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Part VI

Logic and Methodology

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For his times, Royce was a logician of the first rank. The quality of his work in logic becomes more extraordinary when considered in the context of his multiple achievements in areas of thought quite apart from that effort. Morton White, who is skeptical of Royce's overall achievement, evaluates his contribution in this way.

For Royce was more than a metaphysical soothsayer, more than a philosopher of religion and of loyalty to loyalty: he was also a logician and a philosopher of science. He was one of the first American teachers of philosophy to recognize the importance of research in symbolic logic and to encourage its study both for its own intrinsic intellectual importance and as a tool. Some of his pupils, like C. I. Lewis and H. M. Sheffer, became distinguished Harvard contributors to this subject and founders of one of the most influential centers of logic in the twentieth century.[1]

The partial range of Royce's achievement in logic was made apparent by the publication in 1951 of Daniel S. Robinson's edition of *Royce's Logical Essays*.[2] Still further indication of his interest in the philosophy of science and problems of methodology became manifest with the fortuitous recovery and publication of the notes of Royce's "Seminar of 1913-1914."[3] The often cited influence of

In this section, I am indebted to my colleague at Queens College, Dr. Peter T. Manicas, for sharing his interpretation and evaluation of Royce's work in logic.

[1] "Harvard's Philosophical Heritage," in *Religion, Politics and the Higher Learning* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 53.

[2] (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Company, 1951).

[3] See Grover Smith, ed., *Josiah Royce's Seminar, 1913-1914: as recorded in the Notebooks of Harry T. Costello* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963). Still another Royce "Seminar" awaits publication, that of 1916, Philosophy 9, devoted to metaphysics. It is being edited by Richard Hocking.

Charles Peirce on Royce is sustained by both of these publications and this influence is obviously a crucial factor in the development of what Royce calls his "Absolute Pragmatism." (*RLE*, p. 364; below 2:813).

Royce's fundamental problem was to account for the existence and knowledge of real individuals, while yet remaining faithful to the accessibility of "absolute truth."[4] In other terms, Royce faced the classical objection to Absolute Idealism, namely, the impossibility of establishing human freedom. As early as 1897, under the press of criticism from G. H. Howison, Royce makes an effort to restate the relationship between the "Absolute and the Individual." (C. G., Supplementary Essay, pp. 135–326). Later he appends to the first volume of the *World and the Individual* another supplementary essay, in order to once again show the plausibility of holding to the view that "an Infinite Multitude, can, without contradiction, be viewed as determinately real. . . ." (*WI*, 1:476)

It is precisely this contention of Royce, which William James rejects in a "Notebook" entry of 1905. "The difficulty for me here is the same that I lay so much stress on in my criticism of Royce's Absolute, only it is inverted. If the whole is all that is experienced, how can the parts be experienced otherwise than as it experiences them? That is Royce's difficulty. *My* difficulty is the opposite: if the parts are all the experience there is, how can the whole be experienced otherwise than as any of them experiences it?"[5]

A third reformulation, by Royce, of this problem occurs in two stages. The first, in 1905, was a continuation of the work of A. B. Kempe, and dealt with the problem of "order," phrased by Royce as the "System Sigma."[6] It was this paper that C. I. Lewis contrasted with the *Principia Mathematica* of Whitehead and Russell, relative to methodological procedure. "By contrast, Professor Royce's is the

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[4] The persistence of this problem in the thought of Royce is an indication that his early fascination with Spinoza left its mark, perhaps more extensively than that left by the work of Hegel.

[5] Cf. William James, "Unpublished Papers," Houghton Library, Harvard University, box L, n-vii; cited also in Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1935) 2:751–52.

[6] Josiah Royce, "The Relation of the Principles of Logic to the Foundations of Geometry," *Transactions of the American Mathematical Society*, 24 (July, 1905): 353–415.

method of the path-finder. The prospect of the novel is here much greater. The system may—probably does—contain new continents of order whose existence we do not even suspect."[7] The second stage in this development came in 1913 when Royce published the *Principles of Logic* and attempted to bring together his metaphysical concerns, with his newly developed logic of order. The burden of his argument is found in Sections 2 and 3, reprinted below in their entirety. We, therefore, only isolate out a few texts to show Royce's intention. He insists that the logician, "in considering his order-types, is not abstracting from *all* experience. His world too is, in a perfectly genuine sense, empirical." (*RLE*, p. 338; below, 2:787).

But this tie to experience does not preclude the affirmation of an infinite system.[8] On two separate occasions in the *Principles of Logic*, Royce puts this tension into perspective.

First:

The concept of an individual is thus one whose origin and meaning are due to our will, to our interest, to so-called pragmatic motives. We actively postulate individuals and individuality. We do not merely find them. Yet this does not mean that the motives which guide our will in this postulate are wholly arbitrary, or are of merely relative value. There are some active and voluntary attitudes towards our experience which we cannot refuse to take without depriving ourselves of the power to conceive any order whatever as present in our world.[9] Without objects conceived as unique individuals, we can have *no Classes*.

[7] C. I. Lewis, "Types of Order and System," in *Papers in Honor of Josiah Royce on His Sixtieth Birthday*, p. 191. (These papers were originally published in the *Philosophical Review*, 25 [1916], with different pagination. The text from Lewis is found there on p. 419.) See also Smith, *Seminar, 1913–1914*, pp. 178–83, where Royce's critique of Lewis' theory of strict implication is discussed.

[8] For an analysis of Royce's dependence on the shift in emphasis in modern mathematics from quantity to order, see Richard Hocking, "The Influence of Mathematics on Royce's Metaphysics," *Journal of Philosophy*, 53, No. 3 (February, 1956): 77–91. See also the chapter on "Logic as the Science of Order," J. Harry Cotton, *Royce on the Human Self*, pp. 157–89.

[9] This phrasing of Royce seems anticipatory of the notion of posits in the thought of W.V.O. Quine. Cf., e.g., *Word and Object* (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1960), pp. 21–25. By way of influence, it is perhaps significant that William James mentions the term "posit" as early as 1905. He traced the term to the English philosopher Charles Hinton and considered using it as a name for bits of "pure experience." See William James, "Unpublished Papers," box L, n-vii.

Without classes we can, as we have seen, define *no Relations*, without relations we can have *no Order. But to be reasonable is to conceive of order-systems, real or ideal. Therefore, we have an absolute logical need to conceive of individual objects as the elements of our ideal order systems.* This postulate is the condition of defining clearly any theoretical conception whatever. (*RLE*, p. 350; below 2:799).

Second:

In brief, whatever actions are such, whatever types of action are such, whatever results of activity, whatever conceptual constructions are such, that the very act of getting rid of them, or of thinking them away, logically implies their presence, are known to us indeed both empirically and pragmatically (since we note their presence and learn of them through action); but they are also absolute. And any account which succeeds in telling what they are has absolute truth. Such truth is a "construction" or "creation," for activity determines its nature. It is "found," for we observe it when we act. (*RLE*, p. 365; below 2:813).

As to whether Royce saves his metaphysics by this method is open to debate. But Royce's notion of "interpretation"[10] takes on a clarity when analyzed in the light of his logic, particularly the logic of relations (*RLE*, pp. 338–48; below, pp. 788–97). And, above all, these essays on Logic and Methodology, should put to rest the frequent assertion that Royce's thought was indifferent to the burdens of scientific method. Indeed, Royce evaluated the validity of his metaphysics in relation to the claims of science and logic, as much as did Leibniz and Whitehead.

[10] See Hocking, "Influence of Mathematics," pp. 88–90.