but it is consistent with Royce's logic of error which is also experienced by the universal Thought. It is also consistent with the principle of Royce's idealism that whatever is real, is real for consciousness. Thus, if evil is real, it must be internal to God's consciousness of which it is a part of the whole, just as error is part of the whole. How this occurs in the case of the "accidents of existence," we have no way of knowing. We only know that it occurs as a subordinate element in a higher good.

In general, Royce's treatment of the problem of evil suffers from two main defects. One is that God appears indifferent to the evils which afflict human beings. Royce speaks of "the failure of all these personal concerns of ours to find any hint of response from the Absolute."¹²⁷ This is consistent with the way in which Royce has approached God as the objective grounds which explain the presence of evil in the world. The second defect is that human efforts, although morally required, seem to contribute little to the whole scheme of things. "Progress in this world as a whole is therefore simply not needed. The good is eternally gained even in and through the evil."¹²⁸ Our moral progress and our

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 438.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 466.

rational progress are mere minor facts happening at a moment of time. This reflects Royce's early treatment of the individual as a mere element in a higher organic whole.

9. The Conception of God. Critique.

Royce suggests that the question whether his theory of things is a Theism or a Pantheism, is not a very fruitful question¹²⁹ since it differs from the commoner forms of both. "Both usually consider God as a Power," and either separate or identify God and his products.¹³⁰ Royce conceives God as the "Universal Thought" who "combines the thoughts of all of us into an absolute unity of thought" together with all the actual and possible objects in the universe. This conception does not lie in the traditional empirical approach to God through causality and teleology, but in the "idealistic tradition from Plato downwards," and is specifically based "upon an analysis of truth and error as necessary conceptions."¹³¹ The result is that God is conceived, not as a Power who creates, but as a Universal Thought in whom and for whom are all powers.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 475.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 477.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 476.

We have considered that Royce also conceives this Universal Thought as infinite and eternally complete.¹³² It remains constant and unchanging while the objects of its vision change and progress from state to state. These characteristics are found in all of Royce's subsequent conceptions of God. However Royce may enrich his conception of God beyond a Universal Thought, his conception invariably regards God as infinite, eternal and unchanging. These attributes are then fundamental to Royce's way of conceiving God, and they distinguish his conception from all process philosophies which view God as evolving or as somehow contained within the processes of time and change. Royce rejects what he calls "Logical Monism" without mentioning any names. The logical monist conceives human reason as "an activity, a working towards an end," and he thinks the external universe after the analogy of human reason. Consequently, "the constant tendency is for him to conceive the world as a process whereby his World Spirit makes actual what was potential," and thus he conceives God as "the process of self-manifestation of one eternal rational Power."¹³³ Royce rejects this conception because the universal reason, either irrationally or as compelled by another, has gone

¹³²Cf. above, pp. 41-43.

¹³³The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, p. 258.

without the possible perfection which it might possess and never ought to have lacked.

One may also regard Royce to conceive God as transcendent, although Royce himself does not use the word transcendent to characterize God. God is the Universal Thought who transcends all the elements of his thought and organically joins them in one infinite, eternal, unchanging Insight. One may also cite in this regard Royce's rejection of humanism. God is not humanity. "Here is not the ideal We will serve humanity, but how can we worship it?" God is "a Life greater in infinite degree than humanity."¹³⁴

However, transcendence must be taken together with the organic view of the Whole. "Organic" means for Royce the subordination and relation of one element to another by the Universal Thought in whom and for whom these elements have their being. "Organic" also refers to the whole world seen as a rational unity by the Universal Thought. Underlying Royce's conception is the thesis of idealism that reality is only for consciousness. Royce applies this thesis differently to the human and to the divine consciousness. Human thought is constructive of its knowledge of the real world, but the real world is external to its consciousness. Only for the Universal Thought are real objects internal to

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 472.

its Thought. However, these objects are not products of its Thought, but are simply given. That they form an organic whole is discovered neither through causality nor teleology, but through an analysis of the nature of truth and error. The model of the organic whole is not a biological organism, nor a thing in nature composed of substance and accident, but the unity of insight which a human being achieves when he brings two or more elements of his thought into unity.

Royce's critics soon pointed out what appeared to be a Pantheism in his position.¹³⁵ Human beings are mere elements of a higher Thought, and thus they appear to lack the metaphysical status of true individuality, and so, also, the integrity of free choice required for moral action. The criticism seems to have foundation since human beings, as mere elements of a higher Thought, have no being in themselves and for themselves. Royce's subsequent vigorous reaction to this criticism in The Conception of God indicates that he himself was not content with this conception. He will make various new efforts to express better the individuality of human beings.

This metaphysical monism seems to be reinforced by an epistemological monism since Royce provides no theory of

¹³⁵Cf. the remarks of George Howison in The Conception of God (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1897), pp. 97-100, 107.

strictly human truth and error. The external object of human knowledge lies outside its consciousness, and consequently it must be supplied by the Universal Thought. However, the object is not supplied in the sense that the Universal Thought causes the human judgment to know it, but only in the sense that error now becomes possible since the Universal Thought knows both the object and the human judgment. But, how can the human judgment intend an object which must be supplied by another who does not communicate this object to the human judgment? Royce replies by saying that the judgment vaguely intends the object. However, this reply remains undeveloped in Royce's thought,¹³⁶ and Royce must have been aware both of its importance and its undeveloped state since it will later emerge as his "fourth conception of being" in The World and the Individual.¹³⁷ The problem is that Royce requires two judgments to constitute an error, and one of these judgments is the comparing insight of the Universal Thought. Hence, the human knower is

¹³⁶Cf. above, pp. 27-29.

¹³⁷Marcel picks out the connection. "As to the feeling of dependence with respect to the object, it implies an intention, the internal purpose of which we have already spoken." Cf. Gabriel Marcel, La métaphysique de Royce (Paris: Aubier, 1945). English translation by Virginia and Gordon Ringer, Royce's Metaphysics (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1956), pp. 23-24.

incapable of committing his own error, and there is no theory of strictly human knowledge. Royce finally says this. "Our thought needs the Infinite Thought in order that it may get, through this Infinite Judge, the privilege of being so much as even an error."¹³⁸

Without a theory of human truth, Royce's metaphysical monism is also an epistemological monism, and there is one Being and one Knower. Consequently, we do not find in Royce's early thought a theory of community, although the seed of the later community theory expressed in The Problem of Christianity is planted in the analysis of error concerning the neighbor's mind.¹³⁹ We find only organic unity and monism. The element of transcendence is clear in Royce's early thought, but it is obscured, not by close union with the world which is transcended, but by an impoverished view of that world.

One can feel the tension in Royce's thought polarized between the need to express authentic subjectivity, such as we find in the theory of the postulates, and the need to find absolutely objective grounds of truth and error. The conception of God emerges as these absolute objective grounds of truth and error, and consequently as the solution

¹³⁸The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, p. 427.

¹³⁹Cf. above, p. 29.

to an epistemological problem. The Universal Thought lacks important characteristics of subjectivity since he is neither a creator, nor one who communicates, nor one who loves, but simply one who knows and grounds objective truth and error. This conception is consistent with the philosophical method Royce has followed, and Royce points out the need of such consistency in arriving at a philosophical conception of God. "The proof that one can offer for God's presence at the heart of the world constitutes also the best exposition that one can suggest regarding what one means by the conception of God."¹⁴⁰

However, it would misinterpret Royce to think that he does not intend and, in fact, does not present a religious conception of God, as far as that concept goes. The Universal Thought is in Royce's mind "an object of infinite religious worth."¹⁴¹ God is the all-knowing Judge for whom Job longed, who objectively estimates the good and evil deeds of men.¹⁴² We need this Judge to approve our struggle for moral goodness. "That thou art, is enough for our moral comfort."¹⁴³ This consoles the person of good will who desires "not to be alone. Approval for what really deserves

¹⁴⁰The Conception of God, p. 7.

¹⁴¹The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, p. 477.

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 381.

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 439.

approval he needs, approval from one who truly knows him."¹⁴⁴ Royce is agnostic concerning individual immortality,¹⁴⁵ and he offers no motive of personal gain for a good moral life. We have sufficient motivation in the knowledge that we are known and remembered in this Eternity. Royce's language of God sometimes passionately expresses his conception.

Ours is not thy eternity. But in thy eternity we would be remembered, not as rebels against the good, but as doers of the good; . . . as healthy leaves that flourished for a time on the branches of the eternal tree of life, and that have fallen, though not into forgetfulness. For in thee nothing is forgotten.¹⁴⁶

Royce conceives religion as giving motivation to morality by the belief that "righteousness is in deepest truth triumphant in the world."¹⁴⁷ Religion also gives practical application to the metaphysics of the Absolute by the belief that one serves the Eternal in serving righteousness, and is known by the Eternal.¹⁴⁸ This service is to attempt to bring into the world a reflection of the Absolute Unity which is God's eternal life.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 471-472.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 478.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 440.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 479.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., p. 471.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 441.

CHAPTER II

THE MIDDLE THOUGHT OF ROYCE

1. Transition to The World and the Individual.¹

Royce was pleased with the initial favorable response to the publication of The Religious Aspect of Philosophy.² He spent the next several years, besides filling his teaching duties at Harvard, in publishing an historical study of California,³ and a novel.⁴ Worn out by overwork, he spent most of the year 1888 convalescing in travel.⁵ It was not until 1892 that Royce again expressed himself on the subject of the Absolute. In this connection he developed in The Spirit of Modern Philosophy an important distinction between the World of Description and the World of Appreciation.⁶

¹The World and the Individual (2 vols.; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1899 and 1901).

²Cf. Royce's letter to George Coale, May 31, 1885. In John Clendenning, The Letters of Josiah Royce (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 167-168.

³California from the Conquest of 1846 to the Second Vigilance Committee in San Francisco: A Study of American Character (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1886).

⁴The Feud of Oakfield Creek: A Novel of California Life (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1887).

⁵For the history of this period, cf. The Letters of Josiah Royce, pp. 211-30.

⁶The Spirit of Modern Philosophy, Chapter XII, pp. 381-434.

We can distinguish within experience what is describable and what is only appreciable. This is the contrast between the permanent and universal elements of experience, and the private and fleeting elements. The former are public and objective, and the norm of their objectivity is the permanence and identity of description which many can give to them. The latter is the worth or value that "my experience has for me when regarded just as my own feeling."⁷ Feelings are appreciated, but with difficulty described.

It is the business of natural science to describe experience. What is capable of description and apt to reveal outer truth must be able to be reproduced and rendered permanent so as to be communicated from moment to moment. Moreover, the contents must express definite relations in space and time, and relations that fall under such categories as quantity, number, etc. Thus, we experience the world of description as a world of permanence, necessity, order and form, so that what is public and objective is distinguished from the private and the subjective elements of experience which remain uncategorized and incapable of being shared.

Besides the world of description, the real world also includes the world of appreciation. For example, my world of daily experience includes my friend and, by my

⁷Ibid., p. 389.

friend, "I do not mean this maze of molecules."⁸ I mean his intelligence, his admirable ideals, "his will, which is often so much wiser than mine, his approval, which I prize so highly." Here are facts because I mean them, but these facts are neither within me nor yet describable in the categories of the understanding. Yet they are among the most vitally real objects of my faith and of my will. What I share with my friend is "never consciousness, but only the imitative abstract" of it.⁹ His appreciative inner life is at once foreign to me and yet the object of my interest which I mean.

From this, Royce concludes, in the manner of reasoning in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, that, in meaning my friend,

I mean a fact in the same conscious spiritual realm with me, a fact whose relation to me, as the true object of my thought, only the inclusive Self, in whose thought, for whose reflection, both my friend and I exist,--only he can know, and knowing can constitute.¹⁰

There is, then, a "double aspect" according to which the friends know each other. From the point of view of description, my friend is, as a fact of space and time, real for me only insofar as his inner life is foreign. "But

⁸Ibid., p. 406.

⁹Ibid., p. 407.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 408.

in so far as I truly communicate with him, we are members of the same world of appreciation; and in this sense he is real to me by virtue of our organic unity in the one Self."¹¹

Royce conceives this union as "the unity of self-consciousness of the one Spirit" whose appreciations are his own, yet in them "we all share, for that fact is what binds us together."¹² The world of appreciation is this spiritual realm of self-consciousness, of worth, of purpose and of ideal.

Although the two worlds are seen initially as separated, Royce joins them together. The intention to communicate by descriptions, and thus to have truth in common, supposes the organic spiritual relations by which "all the spirits are truly together in one Spirit."¹³ The world of description is the phenomenal aspect of the interior life which it is meant to symbolize.¹⁴

Royce's double aspect theory of experience and reality has important implications. It allows him to join the "purpose aspect" of his thought, which he expressed in the theory of the postulates,¹⁵ with the "pure Thought" aspect which formerly characterized the Absolute. The

¹¹ Ibid., p. 409.

¹² Ibid., p. 412.

¹³ Ibid., p. 408.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 417.

¹⁵ Cf. above, pp. 5-12.

Absolute is now capable of conception as Will as well as Thought, for its world is one of appreciation as well as description.¹⁵ This development will become explicit in the supplementary essay of The Conception of God where it will lead to the defense of individuality and the freedom of moral agents. The double aspect theory will be developed further in The World and the Individual,¹⁶ and it will have consequences there in distinguishing the third and fourth conceptions of being.

The Conception of God¹⁷ was Royce's next attempt to reason to the Absolute and try to define the Absolute as a

¹⁵This is probably what Royce had in mind when he wrote to William James from sea on May 21, 1888, of a metaphysical speculation which "does more to make the dry bones of my 'Universal Thought' live." (The Letters of Josiah Royce, p. 216.) Also, when Royce accepted Howison's invitation, in 1884, to address his Philosophical Union the following year on the "Conception of God," Royce was able to write to Howison that his "interpretation of the Absolute would be more obviously teleological" than the one presented in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy. (The Letters of Josiah Royce, p. 326.)

¹⁶The world of description is pursued technically and at length in The World and the Individual, vol. 2, Lecture II, "The Linkage of Facts," and Lecture IV, "Physical and Social Reality," in connection with the development of Royce's Cosmology.

¹⁷The Conception of God is the account of a public discussion held before the Philosophical Union of the University of California in 1895. The first edition, published by the Union in 1895, contains an address by Royce and criticisms of Royce's address by Sidney Edward Mezes, Joseph Le Conte, and George Holmes Howison. The second edition appeared in 1897. This edition also contains an "Introduction by the Editor," George Howison, and a supplementary essay, "The Absolute and the Individual," by Royce.

conception of God. The argument "is essentially similar to the one before employed" in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy where Royce argued from the possibility of error. Here he argues from "the implications of very human ignorance itself."¹⁸ There follows a summary of Royce's argument.

The agnostic says that man is "ignorant of the true nature of reality,"¹⁹ since all knowledge is through experience, and experience tells us, not of outer physical reality, but of the current state of one's physiological constitution. Royce probes the assumptions of this statement of human ignorance. How can one truly say that knowledge is confined to sensations, and that sensations do not reveal outer physical reality, unless such truth is known by an experience higher than sense experience? In fact, it is the higher indirect experience which scientific knowledge provides that enables us to assess direct sense experience as relatively ignorant. Thus, sensory knowledge is declared ignorant, not in contrast with any reality apart from any possible experience, but in contrast with the conceived object of an ideal organized experience whose contents and objects are discovered by hypotheses and such predictions which our fragmentary experience can verify.²⁰

¹⁸The Conception of God, p. 46.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 16.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 28-30.

What is real is judged to differ from illusion "in so far as the chance experience of one point of view gets contrasted with what would be, or might be, experienced from some larger, more rationally permanent, or more inclusive and uniting point of view."²¹ To conceive any human belief as false is to conceive it as "either possibly or actually corrected from some higher point of view, to which a larger whole of experience is considered as present."²² Thus, reality is what is present to an organized experience, and the terms, reality and organized experience, are correlative. An Absolute Reality, if such exists, means what is present to an absolutely organized experience inclusive of all possible experience.

What is meant by an absolutely organized experience? It can be understood by contrasting it with the relatively organized experience such as the sciences possess. This relatively organized experience is defined as "the consensus of the competent observers," and it thus has a social origin as its basis.

Deeper than our belief in any physical fact is our common-sense assurance that the experience of our fellows is as genuine as our own, has present to it

²¹Ibid., p. 30.

²²Ibid., p. 31.

objects identical with those that we ourselves experience, and consequently supplements our own.²³

Thus, when one believes himself to verify a truth, "it becomes for him a concrete truth, and not a merely conceived possibility, precisely so far as he believes that his fellow or some concrete mind does verify it."²⁴

My fellow's experience supplements my own in two senses, namely, as actual and as possible experience. When I appeal to his experience for verification of my judgment, I appeal to an actual experience. However, Royce sees this appeal as inadequate for the purposes of verification because

human experience is not precisely an organized whole. Other men experience in passing moments, just as I do. Their consensus, in so far as it is reached, is no one whole of organized experience at all.²⁵

On the other hand, so far as some consensus is reached, an ideal of possible unity is suggested. What men

²³Ibid., p. 33.

²⁴Ibid., p. 34. This social appeal for the verification of human judgment notably differs from the earlier argument in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy (cf. above, pp. 33-35), and in this respect it resembles the later argument in The Problem of Christianity more than any prior argument. The later argument differs from the present in the considerations which follow. The entire argument is repeated with fuller development in "The Eternal and the Practical," Philosophical Review, XIII (1904), pp. 135-42.

²⁵The Conception of God, p. 34.

do experience suggests what they ought to experience "if all their moments were linked expressions of one universal meaning which was present to one Universal Subject, of whose insight their own experiences were but fragments."²⁶ The question, then, is whether this ideally organized experience is real or barely possible. This question can also be stated, "Does a real world ultimately exist at all?" since reality and organized experience are correlative.

Royce gives two arguments why the absolutely organized experience is real and not barely possible. First, "there can be no such thing as a merely possible truth, definable apart from some actual experience."²⁷ The reasoning seems to be that some possibilities are "true" or significant possibilities when grounded in actual experience. Such possibilities cannot be regarded to be merely possible or hypothetical, but must also be actual or categorical. The absolutely organized experience, as a possibility, has been suggested by relatively organized experience which is inadequate for the verification of human judgment. It is, then, a "true" possibility which must also be actual. The argument seems to anticipate the transition from the third

²⁶Ibid., p. 35.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 36-37.

to the fourth conception of being in The World and the Individual.²⁸

Secondly, Royce argues that the absolutely organized experience is actual by hypothetically assuming that it is an unrealized ideal, and that, despite our hopes and will to win it, we are in error in believing that it is. What will this error mean? It will mean that one experiences his fragmentary experience as a final truth and an absolute experience. Only an absolute experience could say with assurance, "Beyond my world there is no further experience actual."²⁹ But this contradicts the hypothesis that there is no absolute experience. Royce concludes, "Experience must constitute, in its entirety, one self-determined and consequently absolute and organised whole."³⁰

Royce's conception of God remains monistic as in his earlier work. "This Absolute Experience is related to our experience as an organic whole to its own fragments."³¹ However, Royce also says that his conception of God now "undertakes to be distinctly theistic, and not pantheistic."³² He does not propose God as an "Unconscious Reality" or a

²⁸Cf. below, section 6 of the present chapter.

²⁹Ibid., p. 40.

³⁰Ibid., p. 41.

³¹Ibid., p. 44.

³²Ibid., p. 49.

"Universal Substance." God is defined by the traditional attribute of Omniscience. This means that, unlike human beings', God's ideas are not divorced from his experience as unfulfilled ideals or unanswered questions. Rather, his experience fulfils his ideas, "as answering what, were he not omniscient, would be mere questions."³³ Implicit in the notion of God fulfilling his ideas in his experience is the new element of teleology in Royce's conception of God. God's experience is what it ought to be since it fulfils his ideas. His experience is thus "good and perfect," and so he must be judged to be omnipotent and "the source and principle of the universe of truth."³⁴ Since God completely fulfils his ideas in his experience, he can be called simply the "Absolute," that is, "the being sufficient unto himself."³⁵ God is also a Self because he is self-conscious, that is, he beholds the fulfilment of his own thought.

In the discussion which followed Royce's presentation, George Holmes disagreed with Royce "when he claims that the conception of God--if God we may name it--afforded by his Monistic Idealism is distinctly theistic instead of pantheistic."³⁶ What Royce's conception lacks is the "distinct reality, the full otherhood, of the creation; so that there

³³Ibid., p. 11.

³⁴Ibid., p. 13.

³⁵Ibid., p. 14.

³⁶Ibid., p. 97.

shall be no confusion of the creature with the Creator."³⁷ What is lacking above all is the "moral reality of the creature, which means his self-determining freedom" even in reference to the Creator. Royce's monism makes us all one and the same final Self who is the sole responsible agent. But this is incompatible with true personality since the real test of personality is the recognition of other genuinely real persons.³⁸

Although William James was not directly connected with The Conception of God, it was significant in the development of Royce's thought that this friend and admired colleague was changing his original unqualified agreement.³⁹ James, a mediate realist, had admired Royce's early work for the way in which it solved the problem of how an idea relates to its object. James came to see clearly in 1893 that Royce's idealistic solution was not required to solve this problem.⁴⁰ In general, James opposed the idea of an already finished universe which left no room for good people to make it better, or the bad to make it worse. To monism he opposed

³⁷Ibid., p. 98.

³⁸Ibid., p. 107.

³⁹Ralph B. Perry, The Thought and Character of William James (2 vols.; Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1935), vol. 1, p. 797.

⁴⁰William James, "The Function of Cognition," in John J. McDermott, The Writings of William James (New York: The Modern Library, 1968), pp. 144-45 footnote.

a pluralistic universe. The objections of Howison and James seem most directly responsible for the subsequent alterations in Royce's thought. The supplementary essay of The Conception of God, and The World and the Individual, in part, are attempts to answer their objections. The answer stresses the role of the Divine Will in relation to human individuality and freedom. Since the form which this answer takes in the supplementary essay to The Conception of God is, in its main features, repeated with fuller development in The World and the Individual, we now turn to this work.

2. The World and the Individual: Introduction.

The World and the Individual is an expanded version of Royce's Gifford Lectures delivered at the University of Aberdeen, the First Series in January of 1899, the Second Series in January of 1900. It is Royce's most complete, systematic, and perhaps best known work. Lord Gifford's will called for a treatment of some aspect of natural religion. Royce approaches this by presenting "the ultimate problems of Ontology"⁴¹ which will shed light "both upon the conception of God, and upon our notion of the relations between God, the World, and the Human Individual." "The single problem of the Conception of Being" dominates the

⁴¹The World and the Individual, vol. 1, p. 11.

entire discussion of the First Series,⁴² and this is related to the conception of God "because to assert that God is, or that the World is, or . . . that I am, implies that one knows what it is to be."⁴³ While the present work maintains an essential continuity with The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, the latter used "the term Thought as the best name for the final unity of the Absolute," whereas the present work will bring into synthesis "the relations of Knowledge and of Will in our conception of God."⁴⁴ For this reason, "the true meaning and place of the concept of Individuality" will receive a fuller statement than in the supplementary essay of The Conception of God.⁴⁵ The Second Series of lectures consists in an application of the general theory of being to such particular topics as nature, time, the self, the moral order, the problem of evil, and the union of God and man.

By way of introduction, Royce indicates where he thinks the central problem of the theory of being to lie, and what method is best suited to approach it. He thinks it best to begin by asking, "What is an Idea? and: How can Ideas stand in any true relation to Reality?"⁴⁶ This approach

⁴²Ibid., vol. 2, p. vi.

⁴³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 12.

⁴⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. xv.

⁴⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. xvi.

⁴⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 16.

subordinates the study of the World of Fact to a reflection upon the World as Idea. The world of fact is full of strange contrasts. As a realm of pure scientific theory, it shows noble order; as a realm of values, it seems hopelessly baffling. The world of fact will continue to baffle us unless we find somewhere else the key to it. Many philosophers in the past concluded that the most promising way to insight into the nature of reality was through a criticism of human consciousness. Royce agrees that reality is best approached from the "side of Ideas."⁴⁷

What, then, is an idea, and how is an idea related to reality? Royce does not regard the "representative" value of an idea, or its power to cognize facts external to itself, as a primal fact, but one in need of critical re-statement, since we are to consider the very possibility of a cognition of Being. Ideas also involve "a consciousness of how you propose to act toward the things of which you have ideas."⁴⁸ For example, one's idea of his friend differs from his idea of his enemy by virtue of his different attitude and intended behavior towards these objects. Hence, an attempt to define an idea as a conscious fact best lays stress upon the sort of will, or active meaning, which any

⁴⁷Ibid., vol. 1, p. 19.

⁴⁸Ibid., vol. 1, p. 22.

idea involves for the mind that forms the idea. Royce stresses the unity of the intellectual and the voluntary, and he uses "idea" in a wide sense. For example, to sing a melody or to count to ten is a single idea in his usage. On the other hand, to hear a noise or to see a color is not yet an idea since mere receptivity does not yet involve a conscious attitude towards such data.⁴⁹

Royce defines an idea as

Any state of consciousness, whether simple or complex, which, when present, is then and there viewed as at least the partial expression or embodiment of a single conscious purpose.⁵⁰

The idea appears in consciousness as having the significance of an act of will; for example, singing to yourself a melody, or the thought of your absent friend, illustrates how your idea embodies a conscious purpose. This purpose, embodied in the content of an idea, Royce calls the Internal Meaning of ideas.

Ideas also have an external reference to outer facts. The melody which you sing can be referred to a certain musical score. Your idea of your friend is said to mean a real being called your friend. This correspondence, or attempted

⁴⁹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 24.

⁵⁰Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 22-23.

correspondence, of an idea with its outer object, Royce calls the External Meaning of ideas.⁵¹

Royce regards the distinction between the internal and the external meaning of ideas as an important way of stating "the problem of the whole relation between Idea and Being."⁵² On the one hand, our ideas seem destined to perform a task which is externally set for them by the real world, and this is an essentially imitative function. On the other hand, the idea must mean, intend or select its object, for without this predetermination of the object by the idea, ideas are neither true nor false. Hence, the problem of the nature of being ultimately reduces to the question, "How is the internal meaning of ideas consistent with their apparently external meaning?"⁵³ Or, how is it that ideas, essentially ideas because of internal meaning, possess a meaning which appears to go beyond this internal purpose? Royce hopes finally to show that external meanings will be seen to become consistent with internal meanings when the former become the entire and complete expression of internal meaning.

⁵¹Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 26-27.

⁵²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 27.

⁵³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 32.

Royce associates the internal and external meaning of ideas with the traditional distinction between essence and existence. Internal meaning refers to essence and, by essence, Royce means the idea of a thing, and this appears especially as "a Plan."⁵⁴ External meaning is associated with existence. It is the affirmation of the ontological predicate, to be; it asserts that a thing is, or refers to the plan executed. Philosophers who emphasize this distinction between what and that usually insist that the "that" makes no difference to the "what" or essence. Royce accepts the distinction, but he regards it as an abstraction to be overcome, since it presents the problem of Being rather than its solution. The ontological predicate appears at once as no true predicate since it adds nothing to the conceivable characters of the objects to which it is applied, and yet it is the most important of all predicates since it means all the difference "between the whole world and nothing at all."⁵⁵

Before beginning his argument for Idealism, Royce thinks it important to situate the problem of being. This problem is first a problem of experience and of practical needs. Two facets of experience give rise to the problem of being. One is the experience of brute facts, or "merely

⁵⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 48.

⁵⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 51.

immediate experience, that is, experience just present, apart from definition, articulation, and in general from any insight into its relationships."⁵⁶ The other aspect of experience is "more or less richly idealized experience," that is, experience that, in addition to mere presence, possesses meaning, and this is what was referred to previously as internal meaning. The problem is that this meaning is never at any moment fully possessed. We are at war with the narrowness of our conscious field; we live looking for the whole of our meaning. There are times when facts fuse with ideas, and we find what we seek. At such times, we feel at home in our world. However, our more normal experience is the warfare of purpose with fortune, idea with datum, meaning with chaos. In this warfare we experience our finitude, and we are disquieted by this. Royce refers to this conflict as "the effort of Thought to comprehend Being."⁵⁷

What does Being mean in light of this situation? Being thus far appears what is "Other than our merely transient and finite thinking of the moment."⁵⁸ Or, it appears as that which we seek, and what, if completely found, would end the conflict between thought and fact. Thus, Being appears

⁵⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 56.

⁵⁷Ibid., vol. 1, p. 58.

⁵⁸Ibid., vol. 1, p. 59.

as "something desirable and desired--an object of longing."
At any rate, the contrast and conflict between fact and idea must determine what notion can be formed of what it is to be.

3. Realism.

Royce distinguishes four fundamental conceptions of being which have gradually become differentiated in the course of history.⁵⁹ The fourth conception, which Royce will defend, is that of idealism, and it conceives the real as that which "finally presents in a completed experience the whole meaning of a System of Ideas."⁶⁰ Royce's defense of this conception of being will depend largely upon showing the inadequacies of the other three conceptions of being. These are realism, mysticism, and critical rationalism. In addressing himself to these positions, Royce is not attempting to account for the historical thought of any one thinker or school of thought. For example, Royce states, after rejecting realism, "I may now add that I think that this conception has never been held wholly alone, and apart from other conceptions of reality, by any first-rate thinker."⁶¹ Royce's

⁵⁹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 60.

⁶⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 61.

⁶¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 70.

account deals rather with tendencies in the history of thought, and he appears to distill what amounts to a pure position, or certain common characteristics, whose rejection highlights what he means by, and why it is what he concludes to, his own fourth conception of being. While Royce rejects the first three conceptions of being, he will adopt an important insight of each and incorporate this insight into the fourth conception of being.

Realism conceives being as what is independent of the ideas that relate, or that may relate, to it. Or, the real is "undetermined by your knowledge."⁶² What determines realism is not that real beings exist "outside the mind." Idealism agrees with this. Moreover, the knowing process, as real, does not exist for the realist "outside the mind." To Royce, what distinguishes realism is that "Being is indifferent to our mere ideas."⁶³ The independently real "controls or determines the worth of ideas, and that wholly apart from their or our desire or will."⁶⁴ Moreover, independence of knowledge is not only a universal character of real objects, "but also constitutes the very definition of the reality of the known object itself."⁶⁵ Metaphysical realism, "recognizing independent beings as real, lays explicit stress

⁶²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 97.

⁶³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 94.

⁶⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 61.

