

Among all of his contemporaries, Royce finds himself increasingly indebted to Charles Sanders Peirce as a logician and pragmatist. Peirce, in turn, comprehends and appreciates Royce's distinctive, dialectical, and logically rigorous type of idealism and even points to him as alone worthy of the name "pragmatist."¹ It is the mature Royce's deepening insight into Peirce's philosophy of signs and interpretation that leads him to his own social approach to metaphysics. Royce is instrumental in saving for Harvard Peirce's published and unpublished papers. He begins the assaying of the "nuggets of gold" in that mother lode, discerning the spirit and key ideas in Peirce's thought and disclosing the architectonic in his numerous drafts.

In this context, then, our hopes of finding new and renewed ideas coming to the fore during these lectures from the period 1915–1916 are warranted. At least seven of these call for special attention.

1. Royce's doctrine of the social nature of reality is based on the unending process of interpretive social action that brings contrasting parts of truth into growing coherence. His new social approach to metaphysics lets him emphasize more than formerly that reality, knowledge, and truth, if abstracted from a progressively realized community of interpretation, dwindle into incoherence.
2. Royce establishes a relational form of the ontological argument, a new view that, unlike Anselm's primarily theological version, is both cosmological and existentially focused on individual uniqueness. He finds, ironically, that even nominalists presuppose of necessity this relational form of the ontological argument.
3. Royce gives us a thoroughly inductive and experiential metaphysics. A widened meaning of experience comprises, for him, the lived achievements of all kinds of human communities, the paradoxes of commerce, the pressures of wars, the imaginative disclosures of poetry and the arts, the givens of his own dramatic intellectual biography, the mixture of evil with good—literally everything that invites interpretation.
4. One student recalls, after many years, that "something arresting had occurred in the *Metaphysics* [course]." Whereas *The World and the Individual* "proposed an idealistic Absolute, a *totum simul*, *The Problem of Christianity* expanded on the time–process, if I remember the phrase. That was the arrest."² The time–process of interpretation all but displaced an Absolute. Thus Royce silently brushes aside his critics' stereotype about an "absolute block universe."
5. Royce enlarges on the ancient theme of individuation by turning to judgments of individual identity, employing that aspect of inductive logic which yields conclusions about the unique individual (this person, this atom). The

world as a whole is a self-individuating process in which judgments of identity and individuality are achieving a steadily increasing coherence.

6. Royce reaffirms his earlier respect for mysticism in its philosophical, poetical, and musical expressions, before leading his students, by means of the critical rationalist interpretation of being, to his own concluding idealistic interpretation.

7. Last, in a surprising irony, Royce claims a fuller realism than that of his realist critics. By the logic of interpretation, he requires, as a start, the rejection of the realist's utter independence of being and thought. Then, by the same logic of interpretation, he establishes the reality of the wholly teleological other. Our "whole intention is to be as realistic as we can." In this process we approach conformity with the being of the world of a higher and prior interpreter. Such a metaphysical realism, as Royce points out, is in essential harmony with the tradition of Judaism and Christianity.

History has fortunately saved this lively classroom record of Royce caught in the act of teaching. The aim of the editors, in the present text, has been guided by the question, "What would Royce have done in preparing his lectures for publication, had he lived?" Hence, the grouping of the year's lectures into the nine chapters of this book.

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