⁶⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 66.

upon their independence as the very essence of their reality."⁶⁶ "This realistic world is a world of Independent Beings."⁶⁷

Of all the four conceptions of being, realism appears to Royce to most sharply and abstractly distinguish the what from the that of every real object. It thus affirms the external meaning of ideas and denies their internal meaning. Royce believes that internal meaning "stubbornly remains" in realism in the form of such practical motives as "social conservatism" and the desire to escape from the finite disquietude of incomplete insight.⁶⁸ There is, however, one practical motive of realism with which Royce agrees and adopts, and that is "the interest in viewing the Real as the absolutely and finally Determinate or Individual fact."⁶⁹ We need and love individuality, and the effort of realism to define determinateness and finality is a stage on the way to a true conception of Individuality and of Individual Beings. Royce will later agree with a modified form of realism which will appear in the third conception of being.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, there follows Royce's reasons for rejecting unmodified realism. According to unmodified realism,

⁶⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 62. ⁶⁷Ibid., vol. 1, p. 103.

⁶⁸Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 72-75.

⁶⁹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 73 ⁷⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 115.

Nothing has real being merely by virtue of the fact that it is conceived by any knower. Conversely, nothing is conceived in idea merely by virtue of the mere fact that it is real.⁷¹

Thus, to link idea and object, causation is introduced as an added fact which is "no part of the definition of the object known, or of its real being, or of the essence of the knowing idea."⁷² Knowledge must be explained in terms of something other than either the idea or "the whole being of the object."

To state this in another way, a real object, o, could change or vanish without being known. On the other hand, any change in o could not be inferred from the mere idea of o, for an idea can be false. Of course, if the idea is to remain true, it must change when o changes. But, this agreement is a further fact independent of both o and its idea.⁷³

Since the causal link must be regarded as a third reality independent of both object and idea, Royce argues that realism cannot logically regard many real objects as related. If two real objects, a and b, make no difference to each other "in precisely the same sense in which Realism says that it now makes 'no difference' to your object

⁷¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 116.

⁷²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 117.

⁷³Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 117-120.

whether you know it or not," no change in either a or b need correspond to any change in the other.⁷⁴ Since the causal link is not involved in the definition of either, it must be as independent of a and b as a and b were independent of each other. It follows that the link "is no link except in name; it is simply a third being, independent of both of them, and yet not linked to either of the two."⁷⁵

Neither can the realist assume a modified monism, asserting that the world is one Being with an internally complex and infinitely wealthy constitution whose various aspects could not change without some implied change in all other parts.⁷⁶ This is because there must be at least two independent real beings, since an idea, as a real entity, is as independent of its real object as its object is independent of it. Relations would be other independent beings. The result is that the realistic theory has nothing to do with any independently real object. "In brief, the realm of consistent Realism is not the realm of One nor yet the realm of Many, it is the realm of absolutely nothing."⁷⁷

Royce will later show that he favors a modified realism. Objects of the world of description must be "such as to

⁷⁴ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 123.

⁷⁵ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 128-129.

⁷⁶ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 132.

⁷⁷ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 137.

be fitted to be known."⁷⁸ Both in the world of description⁷⁹ and in the world of appreciation,⁸⁰ objects of ideas are seen by Royce as "authoritative over ideas." This, however, will not deny the important function of internal meaning in determining its object. Thus, seen in a larger context, Royce maintains that objects are in a sense independent of ideas and in a sense dependent upon ideas. Royce's present attack is directed against a position which would deny the internal meaning of ideas altogether. It remains for Royce to show the place of external meaning in controlling the truth of internal meaning. That objects are in some sense independent of finite ideas and control the truth of ideas is consistently maintained by Royce through all of his works.

4. Mysticism.

Royce's interest in mysticism lies in what he calls "philosophical mysticism" and the "mystical definition of Being." He derives the mystical conception of being mainly from the Upanishads, and he regards this source as sufficient since "the dialectic of Mysticism has nowhere any essentially different tale to tell, nor any other outcome to record."⁸¹

⁷⁸Ibid., vol. 1, p. 201.

⁷⁹Ibid., vol. 1, pp.332-334.

⁸⁰Ibid., vol. 1,pp. 353-355. ⁸¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 175.

Royce acknowledges the translation and commentary of Professor Deussen of Kiel,⁸² and the English translations in his text are done by his colleague, Professor Charles R. Lanman.⁸³

In general, Royce presents the speculative meaning of mysticism as a precise contrast to realism, against which it stands as "a very ancient historical foe."⁸⁴ While realism affirms the external meaning of ideas and denies their internal meaning, mysticism stresses internal meaning to the exclusion of external meaning. As such, mysticism "is precisely as much and precisely as little a logically defensible conception as the former conception, that of Realism."⁸⁵ Realism defines real being as total independence of any idea, while "Mysticism defines Real Being as wholly within Immediate Feeling."⁸⁶ Realism constitutes a dualism between subject and object, while mysticism makes "naught of every dualistic account, either of the relation between the Self and the universe, or of the inner structure and meaning of the Self."⁸⁷ Thus, the mystic expressly declines

⁸²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 156. ⁸³Ibid., vol. 1, p. xix.

⁸⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 77 ⁸⁵Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 83-84.

⁸⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 86. ⁸⁷Ibid., vol. 1, p. 166.

"to go outside of the knowing subject for the definition of the Reality. That art thou, is the whole story."⁸⁸ To be is to be immediate. It is to have won "oneness with the Self," experienced ineffably as an immediate fact.

By defining Being as "to be immediate," the mystic shows himself to be a thorough empiricist who is trying to get experience quite pure. The pure or immediate fact is real, but this is not the sort of facts that men ordinarily experience since these are not satisfying, but send "you elsewhere for a presentation that you do not possess."⁸⁹ They thus declare themselves to be not yet the real. This way of viewing the real stands in sharp contrast to realism for whom the independent fact of ordinary experience "is the finally posited, that hints at nothing beyond itself, . . . and to inquire further is vain."⁹⁰ But, for the mystic, the objects which men ordinarily pursue, and the ideas by which they are pursued, do not reveal what is real because they always look beyond the truly immediate to fleeting states that die as they pass. Our conscious finitude "means at once dissatisfaction and the admission that the truth is not present."⁹¹ This attitude of the mystic toward human

⁸⁸ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 168

⁸⁹ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 147.

⁹⁰ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 187

⁹¹ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 173.

consciousness and experience is similar to Royce's statement of the problem of being.⁹²

The contrasting views of mysticism and realism towards the ordinary facts of experience imply a different epistemological outlook. These facts are for realism independent of the knower. But, for the mystic, "the reality of which you think and speak is first of all a reality meant by you; . . . within yourself lies the sole motive that leads you to distinguish truth from error, reality from unreality."⁹³ "This is profoundly true," observes Royce. It introduces into the mystic's epistemology a practical element not found in the realist view. The mystic's search for truth is "essentially a practical effort to win personal perfection." Hence, the mystic combines the needful and the true, the real and the good.⁹⁴

Royce's analysis of the Upanishads reveals the following main features of the mystical view. "Mysticism, declaring that independent Being is self-contradictory and so impossible, seeks Being within the very life of the knowing process."⁹⁵ "To be means to quench thought in the

⁹²Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 149-155. Cf. above, pp. 78-79.

⁹³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 189.

⁹⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 190.

⁹⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 179.

presence of a final immediacy which completely satisfies all ideas."⁹⁶ Thus, the Other no longer appears as Another, but is the Self absolutely found. The Self is One since all duality is illusory. The illusory many sleeps in One soul. The Self is alone real, the all, the only Being, while "the finite process of striving after the Self is wholly illusory,"⁹⁷ along with all finite ideas and objects of ideas. "Attainment" is to have gone beyond ideas to experience the Self as a final, ineffable and wholly immediate fact. Since consciousness implies duality, the Absolute is conceived as unconscious, and yet as all truth. This paradox is understood as a contrast-effect. "It is by contrast with our finite seeking that the goal which quenches desires and ideas at once appears as all truth and all life."⁹⁸ If one has not yet attained nirvana, and views his finite striving as real, the Absolute appears, by contrast, as unconscious and a zero.

In his critique of mysticism, Royce agrees with the mystic's analysis of finite consciousness, stressing as it does the internal meaning of ideas. "What the mystic has positively defined, then, is the law that our consciousness of being depends upon a contrast whereby we set all our

⁹⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 186.

⁹⁷Ibid., vol. 1, p. 167.

⁹⁸Ibid., vol. 1, p. 171.

finite experience over against some other that we seek but do not yet possess."⁹⁹ However, Royce disagrees that our present striving through finite ideas is illusory or reducible to nothing. "We seek a city still out of sight. In contrast with this goal, we live. But if this be so, then already we actually possess something of Being in our finite seeking."¹⁰⁰ Unless this imperfect striving has reality, the Absolute has none, for the Absolute is conceived by the mystic as the goal of search and is defined in contrast to the search, so that, if the search is not real, neither is the Absolute. Both seeking and finding are real, so that what is, is not merely immediate. Immediacy is but one aspect of Being.

Royce's critique of mysticism reaffirms the real reference of the external meaning of ideas. Moreover, Royce's conception of being is more amply expressed. Previously, he agreed to associate internal meaning with what or essence, conceived as idea, while external meaning referred to the that, or real being. His critique of mysticism makes clear that internal meaning, as idea, is an active seeking and, as such, is real and not merely expressive of definition. The reality of finding must be viewed in light of the reality of seeking. Yet, as real, this seeking stands in contrast with

⁹⁹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 193.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 181.

the finding, that is, with the Other which fulfils. The Other thus remains what we might call the "really real." When he refers simply to "Being," Royce will continue to signify the that, or external meaning.

5. Critical Rationalism.

Neither realism nor mysticism shows the true relation between idea and object, and as a consequence their respective conceptions of being are inadequate. Royce presents a third conception of Being which he calls Critical Rationalism. Critical rationalism conceives Being as the model or standard to which ideas ought to correspond if they are to judge truly concerning objects of present or possible experience. To be is to be a norm which validates ideas, or which makes ideas true, when they correspond to the norm. "To be now means, primarily, to be valid, to be true, to be in essence the standard for ideas."¹⁰¹ Royce regards critical rationalism as a true position; he will question the adequacy of its conception of being.¹⁰²

Examples of valid being are numerous and of various types. Common sense recognizes valid being as credit, debts, market prices, social status, treaties, constitutions of governments. These have objective being. They can be

¹⁰¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 202.

¹⁰²Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 266-267.

stubborn as physical facts and, like physical facts, they have various grades of endurance and of recognized significance. Yet, none of them is viewed as real independent of ideas that refer to them. They are public norms "whose sole Being consists in their character as rendering such thoughts about themselves objectively valid for everybody concerned."¹⁰³

Mathematics is another example of valid being. The mathematicians, without any metaphysical bias, will assert that the most real beings are those which have an "Eternal Truth."¹⁰⁴ The mathematician builds up his objects very much as he pleases, but, once created, this world is as stubborn as any other fact. Like other students of real being, the mathematician observes, experiments, makes mistakes and new discoveries.¹⁰⁵

Valid being is also illustrated in the objects of possible experience which concern the natural sciences. These objects are what "would be observed and verified under exactly statable, even if physically inaccessible, conditions,"¹⁰⁶ as determined by the constitution of our experience, as Kant taught.¹⁰⁷ As the constitution and laws of

¹⁰³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 209. ¹⁰⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 212.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 226. ¹⁰⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 242.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., vol. 1, p. 236.

the state determine such facts as debts and credits, so the universal constitution of our experience gives law to nature, making universal assertions valid and science possible. The truth of science belongs to this realm of valid empirical truth.¹⁰⁸

Royce observes that of all the four conceptions of being, critical rationalism alone "attempts to define the Real as explicitly and only the Universal."¹⁰⁹ Mill's permanent possibilities of sensation are explicit universals, and Kant's objects of possible experience--"his substance, causes, and the rest"--are products of the "categorizing Understanding" and, as such, they are simply "valid general truths."¹¹⁰ The sciences recognize, as in some sense real, "objects, which as they are defined, are universals, and which cannot be individuals without altering their definition."¹¹¹ These considerations lead Royce to question whether critical rationalism presents an adequate conception of being. The question concerns the "problem about the meaning and the place of individuality in the system of Being, and about the relation of individual and universal in our conceptions."¹¹²

¹⁰⁸Ibid., vol. 1, p. 239 ¹⁰⁹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 240.

¹¹⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 241. ¹¹¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 242.

¹¹²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 244.

Royce points out a certain ambiguity which one must face if he wishes to define being solely in terms of critical rationalism. On the one hand, the idea, as a norm of judging an object to be true, is "an idea to which you attribute an essentially teleological significance."¹¹³ The being of the norm is for validating ideas in reference to experience, while experience, in turn, verifies the validity of the idea. Royce agrees with Kant, "Nur in der Erfahrung ist Wahrheit."¹¹⁴ The valid "enters our human consciousness through the narrow portals of the instant's experience."¹¹⁵ The validity of an idea about possible experience must be tested. If the empirical result conforms to expectation, one has "communed with Being."

On the other hand, "there are countless possible experiences that you can never test, and that you still view as belonging to the realm of physical and of social validity."¹¹⁶ There is more valid being than one ever directly verifies or would care to verify. The world of validity is not only far wider than our concrete human experience, but it is interesting to us because we can select from its wealth of possibilities those that we wish to realize.

¹¹³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 244. ¹¹⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 247.

¹¹⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 256-257. ¹¹⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 258.

What the Third Conception of Being fails to explain "is precisely the difference between the reality that is to be attributed to the valid truths that we do not get concretely verified in our experience, and the reality observed by us when we do verify ideas."¹¹⁷ What is a valid possible experience at the moment when it is supposed to be only possible? Such merely valid truths once more appear as mere universals. Can universals, not yet verified, be regarded as possessing wholeness of Being?

Royce believes that critical rationalism inadequately defines Being since it confines its definition to "valid being." Unverified or unexperienced validity appears as "mere general law" which expresses what, or essence. Unless the what is fulfilled in a that, valid being is unrealized or lacks being that is experienced. Valid being is hypothetical. The hypothetical is for the categorical so that the adequate meaning of being could not consist solely in the hypothetical, nor could valid being remain merely hypothetical and be a final account of what is.

Although Royce regards valid being as an inadequate account of the full meaning of being, he believes that it succeeds, where realism fails, to state the true relation between idea and object. The object gives ideas their truth,

¹¹⁷Ibid., vol. 1, p. 260.

and the object is not independent of ideas. The object is at once the objective norm for ideas and dependent upon ideas for its being. Royce will retain this basic conception of the relation between idea and object although what is meant by idea and object will undergo considerable transformation. Moreover, Royce values the function of valid being as a guide to ideas in their quest for true being.¹¹⁸ The inadequacy of validity is that it guides, but does not fulfil. For Royce, Being means primarily that which fulfils. This is now to be considered.

6. The Internal and External Meaning of Ideas.

Royce attempts to conclude to the meaning of Being from an analysis of truth. This analysis centers upon the relation between idea and object, or the internal and external meaning of ideas. The analysis has two parts according as truth can be considered from the point of view of judgment and of correspondence.

The first part deals with truth "as that about which we judge."¹¹⁹ In this part Royce makes two related points. First, human consciousness, neither on its conceptual side nor on its experiential side, manifests true being which is individual. Secondly, however, an analysis of judgment

¹¹⁸Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 202-203.

¹¹⁹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 270.

reveals that the movement of thought towards truth is "towards determinateness of idea and of experience."¹²⁰ Thought moves toward individual being without ever being able to manifest it to us. However, critical rationalism misses this teleology because it considers merely the cognitive aspect of ideas and not their internal meaning. Thus, it tends to separate internal and external meaning, and it does not see that internal meaning always aims at real being which is individual. Ultimately, real being, if known, would be apprehended by "an individual judgment, wherein the will expressed its own final determination."¹²¹

The structure which unifies Royce's critique is the traditional distinction which formal logic makes between the universal judgment and the particular judgment.¹²² First, universal judgments are traditionally distinguished into three kinds: categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive. All such judgments attempt to categorize reality. But they do so, not by saying what reality is, but by saying what reality is not. They exclude from reality as impossible what at first appeared possible. For example, the judgment that all A is B, when strictly interpreted, asserts that reality

¹²⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 296.

¹²¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 332.

¹²²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 273. Royce observes that "this ancient classification is no very deep one; but it may aid us to survey how our various judgments view Reality."

contains no A's which are not B's. It says nothing about the real existence of A.¹²³

Royce concludes that by mere reasoning in universal terms, "we never directly or determinately characterize the Being of things as it finally is. We at best . . . tell what external Reality is not."¹²⁴ But even so, how can one know that his judgment is "universally valid, even in this ideal and negative way, about the external realm of validity, in so far as it is external, and is merely your Other?"¹²⁵ Royce replies that the sundering of external and internal meanings is vain. The object must somehow be "predetermined by your meaning."

Particular judgments of the form "Some A is B" differ from the universal in that they positively assert being in the object viewed as external. While they thus characterize reality in a positive way, they are "very unsatisfactorily indeterminate" since they do not reveal "precisely what object this existent instance of an A that B really is."¹²⁶ They are not judgments of the individual.

The truth of particular judgments is shown by appeal to outer experience and, in general, if we ask what Being positively contains, the ordinary answer is, "By external

¹²³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 276. ¹²⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 279.

¹²⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 282. ¹²⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 283.

experience." Royce shows that this appeal to experience is not undertaken in isolation from internal meaning. There is no "Pure Experience." "It is selected experience," or "experience lighted up by ideas."¹²⁷ External experience decides issues "whose character and meaning for us are determined solely by what ideas of our own are in question."¹²⁸ Royce also points out that appeal to experience is very limited in its ability to tell us what Being positively contains. Experience can never completely confirm or demonstrate any universal judgment. It can only tell us that some A is B. On the other hand, empirical facts can refute universal judgments absolutely, but they cannot show that the ideas in question have no application. A plan of action can be tried again. "Ideas can be quite as stubborn as any particular facts, can outlast them, and often, in the end, abolish them."¹²⁹

In summary, thus far, Royce has considered critical rationalism's limitation in saying "what is" both from the point of view of Thought as contrasted with Experience, and vice versa. Still, the ideal constructions of thought "undertake to be valid of that other world,--the world of

¹²⁷Ibid., vol. 1, p. 285.

¹²⁸Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 286-87.

¹²⁹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 287.

external meanings."¹³⁰ This indicates to Royce that internal and external meanings are not sundered, "but have some deeper unity, which, in this realm of mere validity, you can never make manifest."

Royce has considered critical rationalism from the point of view of the universal and particular judgments. It remains to consider judgment of the individual. This is of importance because Royce has criticized the third conception of being that "at best it leaves Reality too much a bare abstract universal, and does not assert the individuality of Being."¹³¹ Universal and particular judgments leave Reality in some measure indeterminate. "Can we tolerate this view of Reality as final?"

The problem is that "neither internal meanings nor external meanings, in their isolation, are in the least adequate to embody individuality."¹³² The individual is unique, and unique means that there is no other. It is "something that has no likeness." Hence, internal meaning cannot grasp the individual "through ideally imitating it." The idea defines a type, and the individual, as such, is no type. Nor can external experience present us with anything

¹³⁰ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 289.

¹³¹ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 290.

¹³² Ibid., vol. 1, p. 292.

but a type that is empirically observed, or is "a kind of experience." The confirmation of internal meaning by external experience, if "read accurately, is always a confirmation of ideal types by particular cases."¹³³ How could experience present the "no-Other" character? Royce regards individual Being as an essentially metaphysical presupposition, never verifiable in external experience, and in this presupposition lies the very mystery of being.

The inadequacy of the third conception of being is that it abandons the individual and rests content with abstract universals more or less determined by particular observations. But our interest in being is precisely an interest in individuality. To define being exclusive of individuality is to leave both being and our ideas as finally indeterminate. But is this not self-contradictory? "Can the absence of finality be the only final fact?"¹³⁴ The prior analysis of judgments indicates a contrary conclusion, namely, that the movement of thought toward truth is "towards determinateness of idea and of experience." What is still missing is what we "above all regard as the Real, namely, the Individual fact."¹³⁵ This is what we seek when we

¹³³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 294.

¹³⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 296.

¹³⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 297.

consult experience. We are undertaking to give our ideas a certain positive determination "to this content and no other." But this remains in our experience an elusive goal, an object of love and of hope but never of present finding.

Royce regards this individual determination as the principal character of the Real. It is an ideal which always lies beyond the limit towards which we endlessly aim. This goal is such that, if we could reach it, our universal judgments would be confirmed by an adequate experience of individual being so that no other empirical expression of our ideas remained possible. Then, indeed we should stand in the immediate presence of the Real.

The Real, then, is from this point of view, that which is immediately beyond the whole of our series of possible efforts to bring, by any process of finite experience and of merely general conception, our own internal meaning to a complete determination.¹³⁶

Royce now turns his attention to the definition of truth as the correspondence between an idea and its object. Two basic questions can be asked concerning this definition. "What constitutes the relation called having an object?" "What is the relation called correspondence?"¹³⁷ The questions are different since "an idea can have an object without rightly corresponding to its object."¹³⁸

¹³⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 299.

¹³⁷Ibid., vol. 1, p. 300.

¹³⁸Ibid., vol. 1, p. 301.

First, the relation of correspondence admits a variety of forms. Photographs, maps, x-rays, works of art, numbers, symbols, all illustrate the variety of media through which idea and object may correspond. This variety indicates that correspondence is as much a matter of the intent and point of view of the knower as it is of the structure of the object. The selection of one rather than another mode of corresponding implies "serving some conscious end, fulfilling an intent, possessing a value for your will."¹³⁹ Hence, it is "not mere agreement, but intended agreement, that constitutes truth."¹⁴⁰ Or, there is no purely external criterion of truth. Each idea must be judged by its own specific purpose. "Ideas are like tools. They are there for an end. They are true, as tools are good, precisely by reason of their adjustment to this end."¹⁴¹ For example, when you count, you want symbols, not pictures. Thus, an idea is a volitional process as well as an intellectual process; or, an idea embodies an internal meaning, and this is "a conditio sine qua non for all external meaning and for all truth."¹⁴²

Next, Royce takes up the question, what makes an object to be the object of a given idea? Royce first puts

¹³⁹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 306. ¹⁴⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 307.

¹⁴¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 308. ¹⁴²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 311.

aside the reply that the object causes the idea, and hence it is the object of the idea. Royce's position in this regard is sometimes misinterpreted to the effect that he denies that objects cause ideas. However, what Royce says is that causal relations are properly a subject for Cosmology and Psychology, but are not a primary question in Metaphysics. Once you have "finished and established your own definition of Being," you can speak of causal relations "as a psychologist does when he discusses the origin or the results of ideas."¹⁴³ But to straightway appeal to real causes is out of place in metaphysics since this would presuppose what is in question, namely, what is Being, and what does it mean to be real? Royce approaches the question of Being from within the idea-object relation. He thinks that causation is a view from outside this relation which is properly treated subsequent to conclusions concerning what is Real.¹⁴⁴

Why, then, is an object the object of a given idea? Royce replies, "That an idea has an object depends at least in part upon this, that the idea selects its object. And selection is manifested in consciousness by what is usually

¹⁴³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 322. Royce's expressions are careful not to exclude causal relations. "An object is not the object of a given idea merely because the object causes the idea." (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 320. Italics are mine.) For a similar discussion of causal relations, cf. ibid., vol. 1, pp. 440-445.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 311-316.

called attention."¹⁴⁵ While selection is not merely a subjective matter, it is certain that a person's idea cannot be judged true or false independent of the selection he has made of his object. Hence, "the determination of what object is meant" is due "in one aspect, to the internal meaning of the idea."¹⁴⁶

Royce now states an antinomy whose solution will require a certain conception of truth. The thesis is:

There seems to be, in the object of an idea, just in so far as it is the object of that specific idea, no essential character which is not predetermined by the purpose, the internal meaning, the conscious intent, of that idea itself.¹⁴⁷

The reason for the thesis is:

The object of the idea is predetermined, both as to what object it is, and as how it is to correspond to the idea, through the choice made by the idea itself.¹⁴⁸

The antithesis is:

No finite idea predetermines, in its object, exactly the character which, when present in the object, gives the idea the desired truth.¹⁴⁹

The reason for the antithesis is:

Otherwise truth would be mere tautology, error would be excluded in advance, and it would be useless even to talk of an object external in any sense to the idea.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 317.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 319.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., vol. 1, p. 320.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., vol. 1, p. 323.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 323.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 320.

An idea can clearly "intend what its object forbids" and it "can mean what its object excludes."¹⁵¹

Royce's solution is as follows. What the idea always aims to find in its object is "the idea's own conscious purpose or will, embodied in some more determinate form than the idea by itself alone at this instant consciously possesses."¹⁵² The purpose embodied in the passing idea is vague and indeterminate insofar as its fulfilment is not presently and consciously experienced. The object of the idea is conceived by Royce as the goal of a quest, which is to bring what is vague and indeterminate to gradual explicitation and determinate expression until, finally, it is the complete and unique fulfilment of what the idea intended. "Satisfaction of purpose by means of presented fact, and such determinate satisfaction as sends us to no other experience for further light and fulfilment," is the outcome.¹⁵³ Now, this outcome, or this object, or this Other, is imperfectly present at the outset insofar as this is what the idea intended. Yet, this final outcome, as a presently experienced fulfilment, was not present in the vague purpose which began

¹⁵¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 324.

¹⁵²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 327.

¹⁵³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 330.

the process. In this sense, the outcome or object is seen to be other than the vague purpose, namely, its fulfilment. Hence, the antinomy is resolved. "For the object is a true Other, and yet it is object only as the meaning of this idea."¹⁵⁴ The object, as other, determines or fulfils the idea, and the idea intended just this determination or fulfilment.

Royce conceives the relation between idea and its object in a thoroughly teleological way. Ideas, as they first come to us are general, indeterminate and abstractly vague. They are such as to allow another, and yet another empirical instance. One then looks for and finds specification of his meaning in further experience. Ideas seek nothing but their own greater determination. The ideal limit of determination would be a present empirical content such as should permit no other to take its place. This would be a complete determination of the idea and, as complete, it would be individual. That is, it would be a wholly adequate empirical content for which no other content could be substituted. At this ideal limit, one would experience "the individual life of the whole idea, as a process at once of experience and of purpose," and of "present fact."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 331.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 339.

Since this final fulfilment of its purpose is the ultimate object which the idea seeks, it follows that an idea is true in the measure that "it corresponds, even in its vagueness," to this complete object. Having defined both object and truth, Royce is now ready for his fourth conception of being.

What is, or what is real, is as such the complete embodiment, in individual form and in final fulfilment, of the internal meaning of finite ideas.¹⁵⁶

Royce regards his fourth conception of being as now established.¹⁵⁷ In closing this section, we will summarize the main lines of Royce's argument. Royce has reasoned that the independent being of realism and the immediate being of mysticism are ultimately seen to be contradictory. He has accepted the valid being of critical rationalism as a true but inadequate conception of being. The reasons why it is inadequate, together with the positive presentation of the internal meaning of ideas, is the crux of Royce's argument. The conception of idea as embodying purpose and the relation of idea to its object as the fulfilment of its purpose is central to Royce's position. This granted, the state of the question is, why must Being be conceived as the complete fulfilment in individual and final form of the whole content implied within the internal meaning of ideas?

¹⁵⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 339.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 341-342.

Royce's answer has to do with both the positive function and the ultimate inadequacy of valid being. Valid being is, first of all, required. "No quest can be defined as a quest without defining valid possible experiences."¹⁵⁸ The internal meanings of ideas, as plans of action, are pregnant with valid possibilities in their state of mere generality. It seems clear that mere valid possibilities of experience do not explain adequately the meaning of being since they lack the reality of actual experience. However, the question is, why must all, and not merely some, of the valid possibilities of the internal meaning of ideas be brought to complete fulfilment? Royce's precise answer to this question appears to be that the teleology of valid being is for the real fulfilment of purpose. Hence, to suppose that some valid possibilities, required for the full execution of purpose, are ultimately left unfulfilled, is to say that the hypothetical being of validity is what ultimately is. But, this appears to contradict the meaning of validity itself which, in essence, is "for another."¹⁵⁹ Hence, what is, is the complete fulfilment in final and individual form of the internal meaning of ideas.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., vol. 1, p. 359.

¹⁵⁹Royce does not argue that all possible being must become actual being. The selection of a goal irrevocably excludes from reality certain possibilities that might have been, but henceforth must remain "merely possible." The question concerns the valid possibilities required for the fulfilment of significant purpose. Cf. ibid., vol. 1, pp. 451-453.

7. The Fourth Conception of Being.

We will now summarize the fourth conception of being by showing where it agrees and disagrees with the other three conceptions. Then we will consider briefly another argument for the fourth conception and two objections from empiricism.

The fourth conception of being agrees with realism, and against critical rationalism, that reality is ultimately something individual. It is peculiar to the fourth conception to conceive the individual as "an entire instance of Being," or "a Life of Experiencing fulfilling Ideas, in an absolutely final form," and to conceive this "only as the unique fulfilment of purpose."¹⁶⁰ The fourth conception of being also agrees with realism that the object is other than the idea and "authoritative over against the finite idea."¹⁶¹ This authority, however, is not conceived to be independent of the idea, since the fully determined purpose to which the idea must submit is the development of its own internal meaning.

The fourth conception of being agrees with mysticism in identifying Being with fulfilment of purpose. Mystical

¹⁶⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 348.

¹⁶¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 353.

Being is "true of the completed, of the fulfilled and final, or Absolute Self."¹⁶² Just so, the object of present internal meaning is its completed, fulfilled and final Self. This completed Self is, for Royce, "the totality of the life that at this instant you fragmentarily grasp" due to the defect of the present form of human consciousness.¹⁶³

Now this complete life of yours, is. Only such completion can be. Being can possess no other nature than this. And this, in outline, is our Fourth Conception of Being.¹⁶⁴

But the fourth conception differs from mysticism. Whereas the mystic way is through mere negation of finite ideas, internal meanings are not negated, but fulfilled. They inadequately express their own "present and conscious purpose,"¹⁶⁵ but they do "consciously attain a fragment of their own meaning."¹⁶⁶ This reference of finite ideas to their object is real.

We considered the agreement and disagreement of the fourth conception of being with critical rationalism in the previous section. Royce summarizes this as follows.

Since validity has no meaning unless its general types of truth take on individual form, and unless the what turns into the that, I now say, without

¹⁶²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 355. ¹⁶³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 348.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 348. ¹⁶⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 355.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 356.

any reserve, What it does in itself fulfil your meaning, does express, in the completest logically possible measure, the accomplishment and embodiment of the very will now fragmentarily embodied in your finite ideas.¹⁶⁷

In short, present internal meaning is a fragment of being. Real being is external meaning which is the complete and final fulfilment of internal meaning. Idea to be fulfilled has become idea aware of its complete and final fulfilment, and this is real being.

Royce gives a second argument for the fourth conception of being. It combines his analysis of the internal meaning of ideas with his argument from the possibility of error, expressed in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy. There he showed that error is possible and that, for error to be possible, a judgment must have a real object external to itself.¹⁶⁸ Now, Royce has shown that an idea can be judged neither true nor false except in reference to the object which the idea intends and to the mode of correspondence it intends. In any case, the object which an idea intends is the final and complete fulfilment of its internal meaning, so that an idea is presently true or false depending upon how "it corresponds, even in its vagueness, to its own final and completely individual expression."¹⁶⁹ But, for an idea

¹⁶⁷Ibid., vol. 1, p. 358.

¹⁶⁸Cf. above, pp. 20-24.

¹⁶⁹The World and the Individual, vol. 1, p. 339.

to be true or false, its object must exist external to itself. Therefore, the object of the idea, its final and completely individual expression, presently exists. And this is at once its Truth and Being.

My idea in thus seeking its Other, seeks only the expression of its own will in an empirical and conscious life. But this life is. For that any idea, true or relatively erroneous, has an object at all, implies such fulfilment.¹⁷⁰

The empiricist objects to the fourth conception of being. The truth of ideas is decided, not by the object of the internal meaning of ideas, but by the external empirical fact. For example, the outcome of your friend's illness is an empirical fact no matter what your ideas intend. Royce distinguishes between the ultimate object of an idea, its complete and final fulfilment, and the proximate object which is any further determination of the idea.¹⁷¹ The present objection is in the context of proximate objects of ideas. It states that the outcome of your friend's illness is not the object of your internal meaning's further determination. Royce replies that, on the contrary, it is. In this case, the internal meaning of your idea is to know what the outcome is. This must be decided empirically, but it proves nothing since the empirical outcome is the object

¹⁷⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 387.

¹⁷¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 340.

for the given idea "solely because the idea wills it to be such."¹⁷² In all such cases, the idea seeks in its object its own further determination. "If its will is to be determined only by experience that it awaits, then just this experience is the determiner of the will."¹⁷³

The skeptic continues to press his objection. "Perhaps there is no final Being. Perhaps there is only the present fragment of empirical life."¹⁷⁴ If we put this doubt into the form of an hypothesis about the real, it defines the real as this present finite conscious instant of experience, which we call A. A is all that is, or nothing but A exists. Two ideas are contained in the hypothesis, namely, that only what is presently experienced is real, and that A, this present experience, exhausts the idea of being. Now, if one were presently aware that his experience exhausted the idea of being, he would have a whole and final kind of experience, such as the fourth conception of being defines. However, by hypothesis, the experience is not this whole and final kind of experience, but a momentary and passing experience. Thus, it does not contain within itself an awareness that it exhausts the idea of being. This fact lies outside its

¹⁷²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 331.

¹⁷³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 333.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 369.

experience. At this point, the skeptic's hypothesis is seen to be self-contradictory. Either A does not exhaust the idea of being, or this fact transcends present experience. The only consistent way to bring the two ideas together would be to conceive them related as the fourth conception of being relates idea and object. In this case, one would assert "that A itself consciously contains, presents, and fulfils the whole meaning involved in the idea of Being";¹⁷⁵ or, in other words, that A is not a "passing thrill of human experience," but an "absolute experience." This brings the skeptic's hypothesis into agreement with the fourth conception of being.

8. The Proof of God's Existence.

Royce approaches the proof of God's existence within the context of the problem of the one and the many. He has dwelt long upon the concept of being because it is "the richest and most inclusive of all conceptions," and because discussion of the existent realities and their relations depends upon this metaphysical foundation.¹⁷⁶ How is the World of Being to be conceived? Is it both one and many and, if so, how is it one and many? More specifically, does God

¹⁷⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 373.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 393.

exist, and does God exist as the One, "the very life of the world taken in its wholeness as a single conscious and self-possessed life?" On the other hand, do the Many exist as "a realm of individuals, self-possessed, morally free, and sufficiently independent of one another to make their freedom of action possible and finally significant?"¹⁷⁷

Royce first takes up the question of God's existence and the unity of the world. The proof of God's existence is expedited by the previous preparation in defining the fourth conception of being. The proof is divided into two parts. The first part concludes that there exists a conscious Being which includes and completes the internal meaning of finite ideas.

Our concept of Being implies that whatever is, is consciously known as the fulfilment of some idea, and is so known either by ourselves at this moment, or by a consciousness inclusive of our own.¹⁷⁸

If we take this as a major premise, we might draw the minor premise and conclusion as follows. But, the complete fulfilment of our ideas is not consciously known by ourselves at this moment. Therefore, the complete fulfilment of our idea is known by a consciousness inclusive of our own, and consequently this consciousness exists.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., vol. 1, p. 395.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., vol. 1, p. 396.

The major premise states the fourth conception of being. What is, in the fulness of Being, is the experience of the complete and final fulfilment of the internal meaning of ideas.¹⁷⁹ Royce adds that this fulfilment, as experienced, must be within the consciousness of the finite thinker's idea or within some other consciousness. If within some other consciousness, this consciousness must be inclusive of the finite knower's consciousness because the fulfilment is a fulfilment precisely with respect to the finite knower's intention. Royce says, "This essentially idealistic account of what it is to be, we have now elaborately justified by an analysis of the very concept of meaning, or of the relation of idea and object."¹⁸⁰

The minor premise simply states that the final and complete fulfilment of the finite knower's idea is not presently experienced by him. Hence, it follows that it is experienced by a conscious Being "whose existence includes and completes what the finite thinker at any moment undertakes to know."¹⁸¹ Royce concludes universally, "There can exist no fact except as a known fact, as a fact present to some consciousness." This is implied in the fourth conception

¹⁷⁹Cf. above, pp. 107-108, 111-12.

¹⁸⁰The World and the Individual, vol. 1, pp. 396-97.

¹⁸¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 397.

of being since What is, is the experienced or known fulfilment of an idea.

In the second part of the proof, Royce concludes that the whole world of truth and being, in all its variety and relationships, exists as present to the unity of a single consciousness. "For whatever is has its being, once more, only as a fact observed, and exists as the fulfilment of a conscious meaning. That is our definition of Being."¹⁸² The world contains many knowers and ideas which are either related or not. Either way, the fact about their relations exists and is known. Consequently, there must exist a conscious act for which the existence and relations of all the various knowers constitutes a present and consciously observed truth. This is to say that there must exist one final knower who knows all knowing processes in one inclusive act. It follows that,

What is, is present to the insight of a single Self-conscious Knower, whose life includes all that he knows, whose meaning is wholly fulfilled in his facts, and whose self-consciousness is complete.¹⁸³

There is an evident similarity in logical structure between this proof and the argument employed in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy. There Royce reasoned that for error

¹⁸²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 398.

¹⁸³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 400.

to be possible, a judgment must have an object external to itself. But, if one supposes that this object is not known to the judgment, the object must be present to an Absolute Knower who, knowing both the judgment and its object, can declare the judgment true or false. This object must be common in some way to the judgment, otherwise the judgment could not err concerning an object which was not its own. We noted that the weak point in Royce's argument appeared to be just here, since he appealed to an unexplained "vague intention" by reason of which the object was said to be the object of this judgment.¹⁸⁴ What we see in The World and the Individual is a parallel logical structure, but a clarification of the element that was obscure in the former work. The object is now seen to be the object of an idea because the idea is conceived to embody the purpose which selects this object. It is, however, also clear that the idea is not in present conscious possession of its object insofar as its object is the complete and final fulfilment of the idea's purpose, and this is not presently experienced. However, the object is the experienced fulfilment of the idea, and it is known as such, according to the fourth conception of being. From this it follows that the final fulfilment of all human purposes is contained in the complete

¹⁸⁴Cf. above, pp. 27-29, 57.

consciousness of an Absolute Knower. From this point of view, the elaboration of the internal and external meaning of ideas appears as a precise clarification of the element which appeared vague in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy.

In summary, thus far, Royce has deduced from the fourth conception of being the existence of God as an Absolute Knower, and in such wise that the unity of Being is manifest.

The whole world of truth and being must exist only as present, in all its variety, its wealth, its relationships, its entire constitution, to the unity of a single consciousness, which includes both our own and all finite conscious meanings in one final eternally present insight.¹⁸⁵

The question now remaining concerns the finite human individual in relation to the divine life. "In what sense does the finite Being retain, despite the unity of the whole divine life, any individual significance of his own?"¹⁸⁶ Royce observes that failure to answer this question is the most frequent objection to idealism, and for this reason "we from the beginning defined the nature of ideas in terms at once of experience and will."¹⁸⁷ Royce will approach the problem of individuality from the point of view of Will, and he begins this line of solution by returning to the internal meaning of ideas.

¹⁸⁵The World and the Individual, vol. 1, p. 397.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 446. ¹⁸⁷Ibid., vol. 1, p. 433.

To possess meaning is to possess at once both the unity of a knowing process and the presence of purpose. Although these are two aspects of one process, they can be contrasted, and one aspect may be emphasized over the other. The contrast between knowing and willing, seen from within our conscious field, is that we call our conscious process a knowing insofar as it unifies sense data into one unity of consciousness, and we call it a willing insofar as this unity of consciousness embodies a purpose. The word, Meaning, expresses both of these aspects at once, namely, as "something observed with clearness as a unity of many facts, and something also intended as the result which fulfils a purpose."¹⁸⁸

Just as Royce distinguishes two aspects of ideas, so he distinguishes two aspects of the fulfilment of ideas. Ideas tend toward fulfilment by both inclusion and exclusion of contents. On the one hand, completion is achieved by including a greater wealth or wholeness of content. On the other hand, inclusion of certain contents requires the exclusion of possible alternative contents. From this point of view, the fulfilment of an idea requires selection, and it is by selection that contents acquire individual determination, or the character of being this rather than that content. Royce attributes individuation to the selective or "will"

¹⁸⁸Ibid., vol. 1, p. 437.

aspect of ideas, and this aspect expresses exclusion of other contents as well as inclusion of its positive contents. "A will satisfied, a precisely determinate meaning expressed in facts, is as selective and exclusive on the one hand, as, on the other hand, it is possessed of an exhaustive wealth of contents which meet its selection."¹⁸⁹

In terms of possibilities, selection excludes certain possibilities from becoming fact, so that these remain merely or abstractly possible. Conversely, selection includes the fulfilment of valid possibilities of the internal meaning of ideas. The valid possibilities of a selected plan must be completely fulfilled according to the fourth conception of being. Thus, the fourth conception of being does express individuality since the complete fulfilment of the internal meaning of ideas requires the exclusion and selection which gives complete fulfilment its individual, unique, and "no other" character.¹⁹⁰

Royce maintains that our human experience does not reveal the individual, that is, that in all the world there is no other like it. Our idea of individuality comes to our finite consciousness on the selective side of this consciousness rather than upon the side of present fulfilment. "It

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 449.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 454-55.

is not so much what I already know about an individual as what my affection determines to regard as unique in the value of my object."¹⁹¹ Royce points to the predicament of the lover who insists that he loves but one, yet, in expressing himself, describes a type common to many. "Love and loyalty never directly find their unique objects, but remain faithful to them although unseen."¹⁹² Thus, the mother says, there shall be no child like my child; the lover says, there shall be none like my beloved; so the finite self says, no self shall have precisely the meaning that my life has; and the ethical consciousness says, my duty shall be that which nobody but myself can conceivably do.¹⁹³

How, then, does Royce define the relation between the finite will and the absolute will? Royce makes two points. First, every finite purpose is "a partial expression and attainment of the divine will."¹⁹⁴ No finite purpose "could have its place taken by another without a genuine alteration of the whole."¹⁹⁵ Thus, the uniqueness of the finite will

¹⁹¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 458.

¹⁹²The Conception of Immortality (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1900), p. 40.

¹⁹³The World and the Individual, vol. 1, p. 459.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 464.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 465.

is assured by the divine selection and is part of the unique divine whole. Secondly, the facts of any finite life express the meaning of its own ideas. Every portion of the divine whole expresses its own meaning, and this meaning is identical with "what each one of us means by his own individual will, so far as that will is at any time determinate, uniquely selected, and empirically expressed."¹⁹⁶

These two facts need explanation. In what sense is the individual will free if it is at once an expression of the divine purpose? Royce replies that the individual is free precisely as an expression of divine purpose. The divine will is free, and its expression constitutes a unique whole of which the individual will is a unique part. "The problem then of my freedom is simply the problem of my individuality."¹⁹⁷ Royce understands freedom in contrast to causation. A man's life in many ways depends upon nature and society, upon heredity and environment. These aspects, which causally determine man, pertain to the World of Description, and are studied by the scientist as an external observer of man and of nature. Royce sees this viewpoint of man as limited since it does not view man as "he consciously views his own inner life, that is, as possessing Internal

¹⁹⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 466.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., vol. 2, p. 330.

Meaning,"¹⁹⁸ and, by appealing to causal explanation, it describes in general types, and does not grasp the individual which, as such, "is the indefinable aspect of Being."

Whatever is unique, is as such not causally explicable. The individual as such is never the mere result of law. In consequence, the causal explanation of an object never defines its individual and unique characters as such, but always its general characters.¹⁹⁹

For Royce, then, freedom is individuality, or what "cannot be wholly defined through its external relations, or deduced from them, or causally explained by means of them."²⁰⁰ Freedom and individuality differ from causal explanation as the fourth conception of being differs from the third. One's freedom is expressed in his internal meaning or in his life's plan to find in God's world a place no one else can share.²⁰¹ But, this human purpose is seen by Royce to be identical with God's will. "When I thus consciously and uniquely will, it is I then who just here am God's will . . . I then am so far free."²⁰² Royce does not understand human freedom as a product of God's causality. Rather, his freedom is God's will expressed, or the fulfillment of the divine will. "This your own way of expressing

¹⁹⁸Ibid., vol. 2, p. 325. ¹⁹⁹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 467.

²⁰⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 352. ²⁰¹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 326.

²⁰²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 468.

God's will is not derived. It is yourself."²⁰³ God compels man to be free and individual, that is, to express his own purpose which nobody else can share, and so no one else can create. In short, there is no conflict between human and divine freedom "for the Divine Will gets expressed in the existence of me the individual only in so far as this Divine Will first not merely recognizes from without, but includes within itself my own will, as one of its own purposes."²⁰⁴ Thus, the individual is free because he is in God and God is free. Human freedom is part of the divine freedom.²⁰⁵

We will return to Royce's solution of the problem of the one and the many when we review his conception of God in the last section of this chapter. Meanwhile, there are several topics in the second volume of The World and the Individual which merit attention since they are directly related to the conception of God.

9. Time and Eternity.

The perception of time implies a perception of change in terms of a first, then next, or a many in succession. These events form a temporal order insofar as each is past

²⁰³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 293.

²⁰⁴Ibid., vol. 2, p. 330.

²⁰⁵The Conception of God, p. 294.

when the next one comes. Time is perceived insofar as a "many in succession" are perceived at once. The examples of listening to a melody or understanding the sense of a statement illustrate the "at once grasping" of many serially related and distinct events. The present has the twofold meaning of a series of successive states presented at once. Royce refers to our "time-span" of consciousness, or the length of our present moments, or how much succession we can grasp at once.²⁰⁶ It is relatively limited. Moreover, time has for us internal meaning. The irreversible direction of temporal succession means that from which we pass towards a desired fulfilment or a more complete expression of our purpose. Our temporal form of experience is the form of the will as such.

Our ordinary conception of time "as a universal form of existence in the external world" is a generalization derived from our inner experience of time.²⁰⁷ Real processes in the world, whether physical, historical or ethical, depend upon conceiving past, present and future as a single whole whose parts have no true being except in their linkage. The present is not a mathematically conceived indivisible moment wherein no event takes place. "But if the present is a

²⁰⁶The World and the Individual, vol. 2, pp. 121-123.

²⁰⁷Ibid., vol. 2, p. 126.

divisible portion of time, then it contains within itself succession" just as the present of psychological time.²⁰⁸ There is a continuous succession whose present "means any section of the time-stream in so far as, with reference to anybody's consciousness, it is viewed as having relation to this unity of consciousness, and as in a single whole of meaning with this unity."²⁰⁹ Moreover, conceptual time, like perceptual time, is teleological. Time has a fixed direction in such wise that the future depends upon the past for its meaning while the past is expectant of the future, or aims in the direction of the future. Royce conceives this as internal meaning gradually winning its external meaning.²¹⁰

In view of the correspondence "between the universal time of the world-order, as we conceive it, and the time of our internal experience, as we observe it," Royce reasons that God's eternal knowledge of the real world is analogous to our own experience of time.²¹¹ The point of similarity is in the twofold character of our experience of time. The present means a successive many presented at once to consciousness. The "at once grasping" is a certain transcendence of the many successive. A time-sequence, however brief, is already viewed in a way "not merely temporal, when, despite

²⁰⁸Ibid., vol. 2, p. 128. ²⁰⁹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 130.

²¹⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 133. ²¹¹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 140.

its sequence, it is grasped at once, and is thus grasped not through mere memory, but by virtue of actual experience."²¹² Thus, God's consciousness is an eternal consciousness insofar as all past and future time is grasped at once and thus transcended. God's is a consciousness "related to the whole of the world's events, and to the whole of time, precisely as our human consciousness is related to a single melody."²¹³ The point of difference in the analogy is the arbitrary limitation which "forbids us to observe a succession at once in case it occupies more than a few seconds,"²¹⁴ while "God knows the whole time-sequence of the world at once. The difference is merely one of span."²¹⁵ Thus, Royce's treatment of analogy places the element of transcendence, the totum simul aspect, in a position of likeness as well as difference.

Royce also states that God's knowledge is eternal because his view of the world "does not pass away and give place to some other view."²¹⁶ In this way it also differs from the totum simul insight of the human experience of change. The knowledge of all change is itself unchangeable

²¹²Ibid., vol. 2, p. 142.

²¹³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 142.

²¹⁴Ibid., vol. 2, p. 142.

²¹⁵Ibid., vol. 2, p. 145.

²¹⁶Ibid., vol. 2, p. 141.

"because any change that occurs or that can occur to any being is included amongst the objects known to the eternal point of view The knowledge of all sequences does not itself follow as another sequence."²¹⁷ Thus, Royce affirms that the divine consciousness transcends the whole temporal order and, in its knowledge of this order, is unchangeable.

10. The Moral Order and the Problem of Evil.

One of the main objections to Royce's concept of the Absolute has been that it does not allow for the freedom of finite moral agents to make the world either better or worse, for the universe is already finished.²¹⁸ Royce's reply to this objection hinges upon two ideas. One is a conception of freedom developed within the framework of the internal and external meaning of ideas. The second is the distinction which Royce has made between the temporal order and the eternal order.

The moral Ought is a category of temporal application. The moral agent looks to a future course of action, so that without temporal succession there would be no morality.²¹⁹ Secondly, the moral Ought means "a rule that,

²¹⁷Ibid., vol. 2, p. 146.

²¹⁸Cf. above, pp. 71-73.

²¹⁹The World and the Individual, vol. 2, p. 343.

if followed, will guide you" so to express your will as to bring it in unity with the divine will.²²⁰ The essence of the Ought "is that the Self is to accomplish the object of its search through obedience to an order which is not of its own momentary creation."²²¹ This order is the Other, the external meaning, which internal meaning seeks, but with which it is not in present conscious harmony. It is possible for the self to conceive its search for self-expression "as an undertaking not to obey, but to subdue" this order. Consciousness of the Ought requires overcoming opposition through rational obedience, while "the consciousness opposed to the Ought seeks to master the world in the service of the mere caprice of the Self."²²²

Royce has considered the finite self to be free as an unique expression of divine purpose. As individual, it selects its life purpose free from, or undetermined by, external and causal relations to the world. It remains to develop further the notion of the freedom of moral agents in a manner consistent with the internal and external meaning of ideas. When an individual acts, his deed is at once an

²²⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 347.

²²¹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 349.

²²²Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 349-350.

expression of knowledge and purpose, "insight and choice." This is due to what psychologists call "Attention." An idea already involves a nascent deed, while ideas arise from attention. Attention is "the process whereby our present knowledge alters to meet our purposes."²²³ The field of choice is the field of attention. "As a man attends, so is he, so he knows, and so too, he acts, or voluntarily refrains from action."²²⁴ In the moral act, we have to consider attention as "a deliberate and free dwelling upon, or ignoring of, plans of action which we are supposed already to possess."²²⁵ This involves our choice to narrow the field of consciousness upon the ideas of the Ought which are already present. "To sin is consciously to choose to forget, through a narrowing of the field of attention, an Ought that one already recognizes."²²⁶ Choice of the good, on the other hand, "is voluntary persistence in attending to the good already known."²²⁷ In this way, Royce attempts to explain the moral act in a manner consistent with the internal and external meaning of ideas.

Royce takes up the objection that the finite agent expresses what the divine will has already accomplished so

²²³ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 356.

²²⁴ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 355.

²²⁵ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 356.

²²⁶ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 359.

²²⁷ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 360.

that the moral world is static, and the good cannot make it better nor the evil make it worse. In reply, Royce turns to the distinction between the temporal and eternal orders of the world, and he introduces into his thought a theory of human atonement for moral evil. The question is, how is moral evil included and reconciled within the perfect whole? Royce answers,

Not . . . by virtue of the fact that the evil deed expresses the finite agent's evil will, but because his will is supplemented, is overcome, is overruled by what expresses some other will than his finite will.²²⁸

Since the agent did not intend but opposed the Absolute life, there was in the universe what needed to be atoned. The final perfection is won through this atonement which is accomplished either by a new deed of the evil-doer or by the deed of some other moral agent. Thus, moral agents are free to make the world better or worse but, if the agent chooses ill, the world-order will in the end make the evil good by a new deed of reconciliation which overcomes the evil and thus constitutes the perfection of the whole. Moreover, one must regard the distinction between the eternal and temporal orders. The world is not changeless or finished when viewed in light of the temporal order and the freedom of finite agents. From the eternal viewpoint,

²²⁸Ibid., vol. 2, p. 365.

the world is not subject to further change, but only because this viewpoint includes in a single glance the whole of time and "all the changes that finite agents, acting in time, really work in their own world, namely, in the temporal world that is future to their own deeds and subject to their will."²²⁹ Hence, the finite agent's will is identical with the divine will only "when interpreted in the light of all other life," of all other present and future events which are unknown to him now, but which go into the final expression of the whole divine plan.²³⁰

Finally, Royce considers the problem of ill fortune and human sorrows. Royce regards all finite facts as such to be in some sense evil because "taken in themselves, they have no complete meaning, and leave us in disquietude, searching still for the Other, that is, for true Being in its wholeness."²³¹ The only question about any temporal event "is how great an evil it makes manifest to our experience."²³² Thus, death is an evil which makes us acutely aware of human finitude as the experience of the absence of the Other. Royce advises, "Look, then, elsewhere. Seek not the living among the dead."²³³ Human misery sends us searching for our true object which is life fulfilled.

²²⁹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 369. ²³⁰Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 369-370.

²³¹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 363. ²³²Ibid., vol. 2, p. 381.

²³³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 380.

At this point Royce adds a new idea in his treatment of the problem of evil. Ill fortune is seen to accomplish the atoning work mentioned before, and these are linked because the Absolute life is one, and consequently every region of this life has unique relations to the whole. Hence, Royce can look upon the ill fortune due to external natural agencies as part of the burden of the world's struggle with temporal finitude, with sin and its consequences. The "solidarity of mankind links the crimes of each to the sorrows of all . . . Morally evil deeds, and the ill fortune of mankind, are thus inseparably linked aspects of the temporal order."²³⁴ Atoning work is the common lot of human beings although we cannot "understand in detail the connections between sin and ill fortune."²³⁵

There is, however, the bright side to this picture and that is the eternal viewpoint. This viewpoint has two aspects, one of which is new in Royce's thought. First, "the Absolute as such, in the individuality of its life, is not evil, while its life is unquestionably inclusive of evil, which it experiences, overcomes, and transcends."²³⁶ Our comfort lies in the consciousness that our sorrows are God's

²³⁴Ibid., vol. 2, p. 389.

²³⁵Ibid., vol. 2, p. 394.

²³⁶Ibid., vol. 2, p. 396.

sorrows, and that God overcomes and transcends these sorrows. This aspect of Royce's solution is the same as the one expressed in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy.²³⁷ The second aspect is that "we, too, as finally and eternally fulfilled individuals," share in God's eternal fulfilment.²³⁸ This solution goes far beyond The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, and indicates Royce's different position on the question of personal immortality.

11. Immortality.

The importance that finite individuality has come to mean for Royce can be judged by the emphasis he now gives to personal immortality. First expressed in the supplementary essay of The Conception of God,²³⁹ his treatment here takes more ample expression.

Royce considers "three distinct but closely linked considerations" for personal immortality.²⁴⁰ In the first, he argues that individuality is real, but that it is not manifest to us in our present form of consciousness either

²³⁷Cf. above, p. 51.

²³⁸The World and the Individual, vol. 2, p. 408.

²³⁹The Conception of God, pp. 322-326.

²⁴⁰The World and the Individual, vol. 2, p. 431.

in thought or in experience.²⁴¹ Yet, we love and pursue individuality which, as a category of the will, is the seeking and finding of unique purpose. It has been shown that God is conscious, in his eternal knowledge, of our seeking and of the final fulfilment of our purpose, and that these are the unique expression of his own purpose.²⁴² But, the final fulfilment is also the expression of our own present purpose. Hence, we also must experience in another world, and with a different type of consciousness, and in union with God, the complete fulfilment of our purpose. This consciousness includes and completes, and thus is continuous with, our present conscious strivings.

The second consideration questions the "very Possibility of Death." The death of a man is, from one point of view, but a special case of the law "of the universal transiency of all temporal facts." However, in death, a life with a meaning comes to an end "before that meaning is worked out to its completion, or is expressed with its intended individual wholeness."²⁴³ This incompleteness is real. But

²⁴¹This first line of reasoning is stressed in The Conception of Immortality, Royce's Ingersoll Lecture, delivered in 1899.

²⁴²Cf. above, pp. 115-118.

²⁴³The World and the Individual, vol. 2, p. 439.

what is real fulfils a purpose. What purpose can be fulfilled by the ending of a life whose purpose is so far unfulfilled? It is "necessarily a purpose that, in the eternal world, is consciously known and seen as continuous with, yes, as inclusive of, the very purpose whose fulfilment the temporal death seems to cut short."²⁴⁴

Thirdly, Royce reasons that "an ethical task" is such that one can never say, "My work is finished."²⁴⁵ While special tasks come to an end, the ideal offering of one's unique service to God and to his fellows can never be finished in any time however great. "To serve God is to create new opportunities for service" so that there is no such thing as a last moral deed. Royce further develops this idea in his essay, "Immortality," by tying in the notion of an ethical self with the notion of time as a form of the will.²⁴⁶ The present of the temporal self is never wholly satisfied, so that it inevitably seeks to fulfil its purpose in future deeds. A consistent ethical ideal is thus insatiable in its demand for further expression. This indicates that "every rational person has, in the endless temporal

²⁴⁴Ibid., vol. 2, p. 440.

²⁴⁵Ibid., vol. 2, p. 244.

²⁴⁶"Immortality," Hibbert Journal, V (1907), 724-44. Reprinted in William James and Other Essays on the Philosophy of Life (New York: Macmillan Co., 1911), pp. 257-98.

order, an opportunity for an endless series of deeds . . .
Seen, then, from the eternal point of view, my personal life
must be an endless series of deeds."²⁴⁷

12. The Conception of God. Summary.

In the concluding paragraph of The World and the Individual, Royce says, "Despite God's absolute unity, we, as individuals, preserve and attain our unique lives and meanings."²⁴⁸ This remark indicates the emphasis which Royce's thought has given to finite individuality and his concern to reply to his critics. The development of finite individuality, then, marks the main difference between Royce's middle and early periods. "It is precisely the restoration of individuality to the Self which constitutes the essential deed of our Idealism."²⁴⁹

The emphasis which Royce gives to finite individuality is seen particularly in his treatment of the self as free and immortal, and these developments are traceable to the function of will or purpose in the theory of the internal and external meanings of ideas. The self, as a person, is an ethical self by reason of unity of purpose. So also the self is free as a unique expression of God's purpose. It is

²⁴⁷William James and Other Essays, pp. 296-97.

²⁴⁸The World and the Individual, vol. 2, p. 452.

²⁴⁹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 286.

immortal because fulfilment of purpose implies conscious awareness of this fulfilment in the eternal world. Hence, one cannot overestimate the importance of the internal meaning of ideas in Royce's development of the individuality and freedom of the finite self.

To this development there corresponds a significant development in Royce's conception of God. God is related to the world, not simply as Thought, but as Will whose expression is the world of finite individuals. In this expression of the divine will consists the immanence of God since the finite selves, in their lives, constitute the life of God. God is conceived as a Person because he is self-conscious, that is, conscious of his own life, and because his life completely expresses his purpose.²⁵⁰ God is free because the expression of his purpose involves a selection that excludes as well as includes. God is an Individual since his one purpose expresses the whole world. God is "the Individual of Individuals" whose life is an "eternally fulfilled social life" with the complete ethical selves who are the expression of his will, and "the completion of this eternal order also means the self-conscious expression of God . . . who dwells in all, as they in him."²⁵¹ Thus,

²⁵⁰Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 418-20.

²⁵¹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 447.

Royce's treatment of God as Individual corresponds to his treatment of the finite self as individual. Each stems from the notion of purpose. "It is will, then, in God and in man, that logically determines the consciousness of individuality."²⁵²

Consistent with this emphasis upon purpose is the important distinction which Royce draws between the temporal and the eternal orders. "God in his totality as the Absolute Being is conscious, not in time, but of time."²⁵³ God transcends and views totum simul the whole temporal order which expresses his purpose. The distinction between the two orders affirms and reinforces the transcendence of God and his unchanging knowledge which was expressed in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy. Royce also continues to reject any theory of evolution of God's consciousness.²⁵⁴ His position on the nature of God's consciousness as eternal, unchanging and transcendent precludes this in The World and the Individual as it did in the early work. Moreover, Royce rejects "a Law of Universal Progress in time, so that all temporal things grow, by God's will, in all respects better as the world goes

²⁵²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 460.

²⁵³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 419.

²⁵⁴Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 419-20.

on."²⁵⁵ "All things always work together for good from the divine point of view,"²⁵⁶ but it does not follow from this that what comes later in time is "in all respects better, or . . . in every way nearer to God's perfection, than what comes earlier in time."²⁵⁷

Besides emphasizing the development of individuality and purpose in Royce's thought, one must also look upon The World and the Individual as an attempt to deal with the problem of the One and the Many. This latter viewpoint is at least as important as the former, and it is made possible by the former. It is because Royce has developed a new way of conceiving individuality that he can give a metaphysical analysis to the problem of the One and the Many, which was not possible in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, concerned as it was with the epistemology of the problem of the possibility of error.

Royce's approach to the conception of God is undertaken within the context of the problem of the One and the Many. It is impossible to conceive God, in Royce's account, separately from the finite ethical selves, for they constitute God's life as the expression of his purpose. The world is One

²⁵⁵Ibid., vol. 2, p. 421.

²⁵⁶Ibid., vol. 2, p. 425.

²⁵⁷Ibid., vol. 2, p. 421.

because "in mere multiplicity there would be no finality of insight."²⁵⁸ Concretely, the world is One because it fulfils a purpose, "the Absolute purpose," and this is what it means to be real. The One is an individual whole; individual, because it expresses God's one purpose and this by a selection which not only includes, but excludes what remains merely possible; whole, because it includes an infinite variety, "so that its unity is the unity of many Wills, each one of which finds expression in an individual life."²⁵⁹ Thus, the world is Many since "in the interrelationships of contrasted expressions of a single Will lies the only opportunity for the embodiment of wholeness of life, and for possession of Self-consciousness by the Absolute."²⁶⁰ The many are not a result of creation which would cause them, as effects, to be external to their cause. Rather, the many exist as internal expressions of the divine purpose, and so constitute the divine life. "The only general deduction of their existence is furnished by the fact that, unless they existed, the Absolute Will, which is also their own, could not be expressed."²⁶¹ Thus, the world is One and Many as the manifold expression of one divine purpose.

²⁵⁸Ibid., vol. 2, p. 336. ²⁵⁹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 335.

²⁶⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 336. ²⁶¹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 303.

Thus, too, the world is both free and necessary. It is necessary for the general reason that, without the world, purpose would not be expressed, and this would be non-being. Moreover, without the many, God would not be self-conscious since the self of which he is conscious is the many. God is a person because he is conscious of his purpose expressed through the many. However, God's expression of purpose is free in the sense that he selects from possibilities what is to be, and in this selection consists the true individuality of finite selves.

Royce's monism is evident in his treatment of the One and the Many. God's life "is real through us all; and we are real through our union with that life."²⁶² This identification of God's life, as his expressed will, with the life of the finite self is true both of the fulfilled self and the self of temporal strivings. "What the Self in its wholeness wills is, just in so far, God's will, and is identical with one of the many expressions implied by a single divine purpose."²⁶³ So, also the temporal endeavors of finite internal meaning are real and are identified with God's purpose expressed. This identification is seen especially in Royce's treatment of the problem of evil.

²⁶²Ibid., vol. 2, p. 452.

²⁶³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 286.

"I say, our sorrows are identically God's own sorrows."²⁶⁴

Our temporal warfare "occurs, indeed, within the divine life itself, and not in an externally created world."²⁶⁵ God's life is the entire realm of temporal consciousness as well as "the infinite whole that includes this endless temporal process, and that consciously surveys it as one life, God's own life."²⁶⁶

Royce's monism is seen clearly in his discussion of human freedom. The finite self is free as a unique expression of the divine will. What Royce means by this is perhaps best brought out by asking in what sense a finite self can accept its duty as coming from God, if God's will is identical with its own? Royce says that in one sense God's will comes to the moral agent from without, together with so much that makes it to be what it is.²⁶⁷ Unless there is a distinct Other, the self has neither a norm nor a content by which it can fulfil itself. Thus, when Royce speaks of the will of the moral agent as God's will, he refers to the reaction of the self to the external other. This reaction is free and is identical with God's will. One's own selection of how he is to fulfil himself comes only from himself and not from any external source, not even from God as the external Other,

²⁶⁴Ibid., vol. 2, p. 408. ²⁶⁵Ibid., vol. 2, p. 398.

²⁶⁶Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 418-19. ²⁶⁷Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 290-91.

and this very selection is God's will. "It is yourself. And it is yours because God worketh in you. The Spirit of God in its wholeness . . . compels you to be an individual, and to be free."²⁶⁸

Thus, Royce's solution to the problem of the One and the Many is monistic in the sense that the world, in its variety, is identical with the life of God or the expressed will of God. There is no dualistic theory of creation which would make finite selves, as creatures, exterior to God's interior life. There is no wholeness of Being exterior to God. This is seen in Royce's conception of truth. The internal meaning of an idea is true in the measure that it corresponds to its final complete fulfilment, and this resides in God outside the present temporal order. This is also seen in Royce's conception of the good. The good is the whole fulfilment of internal meaning, while temporal strivings are in some sense evil. So, also life is one, only as self possessed, vaguely here and now in ideal, but really, only in the final fulfilment. So, finally, being is identified with the external other of internal meaning, and this is the final fulfilment outside the present temporal order. Temporal strivings are real, as against mysticism, but only in the measure that they are included in final

²⁶⁸ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 293.

fulfilment. Thus, Being is one, true and good only in explicit reference to a wholeness of life which transcends the temporal life of this world.

Nevertheless, the temporal order is real and it is required for final fulfilment since without striving there would be no attainment. Even in the case of attainment, an endless series of temporal deeds of service to God and to one's fellows fulfils the completely self-possessed life. The distinction between the temporal and the eternal orders is itself eternal, and this shows that Royce includes a certain dualism within his monism. God's consciousness is eternal, and this constitutes his transcendence of the whole temporal order. Perhaps it is best to refer to this dualism as an interior dualism, and to God's transcendence as an interior transcendence.

In summary, and in comparison with The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, Royce's middle thought, expressed in The World and the Individual, advances over his early thought by his development of the concept of individuality, and this is accomplished by the introduction of purpose or the internal meaning of ideas. This has led to a richer conception of both human and divine personality. However, in regard to his solution of the problem of the One and the Many, Royce's thought continues the monism expressed in his earlier work.

Finite individuals are internal parts of God's life; the many are partial expressions of and participations in One Individual Whole.

CHAPTER III

THE LATER THEORY OF COMMUNITY

1. Transition to The Problem of Christianity.¹

Following the five years of preparation that went into the Gifford Lectures, Royce was not again to publish a major work for seven years. His health required moderation of activity which was largely confined to class lectures and studies in logic. His interest in ethics grew, and this resulted in various lectures and in the publication in 1908 of his major work in ethics, The Philosophy of Loyalty.² His interest in religious questions also grew, and this resulted in a lecture, "What is Vital in Christianity?," delivered at Harvard in 1909 and published in William James and Other Essays in 1911.³ He indicated that this was but the inception of a larger work that he was planning on Christianity.⁴ He delivered the Bross Lectures in 1911 and

¹The Problem of Christianity (2 vols.; New York: Macmillan Co., 1913).

²The Philosophy of Loyalty (New York: Macmillan Co., 1908).

³William James and Other Essays on the Philosophy of Life (New York: Macmillan Co., 1911), pp. 99-183.

⁴Cf. Royce's letter to George Brett, the president of the Macmillan Co., in The Letters of Josiah Royce, p. 558.

these were published in 1912 as The Sources of Religious Insight.⁵ This work complements The Problem of Christianity, particularly the matter of the first volume, by presenting Royce's conception of the nature of religion which the latter work in part presupposes. We will present a few of these key ideas by way of a transition to The Problem of Christianity.

Perhaps nowhere more fully than in The Sources of Religious Insight does Royce explain what he means by religion. The essential characteristic of religion is its concern with the problem of man's salvation or with the freeing of mankind from a universal burden of evil and sin. The essential postulate of religion "is the postulate that man needs to be saved."⁶ This appears to be a universal and deeply felt need of religious man whenever and wherever he is found. The idea of salvation implies two simpler ideas. One is that there is some overriding end of human life far more important than others which by comparison seem unimportant and trivial. The second idea is that man, as he now is, is in grave danger of missing his final end and so rendering his life a failure.⁷ Religious insight means "insight into the need and into the way of salvation."⁸

⁵The Sources of Religious Insight (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912).

⁶Ibid., pp. 8-9.

⁷Ibid., p. 12.

⁸Ibid., p. 17.

Royce explains that by "sources" of religious insight he means "the ways in which religious truths can become accessible to men."⁹ He is not concerned with the revealed creeds of particular religions, and for this reason he does not attempt an extended discussion of Christianity which he will undertake in some future time.¹⁰ The sources of religious insight which interest him lie within human experience. The religious experience of the individual may concern three objects: first, his ideal, that is the standard in terms of which he estimates the sense and the value of his own life; secondly, his need of salvation manifested in the extent to which he falls short of his ideal; thirdly, the presence of or the longing for the power which will save him, namely, his Deliverer.¹¹

Royce believes that individual experience can be a natural source of religious insight into the first two objects. Although a person's private ideals tend to be capricious and depend upon intuitions and feelings which are unstable, this very fact offers us a fragmentary insight into one absolutely valuable ideal, "the ideal of triumph over our unreason," and "the ideal of spiritual unity and

⁹Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 10.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 28-29.

self-possession."¹² In this case, both the ideal and our need come to consciousness at once. We need to make the warfare of passion subordinate to the peace and power of the spirit. Since the need is pressing and the ideal is far off, we need salvation.

The third object, the felt need of the Deliverer, if it comes, will transcend the boundaries of a merely individual experience. It will be some communion with Another "not-ourselves," the master of life and the revealer of final truth.

Royce sees a religious paradox in the fact that the principal religious motives are natural and human, while they force us to seek for relief from spiritual sources that are super-human. Yet, human life is characterized by narrowness of view and conflicting interests which defeat one another. There are, however, times when we get a wider vision, when we review life or foresee it with broader outlook. These are often tragic moments occasioned by the death of a friend or the bankruptcy of broken promises. They are moments of insight and show us our need, and they arise naturally. At such moments a man sees that he ought to have a highest aim and that his aim should win what it seeks. On the other hand, we are helpless to hold this vision of

¹²Ibid., p. 31.

triumphant life and unity of spirit before us or to turn it into a practical reality unless we come in touch with an order of spiritual existence which is superhuman since it must be a life that is guided by a perfect and unwavering vision, and that somehow conquers all fickleness, conflict and estrangement. "If there is no such life, none the less we need it, and so need salvation."¹³ Thus, Royce believes that natural human experience reveals the need for a salvation which must be supplied by a superhuman source.

Man's social experience is another source of religious insight. On the one hand, Royce rejects the humanistic view which would reduce religion to social concern and reform. So long as man views his fellow-man "merely as fellow man, he only complicates his problem, for both he and his fellow equally need salvation."¹⁴ On the other hand, Royce rejects the view which would confine religious experience merely to the individual. Man cannot be saved alone since he is bound to his fellow-man by spiritual bonds. Royce mentions two examples of religious insight arising from a natural social context. One is the sense of guilt experienced in the total failure of highest purpose. Guilt takes the form of overwhelming loneliness; one believes himself

¹³Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 65.

an outcast from human sympathy. "Salvation involves a reconciliation both with the social and the divine order, a reconciliation through love and suffering."¹⁵ The other example is the experience of a deep love in which one seems to find the divine in the idealized beloved. Royce quotes the two Brownings to illustrate the naturalness of the religious motive and the mystery of the religious object.¹⁶

Royce distinguishes religion from morality. Moral interest centers about the idea of duty, seeks to define right deeds, and insists that they shall be done. Religious interest, on the other hand, centers upon the sense of need or the One who delivers the needy from danger. It may seek salvation through deeds, but some religious moods are contemplative and adoring rather than strenuous.¹⁷

Not all moralists agree with the religious conviction that there is one highest end of existence. Other moralists, who do so agree, do not agree that man is by nature in great danger of completely failing to attain this good so that he needs to be saved. Royce says,

And to me the religious need seems an insistent and clear need. But many moralists are partisans of duty as a substitute for religion. And they are often much more optimistic regarding human nature than I am.¹⁸

¹⁵Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 71-73.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 170

¹⁸Ibid., p. 173.

When the religious person and the moralist agree concerning both the goal of existence and the danger of failure, they emphasize different lines of solution. The religious view emphasizes the saving power of grace. The moralist stresses strenuousness in the pursuit of duty. "Is there any mode of living that is just both to the moral and the religious motives?"¹⁹ Royce believes that there is a morality which is already essentially religious. Royce calls this the religion of loyalty, and he reviews certain salient features of The Philosophy of Loyalty.

Our moral interests develop parallel to our religious interests. The moral problems arise through certain interactions between our individual and our social experience. Both the reason and the will are interested in reviewing these interactions and in unifying our plan of life.

The moral question always takes the form of asking: What am I to do? The first answer is furnished by our individual experience. I am to do what I choose to do. For Royce, the individual's duty must originate in part from his reasonable will. If duty were merely an external imposition, the moral agent would lack autonomy. However, the question arises, what is it, on the whole, that I choose to do? The

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 181.

question is not easily answered. Each of us is by nature so full of caprices and various aims that, left to ourselves, we live not only narrowly but inconsistently. What we choose to do at any one moment of our lives is hopelessly thwarted by what we intended to do at some other moment. Self-will, left to itself, means self-defeat.

Thus, we have to look elsewhere for a rule, and so we consult our social experience since we are naturally imitative and, when trained, conventional creatures. However, the counsel of the social will is an inane wordly prudence. It tells us how to learn from our fellows how to live for we have to live more or less in their ways. Cooperate enough to win the ideas and skills needed to know and accomplish what it is we want. Do not oppose the social will too much because it can destroy you. Conform enough to get what you want.

Such counsel is barren advice since it furnishes no single ideal or universal rule, and thus it does not lead one out of the chaos of self-thwarting efforts. For, as one goes about in social relations, sometimes he loves his fellows and sometimes he feels antipathy for them. Sometimes he is full of pity and tries to help, while at other times they appear as rivals and he tries to crush them. There is thus no one social tendency that teaches how to escape

self-defeat. Love and pity war with social greed and rivalry.²⁰

Royce's dialectic between self-will and the social will requires a solution which is at once a moral and a religious solution. The moral solution establishes a principle of action and a universal norm of duty which does justice both to the autonomy of the individual moral agent to say what his duty is and to the fact that the norm must be objective and beyond the caprices of the individual. That principle or norm is what Royce calls "a Cause," that is, a socially compelling cause such as My Home, My Family, My Country, Mankind, The Church, My Science, or God's Will.²¹ The cause must be freely selected by the individual moral agent and, once selected, it objectively determines his service and self-surrender.

Loyalty is the name Royce gives to the practical attitude one has for his cause. "Loyalty is the willing, the thorough-going, and the practical devotion of a self to a cause. And a cause means something that is conceived by its loyal servant as unifying the lives of various human beings into one life."²² Loyalty to his cause furnishes the single purpose which makes the self a conscious and

²⁰Ibid., p. 186.

²¹Ibid., p. 200.

²²The Philosophy of Loyalty, p. 252.

unified moral person.²³ Since loyalty is, as Royce believes, the best in human life, it follows that one's loyalty to his cause should not be destructive of another's loyalty to his cause, but rather should advance the cause of universal loyalty through example, influence and the proper choice of a cause.²⁴ "Be loyal to loyalty" is the universal moral norm. Indeed, one's true cause is "the spiritual unity of all the world of reasonable beings."²⁵

The cause is also of a religious nature, and Royce calls it a grace, a free gift, and superhuman. The cause is "some conceived, and yet also real, spiritual unity which links many individual lives in one."²⁶ The cause is "superhuman in the scope, the wealth, the unity, and the reasonableness of its purposes and of its accomplishments."²⁷

Royce explains what he means by "superhuman" and "supernatural" by referring to the form of human consciousness. This signifies the narrowness of the human span of consciousness by which man can attend to a very limited range of facts at one instant. Man's whole conscious make-up, or

²³Ibid., pp. 58-59.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 116-26. The Sources of Religious Insight, p. 203.

²⁵The Sources of Religious Insight, p. 205.

²⁶Ibid., p. 199.

²⁷Ibid., p. 200.

his characteristic way of becoming aware of things, suffers from this limitation of conscious span. "We are always like beings who have to see our universe through the cracks that our successive instants open before us, and as quickly close again."²⁸

We can make indirect, not direct, escape from our limitations of time span through our powers of habit-forming, memory, and abstraction. For example, "The odour of a flower may come to us burdened with a meaning that we regard as the total result of a whole summer of our life."²⁹ We indirectly grasp connections which the instant merely suggests, but which we tend to view as if it were our actual experience. We presuppose the interpretation which a wider view would verify, and to this wider view we appeal in all our truth seeking.

Indeed, our acceptance of scientific interpretations of connections of experience, which our form of consciousness forbids us to verify directly, supposes that superhuman forms and unities of consciousness are real. "For the facts of science are indefinable except as facts in and for a real experience."³⁰ These unities of consciousness are no natural objects while all natural facts are objects for them.

²⁸Ibid., p. 262.

²⁹Ibid., p. 263.

³⁰Ibid., p. 270. Royce's reasoning here is continuous with his early and middle periods. Cf. above, pp. 18-20, 37-38, 65-67, 112.

Thus, the difference between our span of consciousness and the wider span is the difference between the human and the superhuman. The latter directly includes what we both directly grasp and indirectly try to grasp. The wider form of consciousness can be called supernatural insofar as it transcends the natural laws which govern our form of human consciousness by surveying at once countless data.³¹

To Royce, the chief source of religious insight appears to be the example of the life and deeds of men who are bound in spiritual brotherhood by loyalty to their causes. True loyalty is religious insofar as it serves all the loyal, the cause of causes. Each such community stands for a unity which is not merely human but belongs to an essentially superhuman world. It seems that Royce can regard such communities as superhuman because he has identified human nature with the endless circular conflict between individual and social experience. Since loyalty to a cause, and to the cause of causes, resolves this conflict, the community appears to have another-than-human and saving aspect. But this is what Royce means by religion, salvation through a superhuman power. Royce identifies this superhuman power as the Spirit.³² This is another reason why the saving community is somehow superhuman. The community

³¹Ibid., pp. 266-68.

³²Ibid., p. 271.

manifests the unity of the Spirit and this unity transcends the narrow span of human consciousness. Its reality is manifested to the insight of individual men only indirectly, that is, by the loyal deeds of the members of the community. Perhaps the community of loyal persons in the Spirit is Royce's deepest insight into the meaning of religion. Man, as a product of nature, needs salvation. What saves man is a reality, a community that is divinely inspired, which comes to man as a free gift from without, and saves man through his loyal dedication to its cause.³³

2. The Problem of Christianity. Introduction.

The Problem of Christianity were lectures delivered before the Lowell Institute in Boston and on the Hibbert Foundation at Manchester College, Oxford. Royce indicated in 1911 his intention to produce a work on Christianity.³⁴ He took a sabbatical leave for the academic year 1912-13 to prepare this work to be presented as the Lowell Lectures. Despite an apoplectic stroke on February 1, 1912, his research continued. In a letter to George Brett, March 29, 1912, Royce indicated that the work would consist of a volume of lectures whose proposed title would be "What is

³³Ibid., p. 281.

³⁴The Letters of Josiah Royce, pp. 558-60. Cf. also, The Sources of Religious Insight, p. 10.

Vital in Christianity?"³⁵ By June 5, 1912, he reported to Brett that the work would be "a longer course of (say 16) Hibbert Lectures in Oxford. The present proposed title is The Problem of Christianity."³⁶ Since neither the article, "What is Vital in Christianity?" nor The Sources of Religious Insight anticipate the material of the second volume of The Problem of Christianity, it is likely that this material, including the philosophy of community and the theory of interpretation, was not developed by Royce prior to the spring of 1912.

An admirable summary of the two volumes is contained in the preface.

The thesis of this book is that the essence of Christianity, as the Apostle Paul stated that essence, depends upon regarding the being which the early Christian Church believed itself to represent, and the being which I call, in this book, the "Beloved Community," as the true source, through loyalty, of the salvation of man. This doctrine I hold to be empirically verifiable within the limits of our experience, and metaphysically defensible as an expression of the life and the spiritual significance of the whole universe.³⁷

This doctrine, as empirically verifiable within the limits of our experience, is the general theme of volume one.

³⁵The Letters of Josiah Royce, pp. 566-68.

³⁶Ibid., p. 571.

³⁷The Problem of Christianity, vol. 1, p. xxvi.

This doctrine, as a metaphysically defensible expression of the life and the spiritual significance of the whole universe, is the theme of volume two. The contents of the second volume are of central importance to this thesis since it is concerned primarily with Royce's conception of God. However, certain ideas expressed in the first volume are related considerations and warrant preliminary attention.

Royce approaches his topic neither as an apologist, a defender of the faith, nor as a hostile critic, but as a student of the problems of religion who attempts a sympathetic philosophical interpretation of Christianity.³⁸ The problem itself is, "In what sense can the modern man consistently be, in creed, a Christian?"³⁹ By "modern man" Royce means man as a product of a certain "growth of human wisdom" who wishes to estimate the Christian creed "partly in the light of its history, partly in the light of a philosophical study of the meaning and lesson of this history."⁴⁰ Royce stresses the history, particularly the earliest history, of Christianity because he thinks that Christianity is not adequately understood by considering simply the teaching, personal example, and the spirit of Jesus. The interpretation which the early

³⁸Ibid., vol. 1, p. 9.

³⁹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 14.

⁴⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 22.

Church gave to the mission of Christ, to his life and death, also has been regarded by tradition as forming an integral part of the Christian creed. Royce accepts St. Paul as this interpreter, and he believes that three ideas appeared in the early Church as interpretations of vital and essential portions of the religious message which Christ had for mankind. These key ideas were the need of a divinely significant community for the salvation of man, the burden of sin from which man needs salvation, and the atonement of Christ which makes possible the entrance of the individual into the saving community.⁴¹ We notice that these ideas correspond fairly closely to the three central ideas of religion expressed in The Sources of Religious Insight, the ideal, the need of salvation, and the Deliverer.⁴²

3. The Moral Burden of the Individual.

In The Sources of Religious Insight, Royce showed that neither individual experience nor ordinary social experience are able to provide man with the norm and ideal required for his salvation.⁴³ In The Problem of Christianity, Royce develops the opposition between self-will and the social will

⁴¹Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 39-45.

⁴²Cf. above, p. 151.

⁴³Cf. above, pp. 155-57.

as the psychological explanation of the Pauline teaching of original sin. Royce's explanation is not an attempt at theology, but an effort to make intelligible the "human motives" which bear empirical witness to Paul's doctrine.⁴⁴ Royce interprets Paul's seventh chapter to the Romans to say three things: that sinfulness belongs to our elemental nature, to our flesh, by birth; sin is not cured but increased by natural cultivation unless the Divine Spirit intervenes and transforms us into new creatures; sinfulness belongs to the race in its corporate capacity.⁴⁵

Royce begins his psychological interpretation of Paul by returning to a former theme, that man is brought to self-consciousness by imitation and social contrasts with his fellow man.⁴⁶ The self of the child grows and forms itself by imitation, and thus by comparing and contrasting his own deeds with those of his models. Imitative reproduction of deeds, whether undertaken submissively or in obstinate reaction, constitutes the beginning of self-conscious life. It is our fellows who first startle us out of our natural unconsciousness about our conduct by providing attractive

⁴⁴The Problem of Christianity, vol. 1, pp. 121-22, 127.

⁴⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 148.

⁴⁶Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 127ff. Cf. "Some Anomalies of Self-Consciousness," in Studies of Good and Evil (New York: Appleton and Co., 1898), pp. 169-197. Also cf. The World and the Individual, vol. 2, pp. 257-266.

and difficult models to imitate and by socially interfering with our doings.

But our ordinary social life inevitably means tension and natural disharmony. This is due in part to misunderstandings but also to the fact that rivalries and criticism make one aware of what he is doing. Hence, the greater the social contrast, the greater the self-awareness about conduct, plans, ideals and self-will. Such tensions seek relief in the social will which through its codes and laws attempts to teach individuals how to deal with their neighbors so as to promote general social harmony. But these codes and laws teach us to be more considerate and self-observant, and this in turn brings us to a higher level of self-consciousness, to new social contrasts between the general will and our will, new conflicts between the self and its world. "Cultivation breeds civilized conduct; it also breeds conscious independence of spirit and deep inner opposition to all mere external authority."⁴⁷

In highly cultivated civilizations, this teaching of independence leads to inner despair since the social will is powerful and must prevail unless chaos is to come. Individuals are thus disciplined into obedience, but an obedience which is at war with the inner man. "I have my

⁴⁷The Problem of Christianity, vol. 1, p. 144.

own law in my own members, which, however I seem to obey, is at war with the social will. I am the divided self."⁴⁸ At the same time, the individual feels the importance of these social forces since they make him aware of his own personal wants and choices and vast opportunities that would be his if he could gain control over them. He wants them to grow more powerful so that he can use them for his own purposes. Thus, the individual will wars against the collective will, and yet needs the collective will in order to have its own way.⁴⁹

In summary, Royce says, "Man's fallen state is due to his nature as a social animal. This nature is such that you can train his conscience only by awakening his self-will,"⁵⁰ which consists in the conscious and active assertion of his own desires and worth over against his fellows and the social will. Royce calls this sort of conscious self-will, Individualism, or the tendency to prefer what the individual demands to what the collective will requires.

Royce believes that this psychological analysis agrees with Paul's account of our fallen state. Sinfulness belongs to our elemental nature, to our flesh, by birth. That is,

⁴⁸Ibid., vol. 1, p. 151.

⁴⁹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 155.

⁵⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 176.

as social beings, we are brought to self-awareness and self-will by a social process which tends to set us in opposition to the social will. At best, our obedience is distracted since it does not have the consent of the inner man. This divided state belongs to the human race since we are by nature social animals trained through the discipline of social tension and conflict. Our enemy is what Paul called the flesh and which Royce interprets as self-will set against the community, and this opposition is further emphasized by "the law," or the social will. This enemy is due to our nature as social beings cultivated by social conditions which train self-consciousness by inflaming self-will. "This our social nature, then, is the basis of our natural enmity both towards the law, and towards the spirit."⁵¹

4. Guilt and Atonement.

Royce's analysis of the human predicament helps us see man's need of the Beloved Community which will provide his salvation. Before considering this solution, another idea needs consideration, the idea of atonement. Royce introduces this discussion by extending the notion of sin to cover personal sin, the act whereby the sinner wilfully violates his own idea of what is right for him. Two aspects

⁵¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 376.

of the Christian teaching are stressed. The wilful sinner is powerless to repent by any deed of his own, and the penalty of serious sin is endless.⁵² Royce makes no attempt to mitigate this teaching, but rather he offers an interpretation which aims to make its ethical spirit intelligible.⁵³ His reflections are mainly of a psychological nature and stress sin as an inner voluntary deed and the irrevocability of the deed.

Royce sets the scene for the moral drama by placing it in a man's consciousness of his own rule of life. When a person becomes conscious of what makes his voluntary life worthwhile, he tends to arrange his ideas of right and wrong acts so that at least some acts appear to be such that they would involve for him a kind of moral suicide, a deliberate wrecking of what makes life for himself morally worthy. Royce suggests some great offense against community such as the intentional betrayal of a great cause once accepted, or the unity of a brotherhood or beloved life betrayed. What moral value, as a matter of simple coherence of view, does the traitor assign himself? Let him confess, "I was a traitor." The deed is irrevocable and as endless as time. I never can undo that deed. My guilt is as enduring as time."⁵⁴

⁵²Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 227-35.

⁵³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 240.

⁵⁴Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 259-61.

Royce notes that all deeds are irrevocable. However, the traitorous sin against the light is such that, in advance, the traitor's own free will acceptance of a cause has stamped it with the character of being what his own will had defined as his own unpardonable sin. This is the "hell of the irrevocable."⁵⁵

In summary, Royce interprets the traditional Christian teaching of the endless penalty for wilful sin in light of his doctrine concerning time, that deeds once done are real and are irrevocably true, together with the idea that the sinner has made the deed peculiarly his own by his free choice. The sinner consigns himself to an objectively irrevocable and painful situation.⁵⁶

The Christian tradition supplements its teaching concerning wilful sin with its doctrine of the atonement for sin. Royce suggests the example of a traitor against the Beloved Community as an instance of a human need for atonement, and he inquires of a sense in which, in purely human terms, we are able to define what an atoning act would be, if it took place, and what it could accomplish as well as what it could not accomplish.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 263.

⁵⁶Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 266-67.

⁵⁷Ibid., vol. 1, p. 273.

The question is whether there can be any reconciliation between the traitor and his own moral world. Can there be any reconciliation which, from his own point of view and for his own consciousness, can make his situation in his moral world essentially different from the situation in which his own deed has left him thus far? The traitor's problem will not be solved by his own future good and loyal deeds since none of these will ever undo the supposed deed of treason. However, we can inquire whether anything could occur in the traitor's world which, without undoing his deed, could still add some new aspect to his deed, an aspect such that when the traitor came to view his own deed in this light, he could say: "Something in the nature of a genuinely reconciling element has been added, not only to my world and to my own life, but also to the inmost meaning even of my deed of treason itself."⁵⁸

Royce's traitor rejects a "penal" theory of satisfaction according to which a divine being, Christ himself, satisfies before a just God for the guilt and punishment due to his sin. It should be noted that Royce rejects this theory, not simply outright, but in terms of what seems to him to be its inadequacy in dealing with the need that the traitor has to reconcile himself to his own moral world.

⁵⁸Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 280-81.

The penal theory objectively satisfies God, but it does not appear to satisfy the need of the traitor to reconcile himself to what he has done.⁵⁹

Royce also considers a "moral" theory of atonement. This theory proposes that the work of Christ consisted in such a loving sacrifice for human sin and for sinners that the contemplation of this work arouses in the sinful mind a depth of saving repentance as well as love. Royce agrees that repentance on the part of the sinner is required, but he sets aside the moral theory, not as false, but as inadequate to deal with the objective fact of the irrevocable deed which no subsequent act of repentance can cancel. Beyond repentance, some new form of atonement is needed to reconcile the traitor to his irrevocable deed.⁶⁰

There is another aspect to atonement which has not been considered, and is frequently overlooked. Royce directs our attention to the community. Betrayal breaks ties and wounds the community so that reconciliation concerns not only the traitor but also the community. We have, then, the situation where reconciliation must be rendered both for the traitor and the community relative to the deed of treason. The question is not one of forgiveness, an affectionate

⁵⁹Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 283-85.

⁶⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 292.

remission of penalty, which is both wise and desirable. Nor is it a question of love to be restored since unscarred love was lost and cannot be restored. Is there not some way still untried in which the community may hope, if not to find, then to create something which will reconcile the community to the traitor and both the community and the traitor to his irrevocable deed?⁶¹

Yes, replies Royce. The community is free to do a new deed, or to be incarnate in some faithful servant, who will confound treason in the following way. First, the creative work shall include a deed for which just this treason furnishes the opportunity. Without the treason, the new deed could not have been done. Secondly, the new deed is so ingeniously devised and so concretely practical in the good which it accomplishes that one can say, "The world, as transformed by this creative deed, is better than it would have been had all else remained the same, but had that deed of treason not been done at all."⁶² The new deed is not so much a compensation for a loss, but a transfiguration of the very loss into gain.

Royce believes that, in the Christian idea of atonement, there was something so divinely beautiful and wise

⁶¹Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 293-302.

⁶²Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 307-08.

about the work of Christ that the world as a whole was a nobler and worthier creation than if Adam had not sinned. It is this element that the penal and moral theories omit. It is the objective element par excellence, and it pervades the Christian consciousness as manifested in its worship and art.⁶³

Christ's atoning deed established the Beloved Community, the new creation, which has made the world better than it would have been, had sin not entered the world.⁶⁴ Once established, the Beloved Community is the center of grace through which men are saved. Loyalty to this community saves from the moral burden of the individual, and conscious disloyalty "can be brought within the range which the grace of the will of the community can reach" so that the sinner can be restored to new friendship and loyalty to his community.⁶⁵ Royce stresses the continuing mission of the Beloved Community to reconcile through atoning deeds. These deeds require creative skill as well as suffering. They are deeds performed by individuals acting on behalf of the community, and they constitute "the most absolutely loyal" and "the most creative of the expressions which the community

⁶³Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 318-23.

⁶⁴Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 186-87, 192.

⁶⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 364.

gives, through the deed of an individual, to its will that the unity of the spirit should triumph."⁶⁶

5. The Beloved Community.

In The Sources of Religious Insight, Royce regarded communities such as the family and the nation as essentially superhuman and as suited to evoke a religious type of loyalty.⁶⁷ In The Problem of Christianity, these are identified as natural communities which are subject to the moral burden of the individual. They can be objects of love and loyalty, but this is a natural love and a more primitive type of loyalty. Such communities are natural in origin and they are governed by the "law" so that love for them tends to be "limited or hindered by the influences of cultivation."⁶⁸

The Pauline community believed itself distinct from others in that its origin was not merely natural. A miracle had created the body of Christ. To this new spiritual being, whose level was that of a community and whose membership was human, but whose origin and unifying Spirit was divine, the members owed their love and life. Christianity was the

⁶⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 378.

⁶⁷The Sources of Religious Insight, pp. 198-200.

⁶⁸The Problem of Christianity, vol. 1, pp. 169-72, 180-85.

religion of loyalty to this new creation. The power that gives to the new Christian convert the new loyalty is what Paul calls grace. The individual offers to the community practical devotion and absorbing love, and he looks to the community for the grace that saves and for the atonement that reconciles.⁶⁹

Royce believes that St. Paul's teaching on love complements and fulfils what was implied in the master's teaching concerning love and the Kingdom. The objects of love were, in the master's teaching, God and the neighbor. Each is conceived as an individual. One is to love his neighbor because God himself, as Father, divinely loves and prizes each individual man. Hence, the individual has an infinite value, although he has this value only in and through his relation to God's love for him.⁷⁰ Into the world of Paul's religious life there entered a new kind of being, a real object of love which the master had not explicitly mentioned. This was the Christian community itself, a corporate entity, the body of Christ of which the divinely exalted Christ is the head, and the spirit, and also the lover.⁷¹ Paul now directs toward the Beloved Community the love which the

⁶⁹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 379.

⁷⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 80.

⁷¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 92.

parables direct toward the neighbor. All the values of each man as an individual are bound up with his membership in this body and with his love for the community. So, too, the divine love is now directed toward both the community and the individual, thereby uniting them. In summary, Christian love, as Royce interprets Paul, takes on the form of loyalty. "This is Paul's simple but vast transformation of Christian love."⁷²

Royce conceives loyalty as a love which does not renounce the individual self, but devotes the self with all its consciousness and powers to a community which is absolutely lovable because absolutely united, conscious, and above all the distractions of the separate self-will of its members. In comparison to human love and consciousness as socially cultivated, a radical transformation has occurred. Self-will is not interiorly divided against a social will, but the self is entirely dedicated to a cause which appears wholly lovable. Since Royce has identified human nature with the interior divisions of self-will, this new dedication appears to be due to a power from another level than our own which Royce calls "the realm of grace."⁷³ As the experience of natural self-will reveals human failure and the need of

⁷²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 98.

⁷³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 191.

salvation, so the experience of loyalty reveals our relations to a supernatural world which is worthy to be our guide and salvation.⁷⁴

The Beloved Community was in ideal to be the community of all mankind. Royce sees in the universal mission of the Church what "the deepest and highest rational interests of humanity makes most desirable for all men."⁷⁵ No man is, then, excluded from Christian love since in ideal he is to be a fellow member. This ideal has not been realized in time, but one must discard what he finds and create what remains the ideal.⁷⁶ The Church presents itself not as a finished ideal, but as a challenge to the creative love of its loyal members.

6. The Community and the Time Process.

The analyses thus far of Royce's philosophy of religion in The Sources of Religious Insight and his philosophy of three key Christian ideas in the first volume of The Problem of Christianity both indicate the new importance that community assumed in the later thought of Royce. These analyses will serve as concrete reference points for the

⁷⁴Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 407-08. Also, cf. pp. 349-50.

⁷⁵Ibid., vol. 1, p. 104.

⁷⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 359.

further development of Royce's philosophy of community in the second volume, and they will influence his conception of God. "Not the Self, not the Logos, not the One, and not the Many, but the Community will be the ruling category" of Royce's later thought.⁷⁷

Royce begins his philosophy of community through an attempt to resolve antinomies which arise in experience concerning individuality and community. Certain facets of our experience stress the fact and the value of individuality as against community. Other aspects of experience point to the fact and the value of community in apparent opposition to individuality. The problem is how to resolve these apparently contrasting evidences.

If we consider the problem from the point of view of the individuation of the selves, it seems evident that some principle of individuation keeps the selves apart and forbids us to regard their various lives merely as incidents or as undivided phases of a common life. Indeed, our social common sense insists upon three groups of facts which show that the individual selves are sundered by gaps which seem impassable. First, there is the empirical sundering of the feelings. No person has direct experience of the feelings of another since his sensory nerves do not end in his fellow's

⁷⁷Ibid., vol. 2, p. 281.

skin. Secondly, on the level of the more organized ideas, one person can only indirectly discover the intentions of another. We are individuated by the law that our trains of conscious thought and purpose are mutually inaccessible through any mode of direct intuition. The third group of facts in question is that upon which our cultivated social sense most insists: my soul, my destiny, my rights, my worth, my individual life are my own. We are individuated by our deeds and by the will whereby we do them. Deeds and doers stand in one to one relation.⁷⁸

These facts indicate but one level of human life, the level of the individual human being. There is also evidence which indicates a second level of human life, the communal, which is not merely metaphorically one in being, but is actually a being although of a different and higher level than individual human being.

Royce cites evidence to this effect from the social psychology of his day. Social cooperation brings into existence languages, customs and religions. These, as Wundt declares, are not discrete psychological phenomena, each of which corresponds to some separate individual mind. For example, the English language is a mental product possessing

⁷⁸Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 18-25.

intelligent unity. Its creator must be regarded as also in some sense a single intelligence. The creator of the English language was no mere collection of Englishmen each of whom added his own word or phrase or accent. The creator of English speech is the English people. Hence, the English people is itself some sort of mental unit with a mind of its own.⁷⁹

The being of a community is not called an individual human being because it has no one separate and internally well-knit physical organism of its own, and because its mind is not manifested through the expressive movements of a single separate human organism. For this reason, Royce prefers to speak of individual and communal being as two levels of being. The communal level manifests a mental existence more complex, more potent and more intelligent than human individuals. The individual can find various human motives for behaving toward the community as a very precious and worthy being, as a person or friend of some higher and nobler level than oneself.⁸⁰

The problem of community, then, lies in the two different sets of facts. If men are sundered in their individual lives by the chasms which our social common sense

⁷⁹Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 26-27.

⁸⁰Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 63-68, 167.

seems to make so obvious, how is it that in their social life large and small bodies of men act as if they were possessed of one common intelligence and one common will?

In answer to the question, Royce emphasizes a motive which he has not considered before, and which he believes to play an important part in the psychology of the social consciousness. A highly developed community is a case where some process of a history, that is, of coherent social evolution, has gone on for a long time and is more or less remembered by the community in question. Otherwise, one notices either the predominantly pluralistic forms of the various relatively independent doing of detached individuals, or else the social form of the confused activities of crowds. A crowd is not a community since it has neither institutions, nor traditions, nor coherent unity. A true community is essentially a product of the time process; it has a past and a future.⁸¹

Royce calls attention to what he regards as decisive for the whole theory of community. The rule that time is needed for the formation of a conscious community is a rule which finds analogy within the life of each individual self. The self comes down to us from the past. It needs and is a history. A person's idea of himself as this person is

⁸¹Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 35-37.

inseparably bound up with his view of his former life, of his plans, of the fortunes which fashioned him, and of the accomplishments which in turn he fashioned for himself. In brief, one's idea of himself is an interpretation of his past linked with an interpretation of his future hopes and intentions. These facts illustrate how the idea of community involves the idea of the relations in which a great number of different selves stand to the past.⁸²

Can many different selves, all belonging to the present time, possess identically the same past as their own personally interesting past life? If one asks the question concerning some past time that belongs to previous generations of men, two or more men may regard the same fact of past life as a part of his own personal life. Royce uses the example of the Maori in New Zealand whose ancestors according to legend came to Hawaiki by canoe. One individual choosing the name of the canoe according to his tribe and tradition can say, "I came over in the canoe Tai-Nui." Now, any two members of a tribe, whose ancestors came over in the Tai-Nui, possess, from their point of view, identically the same past in just this respect. Each can say, "I came over in that canoe," or, "We are of the same community." In this case, the real or supposed identity of certain interesting features

⁸²Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 39-43.

in a past which each of many regards as belonging to his own historically extended former self, is a ground for saying that these form a community with reference to a common past. There is question not simply of a past fact in common, but of an interpretation of the past which is the same for each of many.⁸³ So also, plans and hopes for the future may be shared by many who thereby form a community.

We notice here Royce's insistence that the concept of community depends upon the interpretation that each individual member gives to his own personal past history and future expectations. Royce's concept of community aims not only to allow for individuality, but to require the active cooperation of the individual acting in his private capacity, since it is due to the fact that many individuals, each interpreting his own personal past and future, identify their interpretations, that community results. This, in Royce's view, maintains the integrity of both the individual and the community, and it resolves the problem of how the pluralism of the selves is consistent with their forming a community.⁸⁴

⁸³Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 44-48.

⁸⁴Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 51-52.

7. The Body and Its Members.

Royce considers three conditions to be necessary for the existence of community. The first condition is the power of the individual to extend his own self in ideal fashion so as to regard it as including past and future events which lie far away in time, and which he does not now personally remember, but with which he can personally identify. The principle upon which this power rests is that the self is no mere datum but is in its essence a life which is interpreted and which interprets itself, and which apart from some sort of ideal interpretation is a mere flight of ideas or a meaningless flow of feelings.⁸⁵

The need for ideal self-extension seems to have a double significance for Royce. His first concern is that the community be truly a community. He has shown that this must include some common traditions and a history of past generations with which the present generation can identify. It may also include goals incapable of attainment in the lifetime of the present generation. Ideal self-extension thus constitutes the being of community, for it constitutes its integrity and permanence, and so distinguishes true community from a crowd or a mob. Ideal self-extension will

⁸⁵Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 60-61.

later be seen in the light of interpretation. The identification of many interpretations, which each individual gives to his own past and future, constitutes community.

Royce's second concern for ideal self-extension has to do with the meaning of the individual as a self. The meaning of person is to interpret one's life. A person is one who chooses what in his past life is to be brought into his present life in view of his future life. Or, a person's idea and choice of what his future life will be, illumines what from his past he chooses to identify with his present. Thus, it is one's deeper attitude toward his past and future which constitutes the meaning of his present, and sets him off as a person. Such personal integrity is prerequisite for the formation of true community. Royce says,

It is, in fact, the ideally extended self, and not, in general, the momentary self, whose life is worth living, whose sense outlasts our fleeting days, and whose destiny may be worthy of the interest of beings who are above the level of human individuals. The present self, the fleeting individual of to-day, is a mere gesticulation of a self. The genuine person lives in the far-off past and future as well as in the present. It is, then, the ideally extended self that is worthy to belong to a significant community.⁸⁶

The second condition required for community can be dealt with more briefly. It is simply that there must be a number of selves capable of social communication. Royce has

⁸⁶Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 66-67.

considered previously the distinctness of the selves in community. Here he stipulates that a community does not become one, in the sense of his definition, "by virtue of any reduction or melting of these various selves into a single merely present self, or into a mass of passing experience."⁸⁷

The third of the conditions for the existence of the community consists in the fact that the ideally extended past and future selves include at least some events which are, for all of these selves, identical. Royce makes two observations concerning this third condition. First, it is the one which furnishes the most exact and important of the motives which warrant us in calling a community a real unit.⁸⁸ Secondly, the Pauline metaphor of the body and the members finds, in this third condition, its most significant basis, one capable of exact description.

The Beloved Community ideally illustrates the conditions required for true community. It is a community of memory as well as a community of hope. For the Pauline Churches, the ideal memory of their Lord's death and resurrection was for each believer an acknowledged occurrence in his own past. For each was taught the faith that in that

⁸⁷Ibid., vol. 2, p. 67.

⁸⁸Ibid., vol. 2, p. 69.

one event his own individual salvation was accomplished. Since the early Church was aware of this dependence of its community upon its memory, it instinctively resisted every effort to deprive that memory of definiteness or to change it into an allegory. Hence, the Church insisted upon the words, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate." A very definite event was viewed by each believer as part of the history of his own personal salvation, and this belief gave to the community its coherence. Paul stressed the commemorative act of the Lord's Supper wherein each member recalled the origin of his own salvation and the community maintained its united life.⁸⁹

Besides ideal memory, there was an ideal future event personal to each and common to all. Paul's great chapter on the resurrection emphasized equally the common resurrection of all and the very explicit immortality of each person. The community solves its own problem of the one and the many by conceiving both the diversity of the members and the unity of the body in terms of the common hope for the same event.⁹⁰

Thus far, Royce has considered how ideal self-extension into the past and the future serves as the basis for community. He has exemplified this in the Beloved

⁸⁹Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 69-72.

⁹⁰Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 73-77.

Community. Now he completes his development by connecting three important considerations. That a community be a community, it is necessary that its members be conscious of their common life. But this requires, besides self-extension into the past and future, ideal identification with the present workings of the community. But this, in turn, requires the presence of love. All of this is again exemplified in the Beloved Community.

The true common life of the community consists of deeds which are essentially of the nature of cooperation. That is, the common life consists of deeds which many members perform together. The question is how such cooperation can become part of the consciousness of the community. The problem, especially today, is that the complexities of social activity far outstrip the ability of individuals to be aware of their intricacies and, hence, to identify with them. The kind of cooperation which allows the community to be aware of its own life requires that the individuals understand enough to be able: (1) to direct their own deeds of cooperation, (2) to observe the deed of their fellows, and (3) to know that without just this combination just this deed could not be accomplished by the community.⁹¹

⁹¹Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 82-89.

When these deeds are hopelessly complex, how shall the individual member be able to regard them as genuinely belonging to his own ideally extended self? He can no longer understand them in any detail. The more complex the social order grows, the more cooperation seems mechanical, and not as an ideal extension of the self, unless love supplies what individual wit can no longer. If a social order, however complex it may be, wins and keeps the love of its members so that each member sees in the deeds of former generations the source and support of his present love, and can look forward with equal love to the future, then indeed love furnishes the basis for the consciousness of the community, which intelligence without love in a highly complex society can no longer furnish. When this occurs, the loyal individual will tend to identify himself, both in ideal and in feeling, not only with the distant past and future of the community, but also with the present life of the whole social body. In this way, love triumphs over the complexities which obscure the common life and completes community consciousness.⁹²

Royce now applies this to the Beloved Community where it finds ideal illustration. Royce observes that ideal self-extension in regard to the present workings of community is hard or impossible "since we human beings are as narrow in

⁹²Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 90-95.

our individual consciousness as we are."⁹³ Royce continues,

Therefore our ideal extensions of the self, when we love the community, and long to realize its life with intimacy, must needs take the form of acting as if we could survey, in some single unity of insight, that wealth and variety of connection which, as a fact, we cannot make present to our momentary view.

Love is discontent with the present sundering of the selves and with the problems and mysteries of the social order so that it longs to find what it loves as a fact of experience and to be in the immediate presence of the beloved.

Some of Royce's commentators have found somewhat baffling his position on love in these passages.⁹⁵ Love attempts to supply what human intelligence cannot. As such, it is an emotion which seeks mystical blending, although this aspect of love is not the whole of charity which requires the distinction of individuals and their services for the common life.⁹⁶ Perhaps it would be helpful in interpreting Royce

⁹³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 96. Cf. above, pp. 158-59.

⁹⁴Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 96-97.

⁹⁵Peter Fuss, The Moral Philosophy of Josiah Royce (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 243. John Smith, Royce's Social Infinite (Conn.: Archon Books, 1969), p. 77. Smith believes that Royce "came close to interpreting love as itself a kind of insight, thereby making it a species of knowledge."

⁹⁶The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, pp. 97-98.

here to connect his present expression with other of his ideas. In The World and the Individual, Royce reasoned that true individuality is neither conceived nor perceived, but it is postulated. Individuality involves the whole of a life, and it is the object of will and faith.⁹⁷ If we regard Royce's present use of "love" as an expression of will and faith, it postulates a presence which is not really present to consciousness, namely, the community in its wholeness and individuality. But, love so desires, and so believes, and so acts as if the community and its present operations were wholly present to it. This is what Royce seems to say; and, if so, this interpretation places "love" on the side of Royce's voluntarism, or the use of postulate as an adjunct to reason. Love postulates what consciousness does not have before its vision, the superhuman vision of a reality which is naturally denied to its partial insight.⁹⁸

With his analysis finished, Royce warns that it does not explain the way in which loyalty originates. "Knowledge of the community is not love of the community. Love, when it comes, comes as from above."⁹⁹ The problem of love is human, but its solution is superhuman and divine. "For in

⁹⁷Cf. above, pp. 122-23.

⁹⁸Cf. above, pp. 159-60.

⁹⁹The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, p. 102.

the love of a community the individual obtains . . . the unity, the wealth, and the harmony of plan which his sun-dered natural existence never supplies."¹⁰⁰ Royce's position here is consistent with that taken in The Sources of Religious Insight.¹⁰¹ He can endorse, from a philosophical vantage point, the Pauline doctrine of the realm of grace because he has identified human nature with the circular conflict of self-will and social will from which loyalty to the Beloved Community provides salvation to the natural man;¹⁰² and because ideal self-extension, motivated by love, postulates a presence naturally denied to human consciousness.

8. Perception, Conception, and Interpretation.

Royce has considered how self-extension into the past and future is required for community. When individuals merge their interpretations of their past and future, community becomes possible. Now, the act by which one interprets his own past and future is a triadic form of knowledge. And the acts by which individuals communicate to each other their interpretations are triadic forms of knowledge, so that the basic structure of community is the triadic form of

¹⁰⁰Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 99-100.

¹⁰¹Cf. above, pp. 157-59.

¹⁰²Cf. above, pp. 164-68, 177-78.

interpretation. These considerations show at a glance the importance of the theory of interpretation to Royce's theory of community, and how this theory is related to what has gone before.

Royce's first concern is to distinguish interpretation as a triadic form of knowledge from perception and conception which, in their synthesis, constitute a dualistic theory of knowledge. Royce takes this synthesis from the current pragmatism of his day, and he derives the logical structure of interpretation from Charles Sanders Peirce¹⁰³ to whom Royce frequently referred as "our American logician."¹⁰⁴

Royce makes it clear that he agrees with pragmatism's synthesis of perception and conception. Pragmatism stresses the practical character of every human cognitive process and depicts the life of knowledge as a dramatic pursuit of perceptions guided by the "leadings" which our conceptions determine and in some sense constitute insofar as they have life. In this sense, Royce himself has defined an idea as a "plan of action."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 114, where Royce cites his references to Peirce. Also cf. ibid., vol. 1, p. xi; vol. 2, pp. 115-17, 138-44, 169, 184-86. For background material, cf. John Smith, Royce's Social Infinite, pp. 19-31.

¹⁰⁴Cf. for example, "The Problem of Truth in the Light of Recent Discussion," in William James and Other Essays, p. 207.

¹⁰⁵The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, pp. 117-23.

However, pragmatism's synthesis of perception and conception does not define a triadic type of knowledge. To illustrate this, Royce turns to an analogy used by Bergson.

I do not deny the usefulness of abstract and general ideas,--any more than I question the value of bank-notes. But just as the note is only a promise to pay cash, so a conception has value only by virtue of the eventual perceptions for which it stands.¹⁰⁶

The analogy relates conception to perceptions as bank-note to cash, or credit-value to cash-value. All these corresponding antitheses depend upon a dual classification. It is true that each of these pairs is brought into synthesis by a process of promising or of redeeming the promise. In the case of the bank-note, this would be the commercial solvency or the power of a modern state. In the case of conception and perception, the synthesis may be through an act of attention or a series of voluntary deeds. However, these activities are not set side-by-side with perception and conception as a third form of cognitive act any more than the activity of promising to pay is defined as a third sort of currency which is neither gold nor bank-note.¹⁰⁷

Thus, the synthesis of perception and conception is basically a dual theory of knowledge. If we consider the

¹⁰⁶Ibid., vol. 2, p. 124.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., vol. 2, p. 126.

objects of this type of knowledge, we find that the object of perception is a datum of some sort, a thing or a change; while the object of conception is a universal. The object of knowledge not thus far accounted for is the mind of another human being which is neither perceived nor conceived, but must be interpreted through a triadic form of knowledge.

To illustrate, Royce returns to Bergson's analogy and develops it further. When a traveller crosses the boundary of a foreign country, he must exchange the currency of the country which he leaves for that of the foreign land which he enters. This transaction is neither the presentation of cash-values nor the offering of credit-values. It is a process of interpreting the cash-values of one country in terms of the cash-values of another, and such interpretation requires a third norm in terms of which the two sets of values are brought into comparison.¹⁰⁸

Royce applies the analogy to the communication between minds. Each of us, in each new effort to communicate with his fellow man, stands like the traveller at the border in the presence of a largely strange world of perceptions and conceptions. We never certainly share our neighbor's perceptions in their immediate presence. And while our neighbor's conceptions are highly communicable, the active syntheses, the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 131-32.

practical processes of seeking and construction, the volitions and promises whereby we pass from concepts to percepts, are often in a high degree individual and difficult to compare. Comparison between the complexities of two minds implies the need of interpretation, that is, the creative effort to form new ideas or insights in terms of which the two sets of mental data can be related and thus understood. This requires gradual clarification through "talking it over," and this process is not reducible to the act whereby an individual relates his own concepts to his own percepts.¹⁰⁹

Interpretation is needed not only in social relations, but it constitutes an important problem for each person, the problem of self-interpretation. In our inner life it sometimes happens that we have to cross into some new realm, not only of experience, but of desire, hope and resolve. Our problem then is not merely that our former ideas no longer work in terms of familiar inner perceptions, but that both our ideas and experiences, our plans and power to realize them, our ideas with their leadings, are in process of dramatic transformation.¹¹⁰

Royce agrees with Peirce that self-reflection involves what is in essence an interior conversation in which one discovers his own mind through a process of inference analogous

¹⁰⁹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 136.

¹¹⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 137.

to that which guides us in a social effort to interpret our neighbor's mind. In regard to self-knowledge "there is no direct intuition or perception of the self."¹¹¹ In this Royce disagrees with Bergson. "You can never so far retire into your own inmost recesses of intuition as merely to find the true self presented to an inner sense."¹¹² For Royce, self-knowledge is through a discursive knowledge whose proper mode is interpretation.

Interpretation always involves a relation of three terms of which one is the interpreter (A); a second is the object, person or meaning which is interpreted (B); the third is the person to whom interpretation is addressed (C). Interpretation brings the three terms into a determinate order so that the triadic relation is non-symmetrical. If the order of the terms (A, B, C) is transposed, an account of the happening which constitutes the interpretation must be altered.¹¹³

These formal aspects apply not only to social interpretation but also to self-interpretation, even though only one person is involved. When a process of conscious reflection goes on, a person may be said to interpret himself to

¹¹¹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 138. Also, cf. above, pp. 165-66.

¹¹²Ibid., vol. 2, p. 139.

¹¹³Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 141-42.

himself, and the relation is triadic. There is the person of the past whose promises, let us say, are interpreted. There is the present self who interprets them; and there is the future self for whom the interpretation is intended.¹¹⁴

In summary, interpretation differs from the synthesis of perception and conception in three respects. First, interpretation is a conversation and not a lonely enterprise. Its goal is social. Secondly, the interpreted object is itself something which has the nature of a mental expression, and which Peirce calls a sign. Thirdly, since interpretation is a mental act, an act which is expressed, the interpretation is itself a sign which calls for further interpretation. Thus, interpretation is by nature endless in its spiritual fecundity. Perception and conception are self-limiting processes insofar as they terminate in the object perceived or described.¹¹⁵

9. The Will to Interpret.

With the logical structure of interpretation set forth, Royce now points out the motives or goals of interpretation, which are to teach men how to deal with life.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 143-44.

¹¹⁵Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 148-52.

¹¹⁶Ibid., vol. 2, p. 193.

First, interpretation is the proper mode of self-knowledge and thus it aims at providing wholeness of life for the individual. It also aims at community of individuals and thus provides for loyalty to community which is Royce's ethical ideal. Secondly, Royce sets the basis for his metaphysics and conception of God which we will consider in the next chapter. In this respect, the present interpretation bears some resemblance to The Religious Aspect of Philosophy where approach to God was in a triadic context.¹¹⁷ Some similarity may also be seen with The World and the Individual where Royce considered the problem of being as the problem of conflicting antinomies.¹¹⁸ The goal of interpretation is to mediate conflicts whose resolution constitutes community. This prepares the way for a metaphysics of community.

Royce first considers how an interpreter conducts himself when he interprets two of his own ideas. Royce calls this sort of interpretation the comparison of ideas. At first glance, comparison of ideas might appear to consist of dyadic relations of similarity and difference. But, as Peirce pointed out, every explicit comparison constitutes an interpretation. The difference and similarity between A and B is interpreted by a third idea, C, which expresses the

¹¹⁷Cf. above, pp. 30, 39-40.

¹¹⁸Cf. above, pp. 78-79.

respect in which A and B are similar and different. Comparison of ideas thus has the triadic structure of interpretation.¹¹⁹

When a person compares two of his ideas, his task is not to bring percepts and concepts into desirable relations, but to bring into harmony two distinct and contrasting ideas. Nor is it simply a matter of dealing with two different sets of percepts and concepts, but also at times with conflicting interests, estranged motives and warring passions, which resemble the plaintiff and defendant in a suit of law.¹²⁰ The goal of interpretation is then to arbitrate the conflict and to bring into community ideas which of themselves refuse to coalesce into one life. Comparison achieves its goal when it leads to the discovery of that which mediates and resolves the conflict, and thus leads to a larger unity of consciousness and coherent aim in living. The will to interpret is the will to be self-possessed or to achieve wholeness of life.¹²¹

The comparison of ideas consists in the discovery of some third idea which interprets one idea to another. Finding the new idea calls for originality. Royce variously characterizes this creative act as "observant reason," "rational

¹¹⁹The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, pp. 169-73.

¹²⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 182.

¹²¹Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 184-93.

intuition," creative insight," "creative vision," or simply "intuition." It appears at times as a kind of genius in great artists, poets, prophets, scientists, mathematicians, statesmen, and in St. Paul.¹²² Royce has rejected the position of Bergson that self-knowledge is through direct intuition. The comparison of ideas is a discursive knowledge. However, the task of finding the third idea which will mediate successfully the two conflicting ideas may require a genius of sorts where no fixed rule insures correct solution. Plausible suggestions must be put forth until the apt solution is discovered. This requires creative insight.¹²³

In The Sources of Religious Insight, Royce explains more fully what he means by the term, insight, and how he uses it in relation to the terms, reason, intuition, and experience. Insight connotes "the synthetic use of reason," that is, the systematic effort "to see life steadily and see it whole."¹²⁴ The three marks of insight are: (1) it makes us aware of many facts, (2) it brings these facts into coherence and unity of view, and (3) it implies intimate personal contact with these facts.¹²⁵ Insight is a function

¹²²Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 189-93.

¹²³Cf. John Smith's remarks in Royce's Social Infinite, pp. 69-74.

¹²⁴The Sources of Religious Insight, p. 128.

¹²⁵Ibid., pp. 5-6.

of reason, but Royce does not restrict the term, reason, to the power which forms abstract ideas and which analyzes the predetermined meaning of statements. Reason also has a synthetic function of surveying many things in one view. In this sense, one means by a reasonable person one who can see things broadly, while an unreasonable person is one who lacks vision for the true relations and total value of things.¹²⁶

As a function of reason, insight connotes knowledge which is intimate and manifold, as well as knowledge which views facts and relations in their unity. The terms, intuition and experience, are often used to lay stress upon that aspect of insight which makes it either intimate or else brings it in touch with many and various facts. Such usage is convenient. The word, reason, as exemplified in its more synthetic meaning, calls attention to that aspect of insight by which we grasp many facts in their unity and see the coherence and totality of a set of experiences.¹²⁷

Insight is the constructively synthetic use of reason which is creative of novel discoveries in the relations between diverse data. This is exemplified in both pure and applied mathematics.¹²⁸ In The Problem of Christianity, Royce

¹²⁶Ibid., pp. 84-87.

¹²⁷Ibid., pp. 99-100.

¹²⁸Ibid., pp. 98-99.

makes creative insight the function of interpretation, that is, a mediation which follows the comparison of ideas. As such, it constitutes a vision of unity which surveys "as from above."¹²⁹

Having stated the creative and flexible character of insight, Royce makes it clear that insight is also capable of discerning fixed or absolute truth.¹³⁰ This result depends upon what ideas are compared and the purpose and skill brought to bear in comparison. The results of comparison may express absolute truths, truths which once seen can never be reversed, for either one of two reasons. First, in pure mathematics a deduction if correct leads to an absolutely correct and irrevocably true discovery of a relation of implication between exactly stated premises and some conclusion. Secondly, the result of an interpretation may be absolutely true because it counsels the one who makes the interpretation to do some determinate and individual deed. This deed may be such as to accomplish some ideally valuable result. But a deed once done is irrevocable, and the interpretation remains as irrevocably true as the deed that is done.¹³¹

¹²⁹The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, pp. 192-93.

¹³⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 194.

¹³¹Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 196-201.

Whatever the varieties of the cases in question, comparisons can reach truth because "they express an insight which surveys, as from above, an unity wherein are combined various ideas."¹³² Our comparisons can be true "simply because we are wider than any of our ideas, and can win a vision which shall look down upon our own inner warfare, . . . as well as upon our own inner contrasts of exact definition."¹³³ This function of the interpreter of his own ideas recalls the function of the Absolute in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy. The difference here is that the human interpreter is capable of discerning truth for himself, and truth which is, in certain aspects, absolute truth.

Royce now turns his attention to the process of social interpretation, the interpretation of the neighbor's mind, and to the ideal which guides the truth loving interpreter. The psychology of social interpretation, so far as that process goes on in the individual interpreter's own mind, is the same as the psychology of comparison. Nobody can interpret unless the idea which he interprets has become more or less clearly and explicitly one of his own ideas and unless he compares it with another idea which is in some sense his own.

However, in social interpretation, the interpreter is dealing with two minds other than his own. His mediating

¹³²Ibid., vol. 2, p. 202.

¹³³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 203.

idea is aroused in his mind through signs which come to him from the mind which he interprets, and he addresses his mediation to the one to whom interpretation is made. He is, then, dealing with ideas which are relatively alien and which he does not intuit or see "face to face." Hence, his interpretation lacks the clarity of vision that he sometimes has in the comparison of his own ideas. This lack of clarity is the chief difference between comparison and social interpretation. However, the clearness of vision which sometimes comes in self-interpretation forms for the interpreter an ideal of successful social interpretation. Guided by this ideal, and motivated by loyalty, he wishes to make a community of three distinct and sundered selves.¹³⁴

If the interpreter could succeed in interpreting another mind as fully as in his clearest moments of self-knowledge he does his own, his interpretation would reduce to a conscious comparison of ideas that would look down from above. This would not, in Royce's view, imply interpenetration. "For our functions as the mind interpreted, the mind to whom the other is interpreted, and the interpreter, would remain as distinct as now they are."¹³⁵ This goal is unattainable under human social conditions, but it remains

¹³⁴Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 204-08.

¹³⁵Ibid., vol. 2, p. 210.

the ideal for which all the members strive: "you, when you give me the signs that I am to interpret; our neighbor, when he listens to my interpretation; I, when I devote myself to the task."¹³⁶ Indeed, granted this "will to interpret" on the part of all members, the basic structure of the community of interpretation already exists since there is an agreed upon goal and distribution of functions. The conditions previously required for community are present, namely, "many selves with a common ideal future event at which we aim."¹³⁷

For his part, the interpreter approaches the goal through plans and hypotheses regarding the one to be interpreted, and these can be tested inductively. The interpreter also interprets himself as "in ideal the interpreter who aims to approach the vision of the unity of precisely this community."¹³⁸ This shows how interpretation differs from the pragmatic theory of knowledge. The interpreter is not seeking to verify his concepts in his own percepts. Rather, he is seeking the unity of the community, and his efforts are guided by a norm of objectivity such as an ideal observer should possess who would view the task from outside the triad of minds.

¹³⁶Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 211-212.

¹³⁷Ibid., vol. 2, p. 213. Cf. above, pp. 185-193.

¹³⁸Ibid., vol. 2, p. 212.

For I want my interpretation of you to our neighbor to be such as you would accept and also such as our neighbor would comprehend, were each of us already in the position of the ideal observer from above, whose vision of the luminous unity of my interpretation and its goal I am trying to imitate whenever I try to interpret your mind.¹³⁹

The interpreter occupies the chief place in the community, and he most of all appears as its spirit because the goal of the community is "the ideal unity of insight which the interpreter would possess were these who are now his neighbors transformed into ideas of his own which he compared" and successfully mediated.¹⁴⁰ Royce points out the dynamic relationship between the three members by also calling the interpreter, the servant of all. He must conform to the mind which he interprets and to the mind to whom he addresses his interpretation. Royce concludes,

And his own ideas can 'work' only if his self-surrender, and his conformity to ideas which are not his own, is actually a successful conformity; and only if his approach to a goal which, as member of a human community of interpretation, he can never reach, is a real approach.¹⁴¹

In these concluding remarks we notice, first, that human interpretation can achieve truth. The ideas of the interpreter can "work" through successful conformity to the

¹³⁹Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 214-15.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 216.

¹⁴¹Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 216-17.

ideas of the other members and through a real approach to the goal of interpretation. We notice, secondly, that the goal of interpretation can never be reached by the human interpreter. That is, he can never know the ideas and experiences of the other two as he can know his own ideas and experiences. Thus, truth can be achieved, but this truth cannot be possessed with such immediacy of evidence and clarity of view as to be possessed in a final and ultimate way, or as to exclude further interpretation. This interpretation of Royce seems to be just to the text and to be consistent with his idea that human interpretation is by nature an endless process.¹⁴²

However, the question arises as to the significance Royce attaches to the "ideal observer from above." At first glance, this resembles the Absolute inclusive Thought of The Religious Aspect of Philosophy who includes the human judgment and its object in his synoptic vision, and thus establishes the truth or error of the human judgment.¹⁴³ There are, however, several notable differences between Royce's treatment of the Absolute Thought in the early work and his present "ideal observer from above." These differences are: (1) The human interpreter can arrive at truth, as noted above. (2)

¹⁴²Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 148-51. Cf. above, pp. 197-98.

¹⁴³Cf. above, pp. 35-41.

Royce does not conclude that the "ideal observer" exists as the Interpreter of the World. The passages cited above are not presented as evidence for the existence of God the Interpreter. Royce does go on to mention the aptness of the community of interpretation for conceiving God as the Interpreter of the World,¹⁴⁴ but he does not yet conclude that he has proven God so to exist. Hence, God the Interpreter is not identified with the "ideal observer from above."

(3) Royce nowhere states in The Problem of Christianity that God the Interpreter establishes the truth of such human interpretations as those which verify natural objects, scientific theory, or ordinary social interpretations. On the contrary, as we shall consider in the first section of the following chapter, the ability of human communities to achieve such truths forms the new basis for Royce's approach to the existence of God. (4) The human interpreter interprets himself as "in ideal the interpreter who aims to approach the vision of the unity of precisely this community."¹⁴⁵ The ideal observer of them all is the ideal of the interpreter because the ideal of interpretation is the clarity and unity sometimes achieved in comparison of ideas. But, the interpreter is not merely comparing two of his own ideas. Hence,

¹⁴⁴The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, pp. 219-21.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., vol. 2, p. 212.

he must strive for an ideal of objectivity that would include himself as interpreter as well as the interpreted and the interpretee. While this goal cannot be actually realized, it is not nothing because the interpreter can make a real effort to approach the goal.

Thus, I interpret Royce to mean by the "ideal observer" a reality similar to the type exemplified in The World and the Individual by Critical Rationalism. It has being dependent upon the mind, but it also acts as the norm of verification.¹⁴⁶ It would differ from the norm of Critical Rationalism in that it would not be conceived as an abstract standard, but as a person who is the human interpreter himself ideally extended to include, as best he can, the minds of the triad which include his own as well as those of his neighbors.

I further interpret Royce's conception of the truth of interpretation in the following way. (1) The interpreter must conform to the mind of the one interpreted. That is, he must correctly understand the idea which he is to interpret. (2) His interpretation is the new "third idea" which interprets. He will wish this to be accepted by the one who is interpreted and to be comprehended by the one to whom interpretation is addressed, otherwise there is no consensus, no unity of

¹⁴⁶Cf. above, pp. 91-96.

community, and no verification of the truth of his interpretation. These require that his insight become the insight of the interpreted and the interpretee. (3) Truth presupposes "will," that is, the common desire to arrive at truth, and the effort to do this by all the members, and this includes the attempt by the interpreter at the objectivity implied in viewing the situation from outside the triad. Granted these necessary conditions, truth can be achieved. (4) Truth will be the "correspondence" of the idea of the one interpreted with the "third idea" of the interpreter. It will also be the correspondence between the comprehension of the interpretee and the "third idea" of the interpreter. While the interpreter supplies the "third idea," all three act as if they were in the position of the ideal observer,¹⁴⁷ so that the one who is interpreted can agree that the "third idea" successfully interprets his idea, and one to whom the interpretation is addressed can agree that he comprehends the success of the interpretation. If they so agree, verification has been achieved, and the goal of interpretation has been reached since this goal is the unity of the community. Royce says that "the verifying experience" is "essentially the experience of a community" and that "the final truth of each idea" is due "to its

¹⁴⁷The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, p. 215.

essential spiritual unity in and with the community."¹⁴⁸
Verification is the agreement or actual unity which interpretation brings about. This is the "successful working" of the idea of the interpreter, or the fruit of his interpretation. (5) Truth will also be "coherence" because it consists in community. The correspondence between two ideas and a common third idea can be conceived as a coherence. This is the unity or the common agreement concerning the interpretation which is the goal of interpretation. (6) In summary, triadic coherence, or the correspondence of two ideas to the interpreting third idea constitutes and verifies the truth of an interpretation provided that the conditions mentioned in number (3) above are met. Thus, community both constitutes and verifies truth.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., vol. 2, p. 245.

CHAPTER IV

THE LATER CONCEPTION OF GOD

1. The World of Interpretation.

In The Problem of Christianity, Royce approaches metaphysics in the context of the community of interpretation. Knowledge of reality has an essentially social character so that belief in what is real is seen to be inseparable from belief in the reality of a community of interpretation.¹ This principle underlies Royce's whole approach to the proof of God's existence as the Interpreter of the World.

Royce first illustrates this principle by showing the social character of man's knowledge of ordinary physical objects and of the method whereby science verifies theory concerning natural facts. In each case, the acceptance of what is real supposes an appropriate community wherein ideas are interpreted. With these more familiar instances of communal approach to reality illustrated, Royce generalizes concerning being. Reality itself must be an interpretation of the antitheses that arise in human experience so that the world itself is a community of interpretation which thus includes its own interpreter.

¹The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, p. 273.

Common sense regards the objects of the physical world as able to be experienced in common by many observers. Royce analyzes this belief by using the example of the way in which two men rowing in the same boat regard the boat, the oars, and the water which they see and touch. Each man views the boat, the oars and the water as objects which he experiences for himself. Each also believes that the other is experiencing the same external facts. However, while each verifies his own ideas in his own experience, neither individually verifies the workings of the other's ideas. Nonetheless, each believes that the boat in which he observes himself to be rowing is the same object which the other man experiences. This belief is neither a perception nor is it verified in the workings of the ideas of either man. Rather, it is an interpretation which one addresses to the other. The boat, as a common object of experience, is an interpretation, and the oarsmen thus form a community of interpretation.²

Royce seems to say two things about the verification of interpretations. One is that no individual as such can verify his belief in an interpretation. The private workings of concepts in relation to percepts do not verify an interpretation. Since interpretation is a common endeavor, its verification is a community enterprise, and the verifying

²Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 240-45.

experience "is essentially the experience of a community."³ Secondly, Royce regards the goal of interpretation as the clarity which is sometimes achieved in the comparison of ideas. Now, social interpretation cannot achieve this goal completely since the ideas and experiences of one person can never become fully the ideas of another. Hence, interpretation under human conditions always involves belief.

If the common interpretation is true, then the two oarsmen actually form a community of interpretation, and are even now believing what would be seen to be true if, and only if, this community of interpretation were actually to reach its goal.⁴

Yet, the oarsmen interpret their united life by talking over together their experiences. This dialogue can approach the goal of interpretation or, one might say, indirectly verify what only a comparison of ideas could directly verify if the experiences of the two men were actually the experience of one person. Indirect verification approaches the goal of interpretation inasmuch as each interpreter can appreciate, or make his own, the ideas and experiences of the other. It seems that Royce regards such instances as the oarsmen who experience natural forces together, and the sharing that occurs in the scientific community as examples where the goal of interpretation is

³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 245.

⁴Ibid., vol. 2, p. 243.

most closely approached. In general, it seems clear that Royce accords to human communities the ability to discern truth through interpretation although such discernment involves an element of belief. Indeed, verification of the objects of perception is ultimately a matter of interpretation, as in the case of the oarsmen..

Common sense raises no question regarding the physical reality of the boat . . . simply because the interpretation of the boat as the common object of the experience of both the rowers is already made obvious by the essentially social nature and training of us all.⁵

This is a position that Royce has expressed before. "The reality of the facts of nature, when we actually confirm their presence, is always viewed as capable of being submitted to social tests."⁶ The conclusion of this is that our belief in the reality of the ordinary objects of experience implies our belief in the reality of our neighbor's mind, and consequently our belief in the reality of a community of interpretation.

The more complex case of verifying scientific theory also implies the existence of a community of interpretation. Although natural science depends upon the experience of individuals, no experience of any individual can count as a

⁵Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 245-46.

⁶"Self-Consciousness, Social Consciousness and Nature," in Studies of Good and Evil, p. 223. Cf. above, pp. 68-70.

scientific discovery until it has been confirmed by independent observers. Each scientist must test the success of his idea, and this involves bringing his percepts and concepts into desirable synthesis. However, the individual's discoveries must be interpreted to the scientific community and substantiated by the further experience of that community before they belong to science. The truth of scientific discovery can be fully tested "only in cases wherein, for the interpretation of another human individual's mind, the comparison of distinct ideas is substituted, while these ideas fall within the range of our individual insight."⁷ Independent verification thus supposes the existence of the scientific community of interpretation which is not itself an object of scientific inquiry, but is presupposed by it.

In general, wherever a person's affairs concern the social order in which he belongs, the only way to deal justly with the case is to interpret his views and interests to some fitting representative of the social order. Experience shows that in cases such as illness, legal peril, the personal estimate to which the artist or the statesman is subjected, the individual is seldom a good judge in his own case. Mediation is needed so that a community of interpretation must be formed.⁸ In such cases, verification

⁷Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 251-52.

⁸Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 232-38.

generally is not achieved as clearly as in the case of natural objects and scientific theory, but still the will to interpret aims at the clarity of the comparison of ideas.⁹

Thus, far, Royce has considered the social character which belongs to the verification of human knowledge concerning natural objects and the method of science. The result is "that we found our belief in the reality of the physical world to be inseparable from our belief in the reality of a community of interpretation."¹⁰ Royce now makes a metaphysical generalization of this first result.

Turning to the general philosophical problem of reality, Royce observes that philosophers have shown themselves in the history of culture to be interpreters. This is not simply because the philosopher appeals as man to other men. The deeper reason, Royce believes, is "Reality cannot be expressed exclusively either in perceptual or in conceptual form."¹¹ Philosophers who, like Plato or Bergson, have devoted their efforts to one or other cognitive processes instead of interpretation, illustrate this thesis. Each takes what he regards as a higher form of human consciousness which provides a pathway to reality, and contrasts

⁹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 252.

¹⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 273.

¹¹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 274.

this higher with a lower form of consciousness. Each mediates in his own way between the darkness of sense and the nobler insight of eternal forms of being, or between intellect and the truer intuition of endless change.¹²

Royce believes that the philosopher in such instances acts as a mediator, and he must so act, because he deals with the world as a whole so that the problem which confronts him cannot be defined in terms of one idea only. If he should so define his problem, his philosophy would be formulated in terms either of pure perception or of pure conception, and he would not be an interpreter. His philosophy would be like that of Spinoza who conceives reality in terms of one idea, namely, substance. For Spinoza,

there remains in our world only that which is real 'in itself' . . . The world is defined in terms of a single idea, all other human ideas or possible ideas being but special cases of the one idea. The real world is purely conceptual, and is also monistic.¹³

Royce's point seems to be that a philosophy based upon two ideas either requires mediation through a third idea or stands in danger of being reduced to one idea only.¹⁴

However, Royce does not believe that the problem of reality can be stated in terms of one idea only.

¹²Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 256-58.

¹³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 262.

¹⁴Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 262-64.

We all of us believe that there is any real world at all, simply because we find ourselves in a situation in which, because of the fragmentary and dissatisfying conflicts, antitheses, and problems of our present ideas, an interpretation of this situation is needed, but is not now known to us. By the 'real world' we mean simply the 'true interpretation' of this our problematic situation. No other reason can be given than this for believing that there is any real world at all.¹⁵

The "fragmentary and dissatisfying conflicts, antitheses, and problems of our present ideas" present the problem of being in a way similar to that set forth in The World and the Individual as disquiet over "purpose at war with fortune, idea with datum, meaning with chaos."¹⁶ Here it is summarized as the contrast between "the idea of present experience and the idea of the goal of experience."¹⁷ Royce sees this contrast as the problem of being because it touches all aspects of human life. In its ethical forms, the contrast appears between our actual life and our ideal life, the flesh and the spirit, our irrevocable past life and our future life. In the world of theory, the contrast is between ignorance and enlightenment, problem and solution, uncertainty and certainty. For the religious consciousness, the contrast is between nature and grace, good and evil,

¹⁵Ibid., vol. 2, p. 264.

¹⁶The World and the Individual, vol. 1, p. 57. cf. above, pp. 79-80.

¹⁷The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, p. 265.

present state and salvation. It is the contrast between our present will and its fulfilment.

By the real world Royce means "the true interpretation of the problematic situation which this antithesis presents to us insofar as we compare what is our ideal with what is so far given to us."¹⁸ The antithesis presents itself as appearance while the interpretation of the antithesis, or its solution, is the real world. The real world is the mediating idea which compares the two antithetic ideas and makes clear the meaning of their contrast. But, if the interpretation is real, the community is real, and if the interpretation is true, the community has reached its goal.

Royce concludes,

In brief, then, the real world is the Community of Interpretation which is constituted by two antithetic ideas, and their mediator or interpreter, whatever or whoever that interpreter be. If the interpretation is a reality, and if it truly interprets the whole of reality, then the community reaches its goal, and the real world includes its own interpreter. Unless both the interpreter and the community are real, there is no real world.¹⁹

Let us reconstruct Royce's argument. Like the arguments in his early and middle periods, the present argument proceeds from Royce's idealism whereby he reasons to

¹⁸Ibid., vol. 2, p. 267.

¹⁹Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 269-70.

the nature of reality from the nature of human thought. The examples of the common sense knowledge of physical objects, the method of science and the method of social mediation, all grasp reality by the triad of interpretation. It follows that the mind of the neighbor is postulated prior to the objects the truth of whose reality is known through the reality of the neighbor's mind. Thus the community of minds appears as the most fundamental of realities. Transposing this metaphysically, reality is basically a society of minds which interpret and are interpreted, or reality itself is in the form of a community of interpretation. In this conception, the selves or minds to be interpreted and to whom interpretation is to be made include the antitheses, sometimes tragic, which pervade the whole of human life. These antitheses wear the mask of appearance because they are as yet unmediated. That is to say, their interpretation is not now known to us. However, they have an interpreter and a mediation since reality is in the form of a community of interpretation. If this is not so, there is no real world since we know reality only through a community of interpretation.

In regard to other philosophies, Royce believes either that each in its own way mediates antithetical ideas which present the problem of being, or that it reduces itself to a monism, like that of Spinoza, which is inadequate since it takes no account of the antithetical problem of being which must be included in the resolution.

As for the skeptic who suggests that there is no solution to the problem of being, Royce replies that such an hypothesis, if true, "could be verified only by an experience that in itself would constitute a full insight into the meaning of the real contrast, and so would in fact furnish a solution."²⁰ The skeptic is one who lacks insight and believes this to be an ultimate position. However, to verify his position would require the insight into the meaning of the contrast which would make him no longer a skeptic.

We should observe, finally, that the force of Royce's conclusion in this argument appears somewhat more modest than in previous arguments. The conclusion that "the real world is the Community of Interpretation which is constituted by two antithetic ideas and their mediator or interpreter," is a belief. "No other reason can be given than this for believing that there is any real world at all."²¹ This, however, is consistent with the basis of the argument which is the social character of all human verification of what is real, and all such verification, as social, involves some element of belief.

²⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 269.

²¹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 265.

Royce now states the general structure of the World of Interpretation. He has shown that interpretation implies an endless series of acts of interpretation unless there is some arbitrary interruption.²² The World Community of Interpretation thus expresses its life in an infinite series of acts of interpretation each of which occupies its place in a real order of time. If, however, this community reaches its goal, this whole time process is spanned by "one insight" which surveys the unity of its meaning. This insight will be neither timeless, nor will it occur in any moment of time, and its nature can be known somewhat by analogy with our own comparison of ideas.²³

Royce restates his meaning of the World of Interpretation by what he calls "the doctrine of signs" which he applies to the order of time. Peirce introduced in logic the category of sign as the name for an object which requires interpretation. Percepts are concerned with individual things, concepts with universals, while interpretations have signs as their object. A sign may be called an expression of a mind, as in social intercourse, or an object that fulfils the functions of a mind. Thus, a clock face, a weather vane, or a gesture are signs. They express a mind

²²Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 149-51. Cf. above, p. 199.

²³Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 270-71.

and call for interpretation through some other mind which shall act as mediator between the sign and someone to whom the sign is to be read. The interpretation constitutes a new sign which again calls for interpretation, and so on unless the process is arbitrarily interrupted.²⁴

Royce applies this logic of signs to the real order of time. The antitheses which constitute the problem of being are events that occur in time, and these events are signs which find their real interpretations so that the very being of the universe consists in a process whereby the world is interpreted through an infinite series of acts of interpretation. If we consider the whole time order, "it constitutes in itself an infinitely complex Sign. This sign is, as a whole, interpreted to an experience which includes a synoptic survey of the whole of time."²⁵

Royce again points out, "Our metaphysical thesis generalizes the rules which constantly guide our daily interpretations of life,"²⁶ in which we interpret our own past and future, and in which the historian interprets the past. The truth of the past and future cannot be approached in the manner in which pragmatism verifies an idea through its

²⁴Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 281-84.

²⁵Ibid., vol. 2, p. 286.

²⁶Ibid., vol. 2, p. 291.

present workings since the past and future of our real experience are objects neither of pure perception nor pure conception. One cannot verify any past event through the present workings of his ideas.²⁷ Our memories are signs of the past, and our expectations are signs of the future, which thus require the triadic function of interpretation.

In summary, the manner in which the human mind grasps truth and reality, whether in interpreting the past and future, in common sense interpretation of natural objects, in the interpretation of scientific theory, in ordinary social interpretation,--all indicate what is ultimately real, namely that all the problems which present themselves in finite experience are signs, and the real world contains the interpreter of these signs so that the very being of the world consists in the process of their interpretation.

2. The Theoretical and the Practical.

Royce previously considered that the Christian ideal of the Beloved Community is the universal community of mankind united in the Spirit.²⁸ His last consideration, a metaphysical thesis, was that the real world is, in its wholeness, a

²⁷Ibid., vol. 2, p. 289. For a similar criticism of the pragmatic theory of truth, cf. Edward C. Moore, William James (New York: Washington Square Press, 1965), pp. 102-03.

²⁸Cf. above, p. 178.

community. The joining of these two ideas culminates his philosophy of Christianity. Indeed, unless the metaphysical thesis finds application in the special problems of life, it will prove a worthless abstraction.²⁹ Royce points out that in this respect he is in full agreement with the spirit of pragmatism as James defined it. "Any metaphysical thesis, if it has any meaning at all, is an expression of an attitude of the will of the one who asserts this thesis."³⁰ Our metaphysical interests are interests in directing our will and in making practical our ideals.

Royce acknowledges this as a voluntarism, but he does not believe that one's voluntarism should remain a mere pragmatism. He has long defended what he calls "Absolute Voluntarism"³¹ which he developed "partly under the influence of James, but long before recent pragmatism was in question."³²

²⁹The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, p. 280.

³⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 291.

³¹Cf. ibid., vol. 2, pp. 122-23, where Royce also calls this "absolute pragmatism."

³²Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 292-93. No doubt an early example of this influence was James' essay, "The Sentiment of Rationality," first printed in Mind for July, 1879, and later published in The Will to Believe. There James says that no "philosophy can be, or ever has been, constructed without the help of personal preference, belief or divination." "It is far too little recognized how entirely the intellect is built up of practical interests." (Cited from John J. McDermott, The Writings of William James, pp. 335, 330.) Royce's agreement thus far with pragmatism is stated clearly in "The Eternal and the Practical" (Philosophical Review, XIII, 1904), pp. 113-42. There Royce agrees with the spirit of pragmatism as a tendency "to characterize and to estimate the processes of thought in terms of practical categories, and to criticize knowledge in the light of its bearing upon conduct." (Ibid., p. 113.)

Royce believes that pragmatism or voluntarism should also be absolute, that is, that purpose and conduct should be guided by universal standards which transcend the needs of the moment and give them truth.³³

While every metaphysical theory is the expression of an attitude of the will, there is one, and but one, general and decisive attitude of the will which is the right attitude when we . . . undertake to choose how we propose to bear ourselves towards the world.³⁴

"There are absolute standards for the will."³⁵ These standards create their own realm of deeds which constitute a real life, and are irrevocable and absolute facts.

Thus, the spirit of Royce's absolute voluntarism is that theory, to have meaning, must serve human purposes and needs, while human purpose and need require guidance by the universal truth established by theory. This spirit applies in the present case. The theory of the World Community of Interpretation asserts a fundamental metaphysical truth. What human purpose and need does it serve?

³³In "The Eternal and the Practical," Royce indicates his conviction that truth is not simply "an adjustment to environment." One's private need is not an ultimate warrant of the truth of his judgment "unless I can add: "My need is the human need, it defines a ruling, a standard need. I ought to need just this assertion of just this object in view of just this situation.'" (*Ibid.*, p. 130.) One of man's needs is to be satisfied that his need ought to be what it is.

³⁴The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, p. 293.

³⁵Ibid., vol. 2, p. 293.

This essentially social universe, this community which we have now declared to be real, and to be in fact, the sole supreme reality,--the Absolute, --what does it call upon a reasonable being to do? What kind of salvation does it offer him? What interest does it possess for his will?³⁶

Royce answers the question by stating a principle that is at once theoretical and practical.

Practically I cannot be saved alone; theoretically speaking, I cannot find or even define the truth in terms of my individual experience, without taking account of my relation to the community of those who know. This community, then, is real whatever is real. And in that community my life is interpreted.³⁷

That is, the community fulfils the individual's need both for salvation and for truth. Hence, not only from a practical,

³⁶Ibid., vol. 2, p. 296. In this passage, Royce identifies the universal community as the Absolute. He no doubt means by Absolute what, in a general sense, he has always meant by it, namely, what is "objective" and "whole" in reality. (Cf. above, pp. 20 and 39-40.) The term, absolute, is used here in the context of the discussion of absolute voluntarism. This means that the universal community is the ultimate and complete objective norm to guide human purpose and to fulfil human needs, particularly the need for loyalty and wholeness of life. Royce also seems to use the word, absolute, as a synonym for "immutably true" as when he speaks of irrevocable deeds as absolute, and this also seems to be the meaning of "absolute" when he later sets down two absolute truths. (The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, pp. 376ff.) The present text would seem to warrant interpretation in any and all of these senses of the term, absolute. What the present text does not warrant is the interpretation, which some commentators give, that in a more precise sense Royce identifies his present metaphysical view of the universe with that expressed in his former works. Such a large conclusion evidently goes beyond the evidence contained in this short text.

³⁷Ibid., vol. 2, p. 312.

but also from a theoretical point of view, the individual needs the community. The community responds to the needs of the whole man.

Royce makes one final attempt to show why belief in the universal community of interpretation is a reasonable belief. Why, asks Royce, should anyone believe that the mind of his neighbor is real? The reason for this belief is fundamentally the same reason for believing that the universal community is real. Royce explains the parallel. The reason for "postulating your mind," Royce says,

is that the ideas which your words and movements have aroused within me are not my own ideas, and cannot be interpreted in terms of my own ideas, while I actually hold, as the fundamental hypothesis of my social consciousness, that all contrasts of ideas have a real interpretation and are interpreted.³⁸

That is, the ideas which you arouse in me by your words and deeds contrast with my own ideas. They do not appear as my own past ideas nor as inventions of my own. I suppose, however, that these new ideas have an interpretation, and thus an interpreter to mediate these new ideas and my own ideas.

³⁸Ibid., vol. 2, p. 322. The force of the hypothesis that "all contrasts of ideas have a real interpretation" is enhanced if we consider that Royce regards the development of self-consciousness to depend upon the contrast of ideas. Cf. above, pp. 165-66.

Now this hypothetical interpreter is what I mean by your self, precisely in so far as I suppose you to be now communicating your own ideas to me. You are the real interpreter of the ideas which your deeds suggest to me.³⁹

Royce draws the parallel motive for postulating the universal community. As you present ideas to me which you alone can interpret, so the universe presents problems, antitheses, which it alone can interpret. "Our fundamental postulate is: The world is the interpretation of the problems which it presents."⁴⁰ That is, the world is a community which contains its own interpreter. However infinite and varied its processes, the Spirit of this universal community compares and interprets them all.

The fundamental attitude of the will toward the universal community which befits the metaphysical thesis is "the one which Paul knew as Charity." It is loyalty, or the disposition "to imagine, and also practically to acknowledge as real, a spiritual realm,--an universal and divine community."⁴¹

This is at once an attitude of will and an assertion whose denial refutes itself. For if there is no interpreter, there is no interpretation. And if there is no interpretation, there is no world whatever.⁴²

³⁹Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 321-22.

⁴⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 323.

⁴¹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 311. This placing of love on the side of voluntarism as a practical disposition of the will tends to confirm our former interpretation of love. Cf. above, pp. 190-91.

⁴²Ibid., vol. 2, p. 325.

We see in this passage how closely Royce relates the theoretical and the practical in his doctrine of the universal community of interpretation. In general, the theory is seen to be related to human purposes and needs by providing salvation to the individual, while human purposes and needs dispose one to accept the conclusion of the theory. More in particular, the theory, while it provides the reasons for the reality of the universal community, requires completion through the assent of the will since human interpretation always involves an element of belief. Hence, the theory not only serves human purpose by providing salvation, but it requires human purpose to complete its work. However, if the practical assent of faith is not forthcoming, one appears as unreasonable since this is tantamount to declaring that there is neither truth of human life nor a real world, just as an individual would appear unreasonable who should declare it false that his neighbor's mind is real. Such an assertion would appear contradictory since one needs the community of interpretation to establish either the truth or the error of a judgment that would transcend his subjective states. Without the community of interpretation, there can be neither truth nor error. This latter consideration shows Royce's reasoning to be continuous with his earliest work.

3. The Conception of God.

Prior to his proof for the existence of the universal community of interpretation, Royce indicated how apt this theory was for embodying a conception of God.

And, if, in ideal, we aim to conceive the divine nature, how better can we conceive it than in the form of the Community of Interpretation, and above all in the form of the Interpreter, who interprets all to all, and each individual to the world, and the world of spirits to each individual.⁴³

In this conception, God would appear as the

One who, as interpreter, was at once servant to all and chief among all, expressing his will through all, yet, in his interpretations, regarding and loving the will of the least of these his brethren. In him the Community, the Individual, and the Absolute would be completely expressed, reconciled, and distinguished.⁴⁴

In this presentation, God appears as the divine Interpreter of the community who interprets all to all. This, according to Royce, is "the meaning of the Church Universal, of the Communion of Saints, and of God the Interpreter."⁴⁵ This conception of God shows how closely Royce has brought his metaphysics of God into harmony with his philosophy of the Christian religion. The universal community of interpretation, as a metaphysical conception, is

⁴³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 219.

⁴⁴Ibid., vol. 2, p. 220.

⁴⁵Ibid., vol. 2, p. 221.

identified with the ideal of the Pauline churches, the universal communion of saints in the Spirit. These two viewpoints, the metaphysical and the religious, are kept in close harmony as Royce now makes explicit the details of this central conception.

At the end of Chapter XV, "The Historical and the Essential,"⁴⁶ Royce presents in concise and carefully worded texts his metaphysics of God. We can do no better than cite the most important of these texts and comment upon them. They are words addressed to an imaginary Christian who dies as a loyal member of one of the Pauline churches, and who awakes in the twentieth century to reconsider what is essential in Christianity. Royce believes this to be: "The redeeming divine spirit that saves man dwells in the Church."⁴⁷ Or, again, "The core of the faith is the Spirit, the Beloved Community, the work of grace, the atoning deed, and the saving power of the loyal life."⁴⁸

Addressing our guest, I should sum up the result of our metaphysical inquiry thus: The world is the process of the spirit. An endless time-sequence of events is controlled, according to this account, by motives which, endless in their whole course, interpret the past to the future. These motives express themselves in an evolution wherein to every problem

⁴⁶Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 373-79.

⁴⁷Ibid., vol. 2, p. 363.

⁴⁸Ibid., vol. 2, p. 429.

corresponds, in the course of the endless ages, its solution, to every antithesis its resolution, to every estrangement its reconciliation, to every tragedy the atoning triumph which interprets its evil.⁴⁹

In this passage, the world is identified with the time-process, and the time-process is called the spirit's process. We shall see that this is so whether we consider the spirit from the point of view of his immanence in the time-process, or from the point of view of the spirit's transcendence of the time-process.

Concerning the time-process, we notice three things. First, the time-sequence is endless. This is consistent with the nature of interpretation which suggests an endless sequence.⁵⁰ Secondly, the antitheses in question are not merely theoretical, but are concerned with concrete life and death issues which involve tragedy and estrangement. Interpretation takes the form of concrete reconciliation. Thirdly, the time-sequence, which expresses the tragic antitheses, is a controlled sequence of events. These events include both antitheses and their interpretations inspired by motives which should be understood as from the spirit since the time-process is of the spirit. The sequence of events is so controlled that to each tragic event, as it occurs in the time-

⁴⁹Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 373-74.

⁵⁰Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 149-51.

process, there corresponds the event of its proper reconciliation, so that interpretations unfold "in an evolution," that is, successively in time and according to the spirit's plan.

Royce adds, "But how this reconciliation takes place, we have not attempted to know. Concerning the details of the world of time, we can learn only by historical experience."⁵¹ Royce apparently means that our knowledge of what occurs in time is limited in such a way that only the antitheses are experienced by us, while their solutions, which also unfold in time along with the antitheses, are not able to be experienced by us. We do not now know the details of the spirit's reconciliations.⁵²

Royce continues, "This world throughout [the World of Interpretation] is essentially social, as is also our human world. It is essentially historical, as is any world involving a time-process."⁵³ Here Royce distinguishes the World of Interpretation from our human world. This distinction is what might be called an inadequate distinction. The

⁵¹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 374.

⁵²Royce will mention later that certain reconciliations of the Spirit are made manifest to us. These are deeds of charity and atonement which the Spirit inspires. These deeds "make the world seem like a divine process." (Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 376-77).

⁵³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 374.

human world which we experience, is a dimension of the World of Interpretation, but the World of Interpretation includes a dimension not visible in our human world. This dimension is the reconciliation of tragic antitheses. Such reconciliation is essentially social, as is also our human world, because it consists in an interpretation by the Interpreter of the World, and this interpretation must be addressed ultimately to those whose lives are thus interpreted. Although the interpretations are not now addressed to us, they occur in the time process.

Royce continues, "It is essentially teleological as is every world wherein we can speak, as, according to our philosophy of interpretation, we can justly speak, of a process involving true development."⁵⁴ This statement of Royce would appear to need careful discernment. Nowhere does Royce present the thesis that human life, as we experience it, is undergoing a universal development for the better from stage to stage. He does emphasize the development of science,⁵⁵ and, in a general sense, he regards each generation as inheriting the wisdom of past ages.⁵⁶ But he makes no effort to establish a case for universal progress in the

⁵⁴Ibid., vol. 2, p. 374.

⁵⁵Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 406-20.

⁵⁶Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 17-19.

quality of human life on the basis of empirical evidence.⁵⁷ He does hold out the ideal and the hope that loyal effort will make the universal community manifest in our world to the extent that this is possible.⁵⁸ However, "On earth, as we have seen, the universal community is nowhere visibly realized."⁵⁹

How, then, is the teleological process of true development to be understood? Royce has said that the time process is controlled by the spirit according to plan. According to this plan, "the very being of the time-process itself consists in the progressive realization of the Universal Community in and through the longings, the vicissitudes, the tragedies, and the triumphs of this process of the temporal world."⁶⁰ Such "progressive realization" constitutes, in a mysterious way, the genuine development of the human spirit through participation in the universal community wherein the interpretations of the Divine Spirit genuinely atone. It would seem that the concept of atonement is the key to understanding the sense of Royce's meaning of "true

⁵⁷Royce's position in this regard appears unchanged from that taken in The World and the Individual. Cf. above, p. 141; p. 4.

⁵⁸The Problem of Christianity, vol. 1, pp. 359-60; vol. 2, pp. 367-68, 430-31.

⁵⁹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 388.

⁶⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 387.

development" since atonement makes the world better than it would have been had evil not been in the world.⁶¹ However, this development occurs in that dimension of the world of interpretation which is not visibly present to us. It is nonetheless real, and it will ultimately be addressed to those whose lives are interpreted.

Royce now adds a further and centrally important feature.

This endless order of time stands in contrast to an ideal goal, which the world endlessly pursues with its sequence of events, but never reaches at any one moment of the time sequence. The pursuit, the search for the goal, the new interpretation which every new event requires,--this endless sequence of new acts of interpretation,--this constitutes the world. This is the order of time. This pursuit of the goal, this bondage of the whole of creation to the pursuit of that which it never reaches,--this naturally tragic estrangement of this world from its goal,--this constitutes the problem of the universe.⁶²

We notice first that Royce's view is cosmic in regard both to space and time. It is Paul's vision of "the whole world groaning and travailing in pain" in expectation of the parousia. Secondly, we notice that emphasis is placed upon the words, "endless," "never reaches," "search," "pursuit." Royce seems to be anticipating a solution which will transcend the world of time and history, and yet be true to the fact that development and reconciliation occur in history.

⁶¹Cf. above, pp. 173-75.

⁶²The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, p. 375.

The whole world of the time-process cries out for deliverance from the need to find reconciliation of tragic antitheses. Let there be final deliverance and final solution. This cry, then, is a cry for transcendence, or for a solution which will transcend in some way the time-process in that it reconciles the endless search with its final resolution.

Concerning the redemption of the world, there are two absolute truths which Royce will express in terms of his doctrine of community. This is the first absolute truth:

The salvation of the world occurs progressively, endlessly, in constant contest with evil, as a process that is never ended. The deeds which we know as genuinely interpreting the past to the future, as the reconciling deeds, as the deeds which accomplish what is possible towards making the world seem to us a divine process, are deeds of charity and of atonement. These can exist in their true form only in the community. In the human world, you of the Pauline Churches knew them as the deeds through which the divine spirit was manifested. These deeds, as you asserted, not the power of flesh and blood, but the spirit who founded the Church, and who dwelt in it, accomplished.⁶³

Let us make several comments on this first absolute truth. First, salvation occurs within the time-process. In this respect, it occurs progressively and endlessly just as time itself is progressive and endless. Secondly, salvation occurs in contest with evil. It is from evil that we are saved or delivered. Evil is understood in the general but concrete sense as the antitheses of various types that

⁶³Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 376-77.

constitute the problem of being.⁶⁴ Thirdly, the deeds which make the world seem a divine process are deeds which reconcile and thus overcome evil. These are deeds of charity and atonement, and they exist in their true form only in community. The reconciling work of Christ overcame evil by making the world better than it would have been had no evil been present. This was a true act of atonement for it established the Beloved Community wherein the sinner can be made one with the Spirit, and with his fellow man, and with himself.⁶⁵ So, too, loyalty to the Beloved Community saves the individual from the moral burden which universally afflicts mankind.⁶⁶ It is the mission of the Beloved Community to continue through its members genuine acts of atonement, and to extend charity to all men since all are called to this universal ideal.⁶⁷

Lastly, these deeds which manifest the Spirit in the world are themselves inspired by the redeeming Spirit who dwells in the community. The love that saves and atones "comes as from above."⁶⁸ This consideration seems to present

⁶⁴The meaning which Royce attaches to evil appears to be unchanged from that expressed in The World and the Individual. Cf. above, pp. 133-34.

⁶⁵Cf. above, pp. 170-75.

⁶⁶Cf. above, pp. 164-68, 177-178.

⁶⁷Cf. above, pp. 174-75, 178.

⁶⁸Cf. above, pp. 192-93.

Royce's conception of God's immanence in the world at work in man's salvation, and this occurs in the context of the community. It also shows how intimately Royce has combined a metaphysical conception of God with a religious conception. The metaphysics of God's immanence in the world through sustaining the world in being is, in Royce's treatment, a metaphysics of immanence through salvation. For Royce conceives the being of the world dynamically as the temporal process which consists in the progressive realization of the Universal Community through the interpretations of the Spirit.⁶⁹

Royce now turns to his second absolute truth.

But the salvation of the whole world, the consciousness that in its wholeness the world is and expresses and fulfils the divine plan, and is wholly interpreted and reconciled,--this is something which is never completed at any point of time. Yet this unity of the spirit, this consciousness of reconciliation, this triumph over universal death whereof every event in time furnishes an illustration, this occurs in our world of interpretation, not at any one moment of time, but through an insight into the meaning of all that occurs in time . . . We declare that the whole order of time, the process of the spirit, is interpreted, and so interpreted that, when viewed in the light of its goal, the whole world is reconciled to its own purposes.⁷⁰

The words in this passage which stand out as significant are the words "whole" (mentioned five times), "all," "every," "universal." These words refer to the world in process and to the deeds of reconciliation and interpretation

⁶⁹The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, p. 387.

⁷⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 377-78.

which have occurred in it. The viewpoint is now of the time-process and of all the deeds of atonement and charity and of all the reconciliations which at every step have spelt salvation. Royce's meaning seems to be that all these individual events in time form one interrelated whole which corresponds to the fulfilment of the Spirit's plan. The passage stresses the Spirit's eternal consciousness of the individual solutions as if woven into a total and completed pattern. From this eternal viewpoint, there is final resolution of the world's struggle with problematic and temporal antitheses so that the world is reconciled to its own purpose which is liberation from this bondage. This constitutes a final interpretation, not in the sense of occurring at a final moment of time, but in the sense of a total solution that includes the whole order of time. It is final, then, in the sense of what is ultimate in being, or what is really real.

Presumably this final interpretation, as well as the individual interpretations, will be addressed to the members of the universal community. This is consistent with Royce's theory both of community and of interpretation. The individual longs to find what it loves as a fact of experience, and to be in the immediate presence of the beloved. Ideal self-extension, motivated by love, needs to take "the form of acting as if we could survey, in some single unity of insight," the wealth and variety which escapes the temporal

viewpoint.⁷¹ Presumably, the loyal members of the universal community will receive a participation in the Spirit's total view. Moreover, by interpretation in its social meaning, Royce does not mean simply individual satisfaction in the solution of a problem. Interpretation demands that the interpreter consult those whom he interprets and to whom he addresses his interpretation. Also, he must strive to make his own sense clear to them. Thus, interpretation consists in dialogue and in the sharing of the interpretation, while the entire effort is sustained by a loving effort. Indeed, Royce conceives the Interpreter of the World as consulting the wills of those whom he interprets so that this also enters into the final resolution.

Another important observation to be made about this passage is that Royce expresses the Spirit's transcendence. The Spirit's vision spans the whole temporal order so that it cannot be a vision from within the temporal process. Moreover, the Spirit's interpretation is of the antitheses which constitute the world problem. But the interpreter, as interpreter, cannot be the interpreted. The Spirit, then, transcends the world of time in which the antitheses occur. Moreover, the Spirit is presented as the source of unity of the universal community, and as such he evidently transcends the parts which he unifies. Although Royce does not use the

⁷¹Cf. above, p. 191.

word, transcendence, neither does he disallow it, and its meaning seems evident in his account.

Royce now makes the concluding remarks of his presentation of the conception of God.

The endless tragedies of its sequence are not only interpreted step by step through deeds of charity and of atonement, but, as it were (I speak now wholly in a figure), 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,' the whole of time, with all its tragedies, is, by the interpreter of the universe, reconciled to its own ideal. And in this final union of temporal sequence, of the goal that is never attained in time, and of the divine spirit through whom the world is reconciled to itself and to its own purpose, the real community, the true interpretation, the divine interpreter, the plan of salvation,--these are expressed.⁷²

In this conception of God, both the immanence and the transcendence of the Spirit are expressed, and they are kept in close relationship. The Spirit is in the world through the deeds of charity and atonement which he inspires. But, all that occurs in time through his inspiration and immanence makes for the final solution which occurs in the light of his transcending vision and according to his plan of reconciliation. Thus, his transcendence is of time, but not in the sense of being removed from time. Rather, the Spirit's transcendence of time makes possible his synoptic view of time and his reconciling interpretation of all the antitheses which occur in time. So, too, the plan of

⁷²The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, pp. 378-79.

salvation works in time because the Spirit's transcending vision reveals what deeds must be inspired in time to realize his reconciling purpose. These deeds of charity and atonement fulfil the Spirit's purpose in time, and they enter into and compose the Spirit's final interpretation which occurs outside of time.

It seems that Royce is able to keep his expressions of immanence and transcendence so closely related to each other because they are centered in his doctrine of community and interpretation. The Spirit transcends the tragic antitheses of human life which occur in the time process, but he does not transcend the community. The Spirit is within the community as its Interpreter, and is immanent in the time process through the deeds which he inspires and the reconciliations which he effects according to his plan of salvation. Finally, it seems that it is not only the Spirit's purpose that is fulfilled in this plan of salvation. It is also the purpose of the world itself. For, according to the theory of interpretation, the purpose of the interpreter and of the interpreted is one and the same. This constitutes the unity of the community and the triumph of the Spirit.

4. Elements in Royce's Later Conception of God Which Are Similar to and Continuous with Earlier Conceptions.

This thesis undertakes to compare Royce's later conception of God with those presented in his early and

middle periods in order to determine whether he has changed his conception of God and, if so, in what this change consists. Now that the arguments and conceptions of all three periods have been analyzed, we can undertake this synthetic task of the thesis. First, we will consider the elements in Royce's later conception of God which appear to be similar to and continuous with the earlier ones.

All of Royce's arguments for the existence of God proceed from his idealism whereby he concludes to the nature of reality from the nature of thought.⁷³ Whatever form each argument takes, it always involves the need to explain the possibility of error or the possibility of attaining truth.⁷⁴ This always requires the transcending of present momentary consciousness for what is objective, normative and whole in reality. This, in turn, always occurs through some triadic structure whereby individual judgment corresponds to its object through the medium of some higher insight. The triadic form of the argument is particularly noticeable in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy where judgment is able to correspond, or not to correspond, with its object due to the presence of the inclusive insight of the Absolute,⁷⁵ and in The Problem

⁷³Cf. above, pp. 1, 65-66, 74-77, 95-96, 221.

⁷⁴Cf. above, pp. 37, 65-70, 95-96, 104-08, 111-12, 218, 225-26, 230-32.

⁷⁵Cf. above, pp. 24-27, 30, 34-37.

of Christianity where human truth requires the triadic form of interpretation.⁷⁶ The argument in The World and the Individual is not triadic insofar as it concerns the lengthy discussion of the internal and external meaning of ideas. This appears to be a dualistic theory of knowledge, idealistically conceived. However, the argument becomes triadic in form when it requires that the Absolute be conscious of the external meaning which internal meaning intends but does not presently experience.⁷⁷ In this case the Absolute includes and completes the internal meaning of finite ideas much as it included and completed the intentions of separate judgments in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy.⁷⁸ We considered how the early argument in fact is clarified by the later argument.⁷⁹

The arguments of all three periods conclude to an all comprehending Knower whose single insight includes all that is, is eternal and unchanging, and in some sense

⁷⁶In a letter to Reginald Chauncey Robbins on November 8, 1914, Royce pointed out this connection between his later and early thought. "Most of course I prize at present my latest theory, that of the Peircean 'interpretation,' with its peculiar 'triads.' But in germ I had it . . . , in my Chapter on 'The Possibility of Error' in the Religious Aspect." (The Letters of Josiah Royce, p. 618.) Cf. above, p. 30.

⁷⁷Cf. above, pp. 115-17.

⁷⁸Cf. above, pp. 38-41.

⁷⁹Cf. above, pp. 118-20.

transcends the finite world of his knowledge.⁸⁰ Some statements of Royce's idealism, which are expressed in The World and the Individual, seem equally applicable to his early and later conceptions. For example, Royce speaks of idealism as viewing "the world as a rational whole, present in its actuality to the unity of a single consciousness."⁸¹ This statement could apply to the synoptic vision of God, the Interpreter, as well as to the early Absolute Thought, although, of course, there are important differences.⁸²

Along with these expressions of idealism runs a strain of empiricism in the thought of Royce. We have said that Royce's arguments conclude to the nature of reality from the nature of thought. Thought, as used here, does not mean mere idea. What Royce says in this respect in The World and the Individual holds good for all of his arguments. "Nothing is proved real merely by proving its abstract consistency as a mere idea taken apart from the rest of the world."⁸³ Rather, Royce reasons from thought as lived or experienced. "We have no ground whatever for believing that there is any

⁸⁰Cf. above, pp. 37, 42, 54-55, 117, 120, 141, 243-46.

⁸¹The World and the Individual, vol. 1, p. 433.

⁸²Cf. above, pp. 44-45, 53, 55-56, 243-46.

⁸³The World and the Individual, vol. 1, p. 574.

real world except the ground furnished by our experience, and by the fact that . . . we have problems on our hands which need interpretation."⁸⁴ The experience of thought with a lived problem is always Royce's point of departure, and it reveals the appropriate conception of God. The problem of how human judgment can be true or erroneous leads to the early conception of God as the Absolute inclusive Thought. The problem of man's experience of "purpose at war with fortune, idea with datum," leads to the conception of God as including and fulfilling human purpose.⁸⁵ The experience of human community and of the problems presented by the varied antitheses of human life lead to the conception of God as the Interpreter of the World. Since Royce always aims to empirically ground his argument, it is important to pay attention to the analogy he uses whose human analogue reveals the appropriate conception of God.

Another important element of continuity in Royce's thought is the emphasis which he placed upon purpose in his middle works and upon the close relationship between purpose and meaning in the internal and external meaning of ideas in The World and the Individual.⁸⁶ Although The Problem of

⁸⁴The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, p. 323.

⁸⁵The World and the Individual, vol. 1, p. 57.

⁸⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 37.

Christianity drops the language of the internal and external meaning of ideas, it continues to express the close relationship between meaning and purpose. This is seen in the discussion of the theoretical and the practical which Royce's voluntarism closely relates.⁸⁷ In general, the purpose expressed in the middle works takes the form of loyalty and Pauline charity in the later work. Love is required to complete the consciousness of the present workings of the community.⁸⁸ It is the purpose which guides the truth-loving interpreter to make of three distinct selves a community.⁸⁹ It is the fundamental attitude of the will which befits the metaphysical thesis of the universal community since it disposes one to imagine and practically to acknowledge this community as real.⁹⁰ Loyalty to his cause furnishes the single purpose which makes the self a conscious and unified moral person, and provides salvation in a religious sense. As saving, love is superhuman in its origin.⁹¹

The emphasis upon purpose in the middle works resulted in a conception of God not merely as Thought but also

⁸⁷Cf. above, pp. 227-33.

⁸⁸Cf. above, pp. 189-91.

⁸⁹The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, pp. 207-08.

⁹⁰Ibid., vol. 2, p. 311.

⁹¹Cf. above, pp. 175-78, 192-93.

as Will which expresses itself in the world of finite individuals.⁹² In the later work, purpose appears in the teleology of the time-process whereby tragic antitheses are reconciled through the atonement and loving deeds inspired and effected by the Interpreter of the World according to his plan. The ideal goal of the time-process is the final interpretation of all the tragic antitheses which accomplishes the total plan of the Spirit and is manifested to his eternal vision.⁹³

In one respect, Royce's various solutions to the problem of evil have a common characteristic. Evil is always retained in being overcome so that it fits into a pattern in which it serves the good. In the early treatment, this subordination was effected through incorporation into the higher viewpoint of the Infinite Thought.⁹⁴ In the middle treatment, consistent with its emphasis upon individuality, the human moral agent atones for the evil deed through a new deed which reconciles the evil to the world order and constitutes the perfection of the whole. The whole thus includes the evil which is overcome.⁹⁵ The Problem of Christianity gives this conception a new precision and dimension. The irrevocability

⁹²Cf. above, pp. 140-48.

⁹³Cf. above, pp. 238-47.

⁹⁴Cf. above, pp. 46-48.

⁹⁵Cf. above, pp. 132-36.

of the evil deed is stressed, while the atoning deed, exemplified by Christ's atoning deed, takes the evil deed as an opportunity to make the world better than it would have been had the evil not been present, so that the atoning deed does not simply restore good order, but transforms the very loss into gain.⁹⁶

The constant and general characteristic of Royce's idealism is that it conceives what is real as what is whole. This wholeness of being both transcends and contrasts with present experience which presents the problem of being rather than its solution. In The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, this wholeness takes the form of an Absolute inclusive Thought in which human truth resides. In The World and the Individual, wholeness of being is treated in regard to both the individual person and the world at large. The real self is not a datum or a presented fact, but a completed whole of meaning. As such, it is an ethical conception because it means a purpose pursued and eventually to be won. The true self is a meaning embodied in a conscious life whose uniqueness and entire significance transcend our present form of consciousness. The experience of the whole and real self requires a new type of consciousness to be possessed in another world.⁹⁷ This

⁹⁶Cf. above, pp. 168-75.

⁹⁷The World and the Individual, vol. 2, pp. 269, 286-87. Cf. above, pp. 136-39.

comes through participation in God's eternal consciousness which views the world as one individual whole, individual because it expresses God's one purpose, and whole because it includes infinite variety.⁹⁸ In The Problem of Christianity, wholeness is expressed through community, and this applies to individual selves as well as to communities of selves and to the Universal Community. The individual self is no mere datum, but signifies a whole which includes a past and a future. It is the meaning of a person to interpret his past to his future so that his life may be self-possessed and coherent in aim.⁹⁹ The ability of the individual to extend himself into the past and the future is a condition required for the formation of community. The community of persons, in turn, is the wholeness which is worthy of loyalty, and which through loyalty saves the individual from his isolation and interior divisions.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the community provides the larger social view which makes access to truth possible for the individual.¹⁰¹ What is ultimately real is the universal community, that is, the world as the process of the Spirit who interprets the past to the future in such wise that to every antithesis corresponds its resolution, and

⁹⁸Cf. above, pp. 139-43.

⁹⁹Cf. above, pp. 182-86, 201, 205.

¹⁰⁰Cf. above, pp. 160-61, 164-68, 175-78.

¹⁰¹Cf. above, pp. 214-27.

whose goal is the final resolution which fulfils the Spirit's plan according to his transcendent vision.¹⁰²

5. Elements in Royce's Later Conception of God Which Are Different from His Earlier Conceptions.

The foregoing elements of similarity and continuity seem to bear out Royce's statement concerning the relation of The Problem of Christianity to his earlier works.

In spirit I believe my present book to be in essential harmony with the bases of the philosophical idealism set forth in various earlier volumes of my own, and especially in the work entitled 'The World and the Individual.'¹⁰³

Royce goes on to say that "the present work contains no mere repetition" of his former expressions, and he refers to "the novelty of some of my metaphysical theses in my second volume."¹⁰⁴ Let us now state what appears to us to be these new elements of difference in Royce's later conception of God.

The central and the most important difference appears to be that Royce's later conception of God departs from his former monism. We observed before that The World and the Individual differs from The Religious Aspect of Philosophy by its emphasis upon purpose and individuality, while its point of similarity was that it retains the essential monism

¹⁰²Cf. above, pp. 235-47.

¹⁰³The Problem of Christianity, vol. 1, p. x.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., vol. 1, pp. xi and xiv.

of the earlier work.¹⁰⁵ Our contention now is that The Problem of Christianity differs most significantly from the two previous works in that it no longer conceives the relation between God and the world in terms of monism.

The early expression of monism regarded individual human beings as mere elements of the Absolute Thought in whom and for whom they had their being. This metaphysical monism corresponded to an epistemological monism in that human truth and error are possible only as fragments of the inclusive Thought. There appeared to be but one Being and one Knower which constituted an organic whole.¹⁰⁶

The monism of the middle period was expressed in the context of the one and the many. The many are expressed by the One in order that it may have wholeness of life and self-consciousness. The many are internal expressions of the divine purpose so that the temporal order is conceived as internal to the divine life, and the many as parts of the One. It is for this reason that the human will is free and that "our sorrows are identically God's own sorrows." Thus, the individual human being is a partial expression of the divine will and a part of the divine life which in its entirety constitutes a rational whole.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵Cf. above, pp. 139-48.

¹⁰⁶Cf. above, pp. 55-58.

¹⁰⁷Cf. above, pp. 144-48.

In The Problem of Christianity, both the general theory of community and the theory of interpretation are such as to make it difficult to conceive the universal community of interpretation according to the previous monistic formulations. First, the theory of community requires in its very conception the distinctness of individuals. It is due to the fact that many individuals, each interpreting his own past and future, identify their interpretations that community results. Thus, the first condition required for community is the power of the individual for self-extension, and the second condition is that there be a plurality of selves. Community does not result from a reduction of the many selves into one self, but from the sharing of an ideal past event or future hope with which each identifies the meaning of his own self. In the Beloved Community, this is exemplified by the hope of the resurrection which is common to all and personal for each.¹⁰⁸

What makes Royce's later theory of community difficult to conceive monistically is that it requires in its very concept a plurality of individuals, not as parts, but as individuals. It is true that Royce also emphasized individuality in The World and the Individual, but it is also true that the individual is there conceived as a part of God's

¹⁰⁸ Cf. above, pp. 184-88.

life and a partial expression of divine purpose. There the notion of individuality is derived from the notion of purpose. On the human side, the individual is such by reason of the purpose manifested in the internal and external meaning of ideas, while, on the divine side, the individual is such by reason of the selection manifested in the divine choice. However, the human individual, when viewed in the light of the One divine purpose, becomes a partial expression and manifestation of God's life. Individuals are now seen as the manifold, and as many parts of One unity. Hence, Royce must say, "Despite God's absolute unity, we, as individuals, preserve and attain our unique lives and meanings."¹⁰⁹ Royce believes that he has successfully defended his monistic conception of God against the charge that it does not allow for the individuality and freedom of finite moral agents. However, the language of community in The Problem of Christianity is entirely different. It is not "despite community" that we attain our unique lives, but it is because of individuality that community is possible. Here the One does not require many parts, but many individuals; and these are required, not that divine purpose be expressed and that God be self-conscious,¹¹⁰ but that community be possible. Indeed,

¹⁰⁹The World and the Individual, vol. 2, p. 452.
Cf. above, p. 139.

¹¹⁰Cf. above, pp. 140-43.

the language of God's self-consciousness does not occur in The Problem of Christianity. Consequently, the monistic conception of God expressed in The World and the Individual is simply not present in Royce's later theory of community.

Secondly, Royce conceives God in The Problem of Christianity as the Interpreter of the World.¹¹¹ Since the theory of social interpretation requires three distinct minds, that of the interpreter, the interpreted, and the one to whom interpretation is addressed, the universal community of interpretation cannot be conceived monistically. In the theory of social interpretation, the minds of the interpreted and of the interpretee are neither parts of nor expressions of the mind of the interpreter. On the contrary, the distinct existence of the mind of the other is presupposed for interpretation and for truth so that if the mind of the other does not exist, there is neither truth nor a real world.¹¹² Moreover, the method of social interpretation requires the interaction between distinct minds. The interpreter's ideas are his own, but he interprets successfully only if he conforms to the mind which he interprets and to the comprehension of the mind to whom interpretation is addressed. Interpretation precludes a conception of truth in which

¹¹¹Cf. above, pp. 214-27.

¹¹²Cf. above, pp. 219, 222-23, 231-33.

the interpreter would verify his concepts in his own percepts.¹¹³

Since social interpretation requires a community of distinct minds, the universal community of interpretation is not a monistic conception. The finite individual is not regarded as a divine idea fulfilled in the divine experience¹¹⁴ nor as a partial expression of divine purpose.¹¹⁵ Rather, the divine Interpreter is conceived as interpreting "each individual to the world, and the world of spirits to each individual," and "in his interpretations, regarding and loving the will of the least of these his brethren."¹¹⁶ This conception of God is consistent with the general theory of social interpretation, and it regards the finite individuals, whose lives are interpreted, as distinct from God the Interpreter.

The question of the place of the comparison of ideas naturally arises in relation to Royce's theory of the universal community of interpretation and in relation to his later conception of God. Is not the comparison of ideas the fundamental human analogue for the later conception of God as the Interpreter of the World who thus resembles the Absolute inclusive Thought of The Religious Aspect of Philosophy and whose conception is thus monistic like the earlier conception?

¹¹³Cf. above, pp. 205-08. ¹¹⁴Cf. above, pp. 70-71.

¹¹⁵Cf. above, pp. 140-44. ¹¹⁶Cf. above, p. 234.

The answer to this question requires consideration of the place of the comparison of ideas in relation to the theory of the community of interpretation and in relation to the later conception of God. We notice, first, that the comparison of ideas is not the fundamental analogue for conceiving the structure of the community of interpretation. On the contrary, social interpretation is the basic human experience which is the model for all our efforts at self-interpretation.¹¹⁷ In making social interpretation the model for conceiving the structure of self-interpretation, Royce is consistent with his thesis that self-consciousness develops through contrasts with social models.¹¹⁸ The comparison of ideas acts as the model of social interpretation in that it sometimes provides the clarity and unity of vision that ought to be the ideal and the goal of the truth loving interpreter who, motivated by loyalty, wishes to make a community of three distinct selves.¹¹⁹

Secondly, Royce states that if the goal of interpretation were reached, this would not result in the interpenetration of the selves. There would still be three distinct minds with three distinct functions.¹²⁰ In an

¹¹⁷Cf. above, pp. 197-99, The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, pp. 138-39, 143-44.

¹¹⁸Cf. above, pp. 165-67. ¹¹⁹Cf. above, pp. 205-08.

¹²⁰Cf. above, pp. 206-07. The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, p. 210.

article entitled "Mind," printed in 1916, the year of his death,¹²¹ Royce wrote,

For a mind is essentially a being that manifests itself through signs. The very being of signs consists in their demanding interpretation. The relations of minds are essentially social; so that a world without at least three minds in it--one to be interpreted, one the interpreter, and the third the one for whom or to whom the first is interpreted --would be a world without any real mind in it at all.¹²²

This late statement by Royce repeats the basic triadic structure of the community of interpretation, and he gives it a metaphysical status by saying that the real world must be so structured. Such a structure is not monistic in conception since the interpreted and the interpretee, while they form one community with the interpreter, are not conceived as organic parts of the interpreter, but the three are distinct selves with distinct functions.

Thirdly, the manner in which Royce argues to the existence of God is significant in the way he conceives God.¹²³ But, his argument for the existence of God in The Problem of

¹²¹Josiah Royce, "Mind," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), 8: 649-57. Reprinted in The Basic Writings of Josiah Royce, ed. with an introduction by John J. McDermott (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), vol. 2, pp. 735-61.

¹²²The Basic Writings of Josiah Royce, vol. 2, p. 758.

¹²³Cf. above, pp. 58-59, 139-40.

Christianity is a metaphysical generalization of the fact that human judgment concerning reality is verified within the triadic structure of social interpretation.¹²⁴ Consequently, the universal community of interpretation, whose interpreter is God, is conceived in the manner of the social community of interpretation, and this conception is not monistic.

Thus, the comparison of ideas is not the basic model for conceiving the structure either of the social community of interpretation or the World Community of Interpretation. It is the goal and ideal of all communities of interpretation because it is a model of ideal clarity and unity of interpretation. In respect to this goal, Royce clearly says two things. One is that, if this goal were reached, the selves within the community would remain distinct with distinct functions.¹²⁵ The other is that this goal is never reached in the case of human interpretations,¹²⁶ but this goal is indeed reached in the case of the interpretations of the Interpreter of the World.¹²⁷ This means that God the Interpreter sees his interpretations with the clarity and the

¹²⁴Cf. above, pp. 214-27, 231-33.

¹²⁵The Problem of Christianity, vol. 2, p. 210.

¹²⁶Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 216-17. Cf. above, pp. 205-13.

¹²⁷Ibid., vol. 2, p. 378. Cf. above, pp. 243-47.

unity of his own ideas, and yet what is interpreted are the lives of human individuals who are not simply ideas of God conceived in the manner of the Absolute Thought in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, but are distinct minds with distinct functions conceived in the manner of members of a community of interpretation. Clearly, there is no human analogue for this combination where the goal of interpretation is actually reached, and distinct individuals are interpreted with the clarity and intimacy of the comparison of ideas. It seems that Royce's later conception of God is more religious in this respect that it requires a combination of ideas, each clear in itself, but unable to be composed within the experience of the human interpreter. This differs from earlier analogies which were easily formed within the experience of human thought. In The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, the human analogue was a human thought inclusive of the many elements of any complex assertion.¹²⁸ In The World and the Individual, the human analogue was the brief time-span within which consciousness grasps at once a many in succession, as in listening to a melody.¹²⁹

It seems that these two ideas, namely, the distinction of the selves who constitute the community of interpretation and the fact that the goal of interpretation is

¹²⁸Cf. above, pp. 39-41.

¹²⁹Cf. above, pp. 126-30.

reached so that their distinct lives are comprehended and unified by the divine Interpreter as ideas of his own, can be composed without contradiction if we consider that Royce conceives the time-process as the process of the Spirit, and that this process unfolds according to the Spirit's plan. The interpretations of the Spirit differ from human interpretations in that the Spirit effectively accomplishes his interpretations through inspiring deeds of loyalty and atonement and through his own reconciliations of the antitheses which occur in the time-process. The Spirit effectively accomplishes his interpretations according to his plan. Hence, the final resolution, which is revealed to the Spirit's eternal vision, appears as the accomplishment of his own ideas, and thus is known with the clarity and unity of vision whose empirical model is the comparison of ideas. However, in order to maintain at the same time the model of the social community of interpretation,¹³⁰ the Spirit's ideas cannot be conceived as unfolding within his own life, but within the time-process which is within the community of interpretation, yet not within the Interpreter of the community. This means, again to maintain the distinction between the triad of selves, that the time-process, whose events are real signs to be interpreted, is exterior to the interior life of the

¹³⁰Cf. above, pp. 261-64.

Interpreter, although interior to the community which includes its Interpreter. This means that the divine transcendence, as presented in the later conception of God, is an exterior transcendence of the order of time and, in this, it differs from what we called the interior transcendence presented in The World and the Individual.¹³¹

Since Royce conceives the community of interpretation in terms of interrelated triadic functions, the exterior transcendence of the Interpreter over the temporal process does not imply a separation, but an intimate union, between God and the world.¹³² This intimate union, moreover, is conceived as a loving union, and in this respect Royce's later conception of God advances over prior conceptions. In the early period, God was conceived as the Universal Thought and as a Judge.¹³³ In the middle period, purpose was introduced, and this stressed God's freedom, his choice of individuals, and his making the world whole. In the later conception, God emerges as the loving Interpreter whose interpretations reconcile the tragic antitheses which afflict human life, and atone for evil with a generosity and wisdom not manifested in previous conceptions.¹³⁴ God the

¹³¹Cf. above, pp. 146-47.

¹³²Cf. above, pp. 246-47.

¹³³Cf. above, pp. 59-60.

¹³⁴Cf. above, pp. 253-54.

Interpreter acts as the unifying Spirit of the community and as the servant of all, consulting the will of the least of his brethren, and interpreting each to the world of spirits and the world of spirits to each.¹³⁵ God's loving salvation for man evokes in return a loving response which is shown through loyal deeds performed for the community. Man is saved through loyalty to the community, but such loyalty is above the capacity of the natural man. Saving love is inspired by the Spirit so that the community is distinctive in that it is a community of love and the Spirit is thus seen as a God of love.¹³⁶ God's immanence in the world through his loving salvation through the community is a religious conception unparalleled in Royce's previous works.

We have maintained that Royce's later conception of God differs from his previous conceptions in that it departs from his monistic formulations while, at the same time, maintaining God's unity with the world. Another evidence to this effect concerns the later treatment of the problem of evil. It is an evidence by way of silence. We observed that all of Royce's solutions to the problem of evil assume a triadic form in which evil is retained but overcome.¹³⁷ In the works

¹³⁵Cf. above, p. 234.

¹³⁶Cf. above, pp. 175-78, 192-93, 242-43, 246-47.

¹³⁷Cf. above, pp. 253-54.

of the early and middle periods, evil was considered to be interior to God's life, although overcome within that life.¹³⁸ "Our sorrows are identically God's own sorrows."¹³⁹ As late as "What is Vital in Christianity?" Royce maintained that the world is God's life, and that God endures evil and triumphs over it.¹⁴⁰ However, this language is entirely lacking in Royce's treatment of atonement and reconciliation in the two volumes of The Problem of Christianity. The silence seems significant. According to our interpretation, evil occurs in the time-process which is distinct from God's interior life, and evil is reconciled there through the interpretations of the Spirit.¹⁴¹ That Royce regards the time-process to be intimately related to, but distinct from, the Spirit's interior life, would explain this silence.

Another evidence that Royce's later conception of God is not monistic is the integrity which Royce attributes to human judgment to discern truth for itself. The argument for the existence of the World Community of Interpretation proceeds from the premise that human judgment, in human community, is capable of verification in reference to certain

¹³⁸Cf. above, pp. 47-49, 51-52, 135-36, 144-45.

¹³⁹The World and the Individual, vol. 2, p. 408.

¹⁴⁰William James and Other Essays, pp. 167, 175, 181-82.

¹⁴¹Cf. above, pp. 235-43.

objects.¹⁴² This differs from the mode of argument in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy where the possibility of human truth and error required the existence of an Universal Thought which included both the human judgment and its object as fragments of Itself.¹⁴³ In The Problem of Christianity, individual judgment requires another, but this other is another human mind which it interprets and by whom it is interpreted. The early triadic structure of judgment, object and inclusive Thought becomes the later structure of two or more minds concerned with a common object. The hypothetical solution offered in The Religious Aspect of Philosophy whereby Thomas would know John's thoughts about him, and thereby see John's error, becomes the actual structure of human interpretation, as exemplified in the two oarsmen in The Problem of Christianity.¹⁴⁴ Again, in the early work, the possibility of true or false judgment concerning the relation of past and future experience to present experience required the presence of an inclusive Thought.¹⁴⁵ In the later work, the ability of the individual to interpret his life through ideal extension into the past and future is a requirement for the formation of community.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴²Cf. above, pp. 214-19, 222-23, 226-27.

¹⁴³Cf. above, pp. 37-41.

¹⁴⁴Compare pp. 33-34 with pp. 215-17 and 231-32.

¹⁴⁵Cf. above, pp. 32-33, 36.

¹⁴⁶Cf. above, pp. 182-87.

The difference between the conceptions of truth in the two works is that the early work allows for no human truth, and then argues from the possibility of error to the existence of an Absolute Thought, while the later work concedes that certain truth can be achieved in human community, and from this concludes that the world at large possesses the truth concerning the problem of being because it is in the form of a community which includes its own Interpreter. Between the "either no truth or Absolute truth" of the early work, there intervenes the intermediary position of "some human truth" in the later work. The world of human judgment has assumed an integrity of its own.

In the argument presented in The Conception of God,¹⁴⁷ the truth of individual judgment tentatively takes its norm as what other men experience. However, this norm is rejected because "Other men experience in passing moments, just as I do,"¹⁴⁸ and consequently their consensus is "no whole of organized experience at all." Thus, we come to appeal to what men ought to experience if their experiences were in unity. This suggests an ideal of absolutely organized experience "present to one Universal Subject, of whose insight their own experiences were but fragments."¹⁴⁹ The

¹⁴⁷Cf. above, pp. 65-70.

¹⁴⁸The Conception of God, p. 34.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 35.

effort to deny the actuality of this Subject involves one in contradiction.¹⁵⁰ The appeal in this argument, as well as in the argument expressed in "The Eternal and the Practical,"¹⁵¹ to social judgment as the norm for the truth of individual judgment is rejected because social judgment is reduced to the inability of individual judgment to discern objectivity and consequently truth. Hence, the argument again presents the alternative of "either no truth or Absolute truth." The middle ground of some human truth is expressed in The Problem of Christianity where true judgment concerning natural objects, scientific theory, and social mediation becomes possible through a community of interpretation which then models the way in which the World grasps the truth of the problem of being.

The argument presented in The World and the Individual concludes to the meaning of being from an analysis of the truth of judgment. This analysis centers upon the relation of idea to object, or the relation between the internal and external meaning of ideas.¹⁵² Internal meaning is a volitional as well as intellectual process so that external meaning is intended in this double sense. External meaning

¹⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 40-41.

¹⁵¹"The Eternal and the Practical," Philosophical Review, XIII (1904), pp. 135-40.

¹⁵²Cf. above, p. 95.

is what the internal meaning fully intends, or it is the complete and conscious fulfilment of internal meaning. For its part, internal meaning is true insofar as it corresponds, even in its vagueness, to its complete object. Royce's discussion concludes that this complete object is real, and that this is what is meant by Being.¹⁵³

This argument differs from the previous arguments by analyzing the truth of judgment without, as yet, appealing to an Absolute Consciousness. As such, it is basically a dual theory of knowledge in which an idea seeks its own fulfilment. In this, it is different from the triadic theory of interpretation wherein the interpreter's idea seeks not its own fulfilment but the unity of community.¹⁵⁴ The theory of internal and external meaning becomes triadic when external meaning requires inclusion in an Absolute Consciousness.¹⁵⁵ Thus, the truth of internal meaning, as well as the good and the unity which it seeks, lie entirely outside the temporal empirical order within the Absolute Consciousness.¹⁵⁶ Hence,

¹⁵³Cf. above, pp. 105-09, 112-13.

¹⁵⁴Cf. above, p. 207.

¹⁵⁵Cf. above, pp. 115-20.

¹⁵⁶Cf. above, pp. 146-47. Royce distinguishes this final fulfilment from a proximate fulfilment in experience, but this distinction appears to be made chiefly in answer to a difficulty (cf. above, pp. 113-14), rather than as supportive of and related to the main line of argument. In general, Royce regards human experience as unable to reveal

the theory of knowledge expressed in The World and the Individual does not provide for a human and empirically verifiable truth which relates to the argument for God's existence as we find in The Problem of Christianity with its theory of interpretation. The empirical verification of the truth of the internal meaning of ideas must wait upon a wider consciousness in another world,¹⁵⁷ while the theory of interpretation, as a human mode of knowing, allows for indirect empirical verification whose norm is the judgment of the community.¹⁵⁸ The wider consciousness which is reserved for another world in the middle work also contrasts with the transformation of human consciousness which occurs in the present life in The Problem of Christianity. This transformation occurs as a result of saving grace, and it manifests itself in loyalty to the community which delivers the natural man from the moral burden generated by the circular conflict between self-will and the social will.¹⁵⁹ The later work reserves to another world the face-to-face

the individual which is considered to be real being. Royce relies upon present experience mainly to establish the problem of being. (Cf. above, pp. 77-80.)

¹⁵⁷Cf. above, pp. 116-17, 136-39.

¹⁵⁸Cf. above, pp. 208-19.

¹⁵⁹Cf. above, pp. 160-61, 164-68, 175-78, 189-93.

vision of the ultimate truth and salvation of human life,¹⁶⁰ but it accords to man's present life a human truth and a measure of salvation not found in the works of the early and middle periods.

This conclusion is further confirming evidence that Royce's later conception of God departs from former monistic formulations. As human judgment, so human being has an integrity or being in itself which cannot be construed as a mere fragment or part of the divine life. This implies a certain modification in Royce's previous expressions of idealism. Formerly, Royce held that all finite being, including human judgment, exists only in and for the divine consciousness.¹⁶¹ Now it would seem that a distinction must be made. Human mind remains essentially for divine consciousness as well as for other human consciousness, for without a community of interpretation there is neither truth nor a real world.¹⁶² The interrelated functions of the triad of minds means that each is for the others. At the same time, the triad, in order to be a triad of minds, requires that each have an integrity of its own which is distinct from the others, and that it not be a fragment or part of another.

¹⁶⁰Cf. above, pp. 244-45.

¹⁶¹Cf. above, pp. 17, 19, 34-41, 115-18.

¹⁶²Cf. above, pp. 222-23, 231-33.

It has been this aspect of the triad which has been the center of our conclusions concerning the difference in Royce's later conception of God. Finite minds have being in themselves as well as being for other minds and especially for the Interpreter of the World. This is what Royce seems to say in his article, "Mind."

[The] manifestations [of mind] lie not merely in the fact that it possesses or controls an organism, but in the fact that, whether through or apart from an organism, it expresses its purposes to other minds, so that it not merely has or is a will, but manifests or makes comprehensible its will, and not merely lives in and through itself, as a monad or a substance, but is in essence a mode of self-expression which progressively makes itself known either to its fellows or to minds above or below its own grade.¹⁶³

This selection seems to affirm that mind has being in itself and being for another mind, while it emphasizes the aspect of being for another mind. Thus, while in the first volume of The Problem of Christianity Royce stresses the unity of community and its oneness in being, he also requires that this be understood in terms of the two levels of being, the individual and the communal.¹⁶⁴ This distinction appears to be the same as that mentioned in the above selection. Individual mind has being in itself and being for other minds. Both aspects are required by the nature of a

¹⁶³The Basic Writings of Josiah Royce, vol. 2, p. 759.

¹⁶⁴Cf. above, pp. 178-85.

community of interpretation,¹⁶⁵ so that this community is "equally definable in terms of two ideas--the idea of the self, and the idea of the community of selves."¹⁶⁶ Community being, then, is not one, in Royce's conception, in the sense of responding to one concept, but it is one in the sense of constituting one interpretation into which has gone the efforts of three distinct minds. The unity of community is thus a triunity, not a monistic unity.

In conclusion, Royce's later conception of God differs most significantly from previous conceptions by ceasing to be monistic. This is because God is conceived as the Interpreter of the World, and because the World Community of Interpretation is conceived in structure according to Royce's general theory of community and his theory of interpretation. Community requires a plurality of individuals, and interpretation requires a triad of distinct minds so that the interpreted and the interpreter are not conceived as internal parts of the interpreter but as distinct from the interpreter with whom they constitute a community of interpretation. Further evidence which confirms this departure from monism is found in Royce's silence about evil as part

¹⁶⁵Cf. above, pp. 185-87.

¹⁶⁶"Mind," The Basic Writings of Josiah Royce, vol. 2, p. 760.

of God's life, and especially in the fact that Royce's argument to the existence of God the Interpreter grants to human judgment a new ability to arrive at truth within human community.

However, this departure from monism does not result in separating God from the world, but in a new expression of God's unity with the world since the community of interpretation consists in the interrelated functions of minds. God's interpretations take the form of reconciling the tragic antitheses which occur in the time-process, and of inspiring deeds of loyalty and atonement in the members of the community. The members respond by appropriate deeds of loyalty to the community, and in this consists their salvation.

CONCLUSION

This thesis undertook the task of comparing Royce's later conception of God and argument for God's existence with the earlier arguments and conceptions of God in order to determine the elements of continuity and difference. This aim required that the thesis first take a genetic approach to Royce's thought in which each period was analyzed to determine its argument for God's existence and its conception of God.

In his early period of The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, Royce argued to the existence of an Absolute inclusive Thought. Since error is possible, and since human judgment is incapable of itself either to correspond or not to correspond with its object, judgment and object must be joined in an inclusive Thought in whom and for whom they exist. Thus, there appears to be but one fully constituted Knower and one fully integrated Being so that the early conception of God entails an epistemological and metaphysical monism. God is conceived as Absolute Thought and Judge who both transcends and unites the finite world as a human knower transcends and unites the elements of a complex assertion.

In the middle period of The World and the Individual, Royce argues to the existence of God by first analyzing the truth of human judgment in order to ascertain the meaning of

Being. The conceptions of being expressed by three positions which Royce calls realism, mysticism and critical rationalism, are rejected as either inadequate or contradictory. Royce's analysis of the truth of judgment centers upon the relation of idea and object, or the internal and external meaning of ideas. Internal meaning is the "will" or purpose which ideas express, while external meaning is the complete and conscious fulfilment of internal meaning. Royce argues that this complete and conscious fulfilment exists, and this is what is meant by Being. This is the truth of the internal meaning of ideas, but it remains as a goal of seeking rather than a present possession. Consequently, as a real and conscious fulfilment, it must be present to an Absolute inclusive Consciousness which therefore exists. Since Royce has intimately related idea and purpose, this Absolute Consciousness is conceived not simply as Thought, as in the early period, but also as Will whose expression is the world of finite individuals. This makes it possible to conceive God as free, because he selects from among possibilities, and as a person because he is self-conscious, that is, conscious of the expression of his own ideas which constitute his life. It is also possible to conceive the finite self as individual, because it is selected by God, and as free because it constitutes a unique part of a unique Whole. Thus, a defense of human

individuality and freedom within a monistically conceived Universe is the end result of the conception of God in The World and the Individual. The development of the concept of individuality through an analysis of purpose expressed in the internal meaning of ideas marks a considerable advance over the early thought, while the monistic treatment of the one and the many retains the basic monism of the early work. Finite individuals are the manifold and partial expression of One purpose and constitute one Individual Whole.

Royce's later religious thought, as seen especially in the first volume of The Problem of Christianity, centers mainly upon the twin ideas of community and atonement. The Beloved Community saves the individual from the universal moral burden of self-will divided against the social will by providing him with the cause which, through loyalty, allows him to achieve integrity of life. Atonement, as exemplified in the mission of Christ, established the Beloved Community thereby making the world better than it would have been had evil not been present. The two concepts of community and atonement are important in Royce's later conception of God since God is presented as the Spirit who unifies the community, and whose saving presence inspires the deeds of love and atonement through which community exists and the individual is saved.

This religious conception finds metaphysical expression in the second volume of The Problem of Christianity through Royce's philosophy of community and interpretation. The argument to God's existence is a metaphysical generalization of the fact that human judgment is capable of verification within a community of interpretation which is thus constitutive of human truth and is seen as the most fundamental of realities. Hence, the truth of the problem of being, or the real world, is a Community whose Interpreter reconciles the tragic antitheses of life, and manifests his presence by the deeds of charity and atonement which he inspires. Thus, the metaphysical concept of God as the Interpreter of the World coincides with the religious conception of God as the Spirit of the Beloved Community.

The thesis concludes that there are elements in Royce's later conception of God which are continuous with the earlier conceptions. These include the general mode of Royce's argument which concludes to the nature of reality from an analysis of human judgment. Each argument proceeds through some triadic structure whereby individual judgment corresponds truly to its object through the medium of some higher insight. Each argument is also set in the context of the effort of thought to cope with the experience of a perplexing antinomy which needs resolution. The arguments conclude to an all-comprehending Knower whose synoptic

vision is eternal, unchanging, and in some sense transcends the finite world of his knowledge. In the middle period, this Knower is endowed also with Will whose purpose is expressed in the world of finite individuals. This aspect of purpose continues in the later period through the Interpreter's plan according to which the antitheses of the time-process are brought to resolution. Purpose receives a new dimension as the love which is inspired by the Spirit and saves the individual through his loyalty to the community. Evil is always included in the solution whereby it is overcome. This receives a new precision and dimension in the later thought by the theory of atonement.

Perhaps the most central feature of continuity is Royce's idealism whereby he conceives what is real as what is whole. In the early period, this wholeness takes the form of an Absolute inclusive Thought. In the middle period, the real self is a completed whole of meaning, while the real world is the Absolute Whole which is individual because it expresses God's one purpose, and whole because it includes in its unity infinite variety. In the later thought, wholeness is expressed through community. The real self is a community of past, present and future. The Beloved Community is the whole which is worthy of loyalty and saves the individual from his interior divisions. The real world is the

Universal Community as the process of the Spirit whose final resolution of temporal antitheses fulfils his plan in his transcendent vision.

The thesis also concludes to a notable difference between Royce's later conception of God and his earlier conceptions. The difference is that Royce abandons his monism without abandoning his idealism whereby he conceives what is real as what is whole. The whole that is real is no longer conceived monistically because it is conceived as a community. It is Royce's later theory of community and of interpretation which makes possible this evolution in his thought.

First, the theory of community requires in its very conception the distinction between individuals so that community is not conceived monistically as the union of organic parts which form a whole, but as a union of many individuals who make common their individual self-interpretations. This differs from the concept of individuality in the middle period which was derived from the notion of purpose but, when viewed as the many, were seen as internal parts of one whole. Secondly, the triadic theory of interpretation requires three distinct minds with three distinct functions. The minds of the interpreted and of the interpreter are thus not conceived as parts of nor as expressions of the mind of the interpreter, but their distinct existence

and proper functions are presupposed for interpretation. Since Royce conceives the Universal Community as a community of interpretation whose Interpreter is God, this community is not a monistic conception.

The role of the comparison of ideas in social interpretation does not dispute this conclusion since the model for conceiving the structure of interpretation is social interpretation while the comparison of ideas serves as the model for the goal of social interpretation because of its ideal clarity and unity. Even if this goal were achieved, there would still be three distinct minds with three distinct functions. Since Royce's argument to the existence of God is a metaphysical generalization of the fact that human judgment concerning reality is verified within the triadic structure of social interpretation, the Universal Community of Interpretation, whose Interpreter is God, is conceived in the manner of the social community of interpretation, and this conception is not monistic.

This conclusion is further confirmed by the fact that Royce's later argument attributes to human judgment in community the capability of verification in reference to certain objects without first appealing to an Absolute Consciousness. This differs from former modes of argument. As human judgment, so human being is seen to have a new integrity, or a being in itself as well as being for another mind. This

represents a modification of Royce's idealism to the extent that he previously regarded the truth and being of human judgment as existing only in and for an Absolute Consciousness. The being in itself of human mind argues against a monistic conception of God's relation to the world in Royce's later thought.

In spite of this departure from monism, Royce maintains the idealism whereby he conceives the real as what is whole. The whole is in the form of a community which includes its own Interpreter. This conception closely relates God to the world since it requires the triadic function of minds and purposes which interact in community. God's interpretations consult the will of his brethren. They reconcile the tragic antitheses of the time-process, and inspire deeds of loyalty and atonement in members of the community. The members respond by appropriate deeds of loyalty to the community, and in this consists their salvation. The community is thus seen as a Beloved Community, and the Divine Spirit of the community is seen as a God of love. This conception of God closely relates Royce's metaphysics and his religious thought. Thus, although Royce's departure from monism implies a clearer conception of God's transcendence, this transcendence is conceived as within community, while the conception of God's immanence in the world through loving salvation is a religious conception unparalleled in Royce's former works.

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APPENDIX 1

ABSTRACT OF

The Conception of God in the Later Royce

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The purpose of this thesis is to compare Royce's later conception of God with that expressed in his early and middle periods in order to determine the elements of continuity and of difference between the later and earlier conceptions. The thesis first examines Royce's thought genetically in order to determine the mode of argument of each period and its resulting conception of God.

In the early period of The Religious Aspect of Philosophy, Royce argues from the nature of human judgment to the existence of an Absolute inclusive Thought. Human judgment can err, but it cannot of itself correspond or fail to correspond with its object, so that both judgment and object must be included in an Absolute Thought in whom and for whom they exist. God is conceived as the Absolute Thought and Judge who both transcends and unites the finite world as a human knower transcends and unites the elements of a complex assertion.

Royce's middle period, seen especially in The World and the Individual, is distinguished by the emphasis given to

¹Edward A. Jarvis, S.J., doctoral dissertation presented to the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Ottawa, Ontario, April 1973, xiv-310 p.

purpose in the analysis of the internal and external meaning of ideas. The truth of an idea, or its external meaning, is the complete and final fulfilment of the purpose of the idea, or its internal meaning. Such fulfilment of purpose is real being and thus requires an Absolute Consciousness which both knows and wills it. Hence, God is conceived as a person and as free since he is conscious of his own life constituted by the finite many which expresses his one purpose and fulfils his ideas. The conception of God remains monistic while the individuality and freedom of finite moral agents is defended in light of the free divine choice.

Royce's later religious thought, seen especially in the first volume of The Problem of Christianity, centers upon the idea of community. The Beloved Community saves the individual from his moral burden by providing him with a superhuman cause which, through loyalty, allows him to achieve integrity of life. God is presented as the divine Spirit of the community whose saving presence inspires the deeds of love and atonement through which the community exists. This religious conception finds metaphysical expression in the second volume through Royce's philosophy of community and of interpretation. The argument to God's existence as the Interpreter of the World is a metaphysical generalization of the structure of the human truth-finding community. The truth of the real world is a Community whose divine Interpreter

reconciles the tragic antitheses of human life and manifests his presence by the deeds of charity and atonement which he inspires.

The thesis concludes that this later conception of God is continuous with earlier conceptions in regard to certain general features according to which the arguments proceed, God is conceived, evil resolved, and purpose expressed. The most central form of continuity is the idealism by which Royce conceives what is real as what is whole.

The later conception of God differs most significantly from the others in that the earlier monism of many parts of one whole gives way to the idea of community of distinct individuals and to the triadic theory of interpretation with its distinct minds and distinct functions. God is conceived as the Interpreter of the World in the manner of a social community of interpretation. Human mind is seen to have new integrity, or being in itself, since the truth of judgment can be verified in human community. Despite this departure from monism, God is conceived in intimate relation to the world because he is within the community as its Spirit and Interpreter. Thus, while a clearer conception of God's transcendence emerges, so also the conception of God's immanence through loving salvation is a religious conception unparalleled in Royce's earlier periods.